Scaling-up, opening-up? Using open strategizing for navigating rapid growth

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A R T I C L E   I N F O

A B S T R A C T

This paper investigates the use of open strategizing within a high-technology new venture during rapid growth. Open strategy can facilitate growth but also presents a dilemma when increased managerial control becomes necessary, particularly with high-risk growth phases. Drawing on the work of Deleuze and Guattari, we distinguish between two forms of open strategizing - rhizomatic and arborescent - as organisations navigate rapid growth. Rhizomatic open strategizing is characterised by decentralisation and self-organisation, fostering exploration and accomplishment of growth opportunities both internally and externally. In contrast, arborescent open strategizing is centralised and management-driven, emerging in response to high-risk growth situations. Our study offers new insights into how open strategizing evolves with rapid growth, emphasising the balance between endurance and change in strategizing as organisations scale up.

1. Introduction

Open strategizing benefits growing organisations (Appleyard and Chesbrough, 2017; Gegenhuber and Dobusch, 2017). During rapid growth, or 'scaling-up' (e.g., DeSantola and Gulati, 2017; Schou, 2023), organisations need to decide whether to retain or adapt how they organise and strategize (DeSantola and Gulati, 2017; Alexy et al., 2021), including in response to increasing risk (Motley et al., 2023). This response is evident in some of the world's most prominent high-tech Silicon Valley scale-ups (Baron and Hannan, 2002). For example, firms such as Google have transitioned from having a more open and self-organised approach to strategizing (Olson and Simerson, 2015) to increased oversight, including adopting a modular approach to strategy through the creation of Alphabet Inc. (Reeves, 2015; Zenger, 2015).

However, a dilemma can persist for organisations navigating growth and adapting strategizing. Managers may choose to gain more authority over these processes (Mack and Szulanski, 2017; Brielmaier and Friesl, 2023), but this can be compromised when organisations already have an open approach to strategy. For example, openness can be resource-intensive and hinder control over strategizing and strategic decision-making, creating challenges regarding the "dysfunctional escalation of openness" (Hautz et al., 2017, p.301). Thus, open strategizing may need to be managed or 'reversed' (Baptista et al., 2017; Luedicke et al., 2017; Whittington and Yakis-Douglas, 2020) so organisations and managers can "secure greater control" (Appleyard and Chesbrough, 2017, p.310; Stjerne et al., 2024; Vaara and Rantakari, 2024) or free up organisational resources (Gegenhuber and Dobusch, 2017). This raises questions about how open strategizing evolves as organisations navigate growth. While prior work has emphasised the importance of open

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strategy in growing firms, including new ventures, for impression management purposes (e.g., Gegenhuber and Dobusch, 2017), this only paints a partial picture of how they use open strategizing during growth. Given the tension between opening-up and scaling-up, there is a need to understand this further. We also seek to understand how organisations adapt their open strategizing and how it changes during growth. Our research question is: *'How do organisations use open strategizing as they navigate rapid growth?'*.

This aligns with calls to explore how organising and strategizing endure and change as complexity increases and priorities shift with growth (e.g., DeSantola and Gulati, 2017). As Google's example demonstrates, such changes may involve adapting organisational processes (Jansen et al., 2023), including the evolution of control towards situations where managers have more oversight into issues (Cardinal et al., 2004) such as strategizing (Amrollahi and Rowlands, 2018; Mack and Szulanski, 2017). Our work builds on prior open strategy literature that suggests how strategizing and input from openness may change, need to be managed, or become more 'closed' over time and face 'reversion' (Dobusch et al., 2019; Whittington and Yakis-Douglas, 2020; Vaara and Rantakari, 2024) including as organisations grow (Appleyard and Chesbrough, 2017; Gegenhuber and Dobusch, 2017).

To explore this further, we adopted a fine-grained view by examining the role of open strategizing during the scaling-up of an emerging high-technology venture called TechMex (a pseudonym). Based on our empirical study of TechMex and inspired by Deleuze and Guattari (e.g., 1983; 1987), we identified two forms of open strategizing as the organisation navigated rapid growth: rhizomatic open strategizing and arborescent open strategizing. By identifying these forms, we theorize the role open strategy plays in relation to rapid growth as organisations scale-up. Specifically, we affirm prior work (e.g., Appleyard and Chesbrough, 2017; Gegenhuber and Dobusch, 2017) that open strategy evolves with growth and may need to be adapted. However, we provide new insights that open strategizing, having been used internally and then externally, does not revert to 'closure' but is adapted to focus more on centralised, management-organised open strategizing alongside existing decentralised, self-organised approaches. In our case, the necessity to adapt the use of open strategizing occurred during high-risk growth.

2. Background

2.1. Open strategizing

Many organisations are involving a broader range of stakeholders, both internal and external, in their strategy processes (e.g., Whittington et al., 2011; Birkinshaw, 2017; Seidl and Werle, 2018; Cai and Canales, 2022; Splitter et al., 2023b; Vaara and Rantakari, 2024; Langenmayr et al., 2024). This approach is known as open strategy, or 'open strategizing' (Hautz et al., 2017). Stakeholders include employees (Splitter et al., 2024), consultants (Plotnikova et al., 2021), customers (Baptista et al., 2017), investors (Yakis-Douglas et al., 2017), and professional communities (Morton et al., 2020). There is also an increasing tendency to share strategic information both within and beyond organisational boundaries (Whittington et al., 2011; Gegenhuber and Dobusch, 2017). Open strategy is defined as: *"an openness in terms of inclusiveness, in other words the range of people involved in making strategy; and an openness in terms of transparency, both in the strategy formulation stage and, more commonly, in the communication of strategies once they are formulated"* (Seidl et al., 2019, p.10).

Open strategy offers various benefits. For example, it allows organisations to harness greater creativity (Stieger et al., 2012), gather diverse viewpoints (Dobusch et al., 2019), and create more coherent (Lusiani and Langley, 2019) and legitimate strategic outputs (Luedicke et al., 2017; Morton et al., 2020). However, open strategy can also present several pitfalls or 'dilemmas' (Hautz et al., 2017; Morton, 2023). Stakeholders may face the burdens of strategy work, and organisations may feel pressured to make other areas more open (Hautz et al., 2017). Openness can also bring risk as participants contribute negative or contentious issues or self-promote (Malhotra et al., 2017), or struggle to gain senior management attention (Brielmaier and Friesl, 2023; Splitter et al., 2024). Furthermore, opening up strategy can result in a loss of control in the strategy process (Hautz et al., 2017; Cai and Canales, 2022), including during growth (Appleyard and Chesbrough, 2017).

Open strategy encompasses a spectrum of open and closed elements, affecting control (Dobusch et al., 2019; Morton, 2023; Vaara and Rantakari, 2024). Previous studies have detailed the nuances and complexities of control in managing and overseeing open strategy processes (Amrollahi and Rowlands, 2018; Langenmayr et al., 2024). For instance, inclusion in strategy can be management-led and closely controlled or "independent of management" and un-orchestrated (Whittington and Yakis-Douglas, 2020, p.3; Lundgren-Henriksson and Sorsa, 2023). Relatedly, it can be centralised or 'distributed' and decentralised (Luedicke et al., 2017; Amrollahi and Rowlands, 2018). In centralised processes, authority is concentrated with organisational leaders who play a hands-on role in directing strategizing (Stjerne et al., 2024). In decentralised processes, however, authority is not clearly defined, promoting a more participative and inclusive approach to strategizing (Mack and Szulanski, 2017; Amrollahi and Rowlands, 2018). These differences are relevant to our work when considering the use, and potential adaptation, of open strategizing during growth.

2.2. Organising and strategizing for growth

Rapid growth in organisations, particularly new ventures, is often referred to as 'scaling up', defined as: *"the organisational and strategic routines by which firms grow exponentially through the expansion, replication, and synchronization of resources and practices over time"* (Jansen et al., 2023, p. 590). Managers of new ventures significantly influence the organisation's development (DeSantola and Gulati, 2017; Motley et al., 2023). Such organisations often establish openness in their organising and strategizing principles (e.g., Splitter et al., 2023a), serving as a 'blueprint' for growth and success (Baron and Hannan, 2002). An open, community-like focus (e.g., Baron et al., 2001; Baron and Hannan, 2002; DeSantola and Gulati, 2017) is, for example, beneficial for tapping into the knowledge of different stakeholders during strategizing (Stieger et al., 2012). Many firms have successfully scaled with aspects of openness in their

organising and strategizing (e.g., Google, Valve, and EasyJet), which is not surprising given that growing firms are often undifferentiated (atleast initially) and more flexible in coordination and control processes (Mintzberg, 1979; Cardinal et al., 2004; Lee, 2021).

However, questions arise about whether organisations should maintain openness as they scale-up. A key 'problem' of scaling is balancing effective organising and strategizing during rapid growth. Literature suggests that organisations can demonstrate stability in their organising despite pressures to change with growth (DeSantola and Gulati, 2017). Yet, growth may force them to adapt (Alexy et al., 2021; Schou, 2023), as they face tensions such as shifts in personnel, culture, or, as is central to our work, control by managers (Cardinal et al., 2004). Therefore, aligning organising and strategizing with growth is crucial, as organisations balance endurance and change. Endurance implies that initial organising methods have a lasting impact on behaviours, structures, and practices, and change involves adapting these to growth complexities (DeSantola and Gulati, 2017). Research has provided valuable insights into the issues and dynamics of managerial control over time in organisations. For example, works on institutional entrepreneurship and organisational transformation have contrasted arborescent (centralised) and rhizomatic (decentralised) forms of organising in relation to control, drawing on Deleuze and Guattari's (1987) metaphors of rhizomes and arborescence. Arborescent structures are hierarchical and stable, promoting control and consistency, while rhizomatic structures are flexible and networked, encouraging self-organisation (e.g., Gehman et al., 2023; Hsu, 2022; Magnusson et al., 2022). These distinctions are helpful in our work when considering the importance and role of control in open strategy and how organisations may use and change open strategizing during rapid growth.

2.3. Open strategizing and growth: A dilemma?

Adopting open strategy is relevant for organisations seeking growth. Prior literature suggests that openness can facilitate value creation (Chesbrough and Appleyard, 2007; Appleyard and Chesbrough, 2017) and help organisations identify and develop new growth paths (Stadler et al., 2021). Research has shown how new ventures engage in open strategy with external audiences to gain legitimacy, with the dynamics of openness changing as they grow (Gegenhuber and Dobusch, 2017). Conversely, scaling-up often requires ventures to adapt their organising and strategizing processes (DeSantola and Gulati, 2017) including changes to managerial control (Cardinal et al., 2004; Jansen et al., 2023). This adaptation may involve establishing more structured activities, oversight, and hierarchy (DeSantola and Gulati, 2017) extending to strategy processes. For instance, organisations facing increased risks as they grow may become more risk-averse (e.g., Motley et al., 2023).

From our review of existing work, we identify a tension for growing organisations using open strategizing, and how it changes during rapid growth. The "dilemma of process" to open strategy suggests that heightened inclusiveness in strategy processes can have ambivalent effects (Hautz et al., 2017, p. 301). On one hand, including a wider range of stakeholders allows organisations to capture diverse knowledge and opinions (Appleyard and Chesbrough, 2017; Hautz et al., 2017; Dobusch et al., 2019) and new sources of value (Chesbrough and Appleyard, 2007). However, openness can also present significant challenges, as the involvement of broader audiences can be resource-intensive and reduce control over strategy and strategic decision-making (Gegenhuber and Dobusch, 2017; Hautz et al., 2017). Prior work suggests that this may impede organisations from capturing value from increased openness (Birkinshaw, 2017) necessitating approaches to managing 'dysfunctional openness' (Hautz et al., 2017), such as increased centralisation and management-organised activities like goal- and agenda-setting (Luedicke et al., 2017; Morton et al., 2020). Thus, open strategizing may change or revert during growth (Appleyard and Chesbrough, 2017; Gegenhuber and Dobusch, 2017), with fewer distributed activities and management-led activities becoming predominant (e.g., Luedicke et al., 2017; Whittington and Yakis-Douglas, 2020). The issue of control remains unclear when considering how open strategizing is used and potentially adapts as organisations navigate rapid growth, warranting further exploration.

Overall, evidence is limited on how organisations use open strategizing for growth and how this use changes as they scale-up. They may need to balance their focus on current activities and future imperatives, presenting a tension between endurance and change. As noted, open strategizing might inhibit rapid growth by consuming resources and limiting managerial control in strategy and strategic decision-making. In response, we ask the following research question: *'How do organisations use open strategizing as they navigate rapid growth?'*.

3. Methods and empirical context

3.1. Case selection and context

We accessed our case, anonymised as TechMex, through a research and consultancy project focused on the processes and challenges of scaling up high-technology organisations. This access allowed us to collect data on its growth and strategy process. TechMex was founded in April 2017 as a new venture in the high-technology sector in Mexico with headquarters in Mexico City. The organisation was launched by three partners and specialises in technology development while acting as a technology and platform vendor. They initially held interest in a number of areas, including AI, sentiment analysis, blockchain, and mobile software development. However, as the organisation experienced growth in these areas in its home market, it refined its offerings into three core areas: AI technologies, advanced analytics services, and blockchain solutions. This aimed to better compartmentalise its offerings and attractiveness to customers. The organisation's target segment is varied and includes consultancy companies, political parties, SMEs, and marketing firms. Following significant growth in its first year, TechMex commenced expansion into new markets, including in a number of countries in Latin America and the USA. At the time of our data collection, the organisation was also exploring possible expansion into Western Europe, particularly Spain. Across its markets, TechMex faces significant competition from established incumbents, including smaller regional and national-level firms, and also larger global high-technology organisations.

We adopted a single, in-depth case study approach (Gioia et al., 2013) which is valuable when researching in an explorative manner, to uncover daily realities about nascent topic areas as we have identified through our outline of a theoretical motivation (Weick, 1989). We still know little about open strategizing in relation to rapid growth, including in the scaling-up of new ventures. Equally, research on scaling-up lacks exploration into how new ventures' organising and strategizing endures or changes, as priorities change path during growth (e.g., DeSantola and Gulati, 2017). Our single-case design and focus on a high-technology venture from an emerging market was chosen due to the novel and relevant position of the organisation at hand and the access we were granted. This included the opportunity to interview most of the organisation's staff and to be provided with comprehensive documentation related to strategy and growth. Further, the high-technology sector is marked by elevated opportunities for growth, and TechMex experienced substantial scaling-up in a very short period of time through diversification of product and service areas and eventual expansion into new markets. Fig. 1 provides a concise timeline of TechMex's rapid growth and our data collection activities.

3.2. Data collection

We conducted 30 semi-structured interviews, covering all of TechMex's business areas. These interviews explored themes aligned with our research aims: understanding participants' perceptions of the use of open strategizing and how this changed during the organisation's scaling-up process. The 30 interviews were conducted in two 'live' stages and, overall, we interviewed 24 participants who had a role at different levels of the organisation. The interviews lasted between 22 and 70 min depending on participant input, with an average length of 46 min and were recorded where permitted and transcribed. Detailed notes were also taken. These interviews being conducted in two stages helped us to understand the ongoing experiences of key stakeholders during rapid growth. Interviews encompassed insights from two distinct groups: founding members and early joiners of the organisation (Stage 1, 14 interviews with participants A–L), as well as individuals who joined TechMex in its later growth phases (Stage 2, 16 interviews with participants A-C and M–X). In the second stage, we reinterviewed key senior managers too - the CEO, CTO, and CMO. This allowed exploration of interviewees' opinions on the organisation's purpose and operations across departments, and to understand open strategizing during growth. There was a space of approximately 8 months between the end of the first and the start of the second stage of interviews.

In addition to the semi-structured interviews, we gathered data from other qualitative sources. We documented important email threads and informal conversations. Email exchanges included updates and discussions between one of the authors and senior managers, whilst informal conversations took place over video conferencing platforms and face-to-face. These insights were summarised using notes that could be referred to (Miles and Huberman, 1994). Although interviews represent our primary source of data, the other sources helped to capture the progression of the organisation's strategizing and growth, whilst complementing the interviews to form a rich qualitative dataset. We also acquired numerous documents including formal strategic plans and other archival material (e.g., information from company webpages and social media accounts, internal reports, organisational structure maps, and information on key products, services, and customers). These data were essential in forming a holistic picture (Miles and Huberman, 1994) of the distinct phases of growth. Table 1 provides an overview of our data sources.
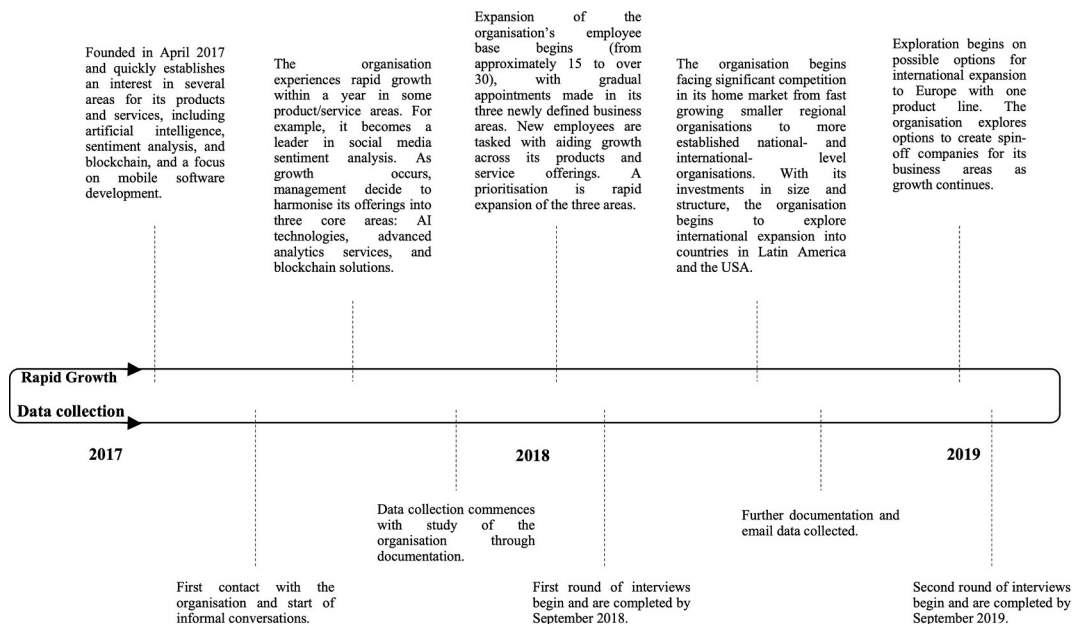

Fig. 1. Timeline of TechMex's rapid growth and the study's data collection.

Table 1

Overview of data sources.

Data Source	Details
Interviews (int)	− 30 interviews with TechMex management and employees. The following list shows these participants, their role, and the number of interviews conducted: Participant A: Co-Founder and Chief Executive Officer (CEO) - 2 Interviews Participant B: Co-Founder and Chief Technology Officer (CTO) - 3 Interviews Participant C: Chief Marketing Officer (CMO) - 3 Interviews Participant D: Head of Customer Relations and Sales - 1 Interview Participant E: Head of Products and Services - 1 Interview Participant F: Senior Communications Manager - 1 Interview Participant G: Advanced Analytics and Blockchain Specialist - 1 Interview Participant H: Full Stack Lead - 1 Interview Participant I: Blockchain Development Manager - 1 Interview Participant J: Sales Manager - 1 Interview Participant K: Prototype Digital Design Manager - 1 Interview Participant L: Political Media Manager - 1 Interview Participant M: IT Blockchain Lead – 2 Interviews Participant N: Artificial Intelligence Lead - 1 Interview Participant O: Big Data and Analytics Lead - 1 Interview Participant P: Artificial Intelligence Lead - 1 Interview Participant Q: Data Science Lead - 1 Interview Participant R: Smart Contract Lead - 1 Interview Participant S: IT Blockchain Lead – 1 Interview Participant T: Senior Artificial Intelligence Developer - 1 Interview Participant U: Marketing and Sales Manager - 1 Interview Participant V: Blockchain Solutions Lead - 1 Interview Participant W: Project Manager - 1 Interview Participant X: Product Manager - 1 Interview
Informal conversations (con)	− 4 informal discussions prior to the interviews to gain a better understanding of TechMex and the scope for the research.
Email exchanges (email)	− 28 email threads between TechMex management and other employees focused on the organisation's strategy and growth.
Documentation (doc)	- Background information about TechMex from company webpages and social media accounts, including information about organisational structure, products/services, and customers. - Internal reports and strategic plans shared by management providing information about strategy including growth plans and products and services. - Internal organisational structure maps. - Technical information about key products and services. - Information about customers and markets.

3.3. Data analysis

The data analysis procedure was chosen as an appropriate way to interrogate interpretive, qualitative data. We moved iteratively between data, relevant literature, and the emerging theory (Gioia et al., 2013). Analysis consisted of three core stages which resulted in our data structure shown in Fig. 2, and our model which is discussed later in the paper.

In the first stage, we sought to identify: (1) what phases of growth took place within our case, and (2) how open strategizing is used in the case of a new venture during rapid growth (i.e., what the intersection of open strategy and rapid growth was, and what the process looked like). This allowed us to identify different features of growth over time (e.g., changing focus on business areas, market expansion activities, and personnel changes) and then to begin to understand open strategizing therein. We focus on open strategizing broadly to consider the "many kinds of strategy process increasingly subject to openness" (Whittington et al., 2011, p.534). This includes a focus on different 'branches' of open strategy (Appleyard and Chesbrough, 2017), including openness in product and process innovation activities that have been widely considered as a subset of open strategy (Whittington et al., 2011; Von Krogh and Geilinger, 2019). We also focus on a variety of 'strategic issues' that represent important facets of work on open strategizing as have been discussed in past literature. This includes product/service development, process improvements, customer relationships, business model/area change, competitive analysis, and internationalisation (Stieger et al., 2012; Luedicke et al., 2017; Yakis-Douglas et al., 2017). Overall, we ascertain that our study explores open strategy as a type of openness focused on "sharing strategic insights and participating in strategy process[es]" (Splitter et al., 2023a, p.11). We see various examples of the facets mentioned above, representing the 'nitty gritty' of open strategizing in our empirical work.

We coded the data in a way required for data reduction (Miles and Huberman, 1994), and this involved going through sentences in the text (e.g., in interview transcripts and notes, and rich documentation data) and assigning short labels and memos to ascertain their meaning (Gioia et al., 2013). This started with the identification of granular first-order concepts related to open strategy as shown in our data structure. As codes were grouped and refined into second-order themes with more consistent labels, it helped us to unpack the richness of the data relevant to open strategizing during scaling-up (Gioia et al., 2013). We began to identify specific practices for how our case organisation was engaged in open strategy (Gegenhuber and Dobusch, 2017). This coding process went through iterations until we were satisfied that the data had been sufficiently covered and both authors had been involved throughout the process.

In the second stage, we went through iterations and discussions between the authors who were both close to the data during this
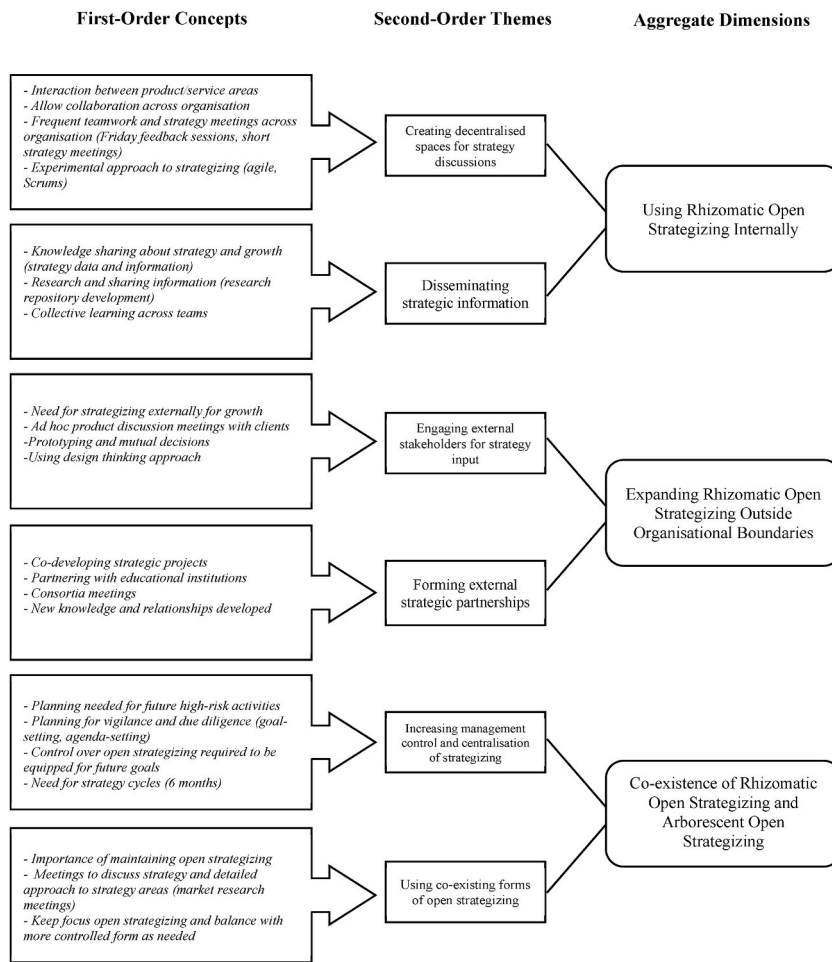
First-Order Concepts **Second-Order Themes** **Aggregate Dimensions**

Fig. 2. Data structure.

process, and this helped to provide commentary and verification about the data and emerging findings. We then produced detailed process summaries of the data (Langley, 1999). This allowed for further discussion of the coding outcomes to allow inter-coder dependability and to finalise the first- and second-order coding and ensured categorisation supported the guiding research

Table 2
Definition and description of rhizomatic and arborescent open strategizing.

	Rhizomatic Open Strategizing	Arborescent Open Strategizing	Relevance to Deleuze and Guattari (1987)
Definition	A decentralised and self-organised approach to open strategizing for exploring and accomplishing rapid growth opportunities.	A centralised and management-organised approach to open strategizing for addressing high-risk growth opportunities.	Rhizomatic structures are non-hierarchical, decentralised, and flexible, encouraging multiplicity and creativity. Arborescent structures are hierarchical, centralised, and stable, promoting control and consistency.
Locus of Control	Decentralised, self-organised, with an emphasis on non-linearity. Open strategizing is flexible and adaptable, encouraging diverse inputs and emergent approaches to evolve.	Centralised, management-organised, with an emphasis on linearity. Open strategizing is stable, encouraging inputs through clear hierarchical structures that are more rule intensive, such as agenda-setting in discussions that are aligned with strategic priorities and plans.	Rhizomatic structures emphasise autonomy, flexibility, and emergent processes and are non-linear and flexible, promoting self-organisation and rapid adaptation. Arborescent structures emphasise heightened authority, and predefined boundaries. They are linear and more hierarchical, promoting stability and control.
Illustrative Practices	Involves freedom for stakeholders to create spaces for decentralised open strategy discussions (e.g., Scrum meetings, short strategy catch-ups, developmental cycles) and share strategic information openly.	Involves oversight and goal- and agenda-setting for centralised open strategy discussions led by management (e.g., market research meetings, transparent board meetings with formal agendas).	Rhizomatic structures foster diverse inputs, rapid adaptation, and collaborative practices. Arborescent structures ensure centralised control.

background on growth in organisations. We then sought to move the second-order categories into higher-order aggregate dimensions (Gioia et al., 2013). This involved grouping our identified second-order themes, the strategy practices, into more general, higher-level bundles of practices (Jarzabkowski and Spee, 2009), that represent open strategizing forms during rapid growth. This was an approach consistent with other work on open strategy (e.g., Gegenhuber and Dobusch, 2017; Lusiani and Langley, 2019). We cross-checked our interpretation until we observed that each of these was stable and consistent. We then developed rich narratives around these forms and how they developed over time and the second-order practices therein which were the basis for our findings.

This led to the final stage, which was important in relating our findings to extant theory, the aims of the study, and in drawing conclusions. Both authors worked together to start to translate our draft narratives into a more precise 'story' (Langley, 1999), and craft clear implications from our work. Specifically, by using our narratives and understanding of the sequence of events, in addition to our understanding of relevant literature, we established a draft model to show the core findings in display form (Miles and Huberman, 1994) and at a higher-level of abstraction. This allowed gradual development of the model until we arrived at a finalised version which was cross-checked with our research question and findings.

4. Findings

We identified two forms of open strategizing: rhizomatic and arborescent. In Table 2, we define the two forms and explain each in relation to their locus of control and illustrative practices during rapid growth. The locus of control encompasses characteristics relevant to rhizomatic and arborescent structures, including centralisation and decentralisation, the nature of strategizing, and the extent of linearity. To explain these, we draw on Deleuze and Guattari's (1987) concepts of rhizomes and arborescence as a "theoretical toolkit" (Gehman et al., 2023, p.289).

Rhizomatic open strategizing, inspired by the metaphor of rhizomes, is characterised by decentralisation, self-organisation, and non-linearity, existing in a state of multiplicity. This approach represents flexible, adaptable strategizing that encourages diverse inputs and emergent processes (Deleuze and Guattari, 1983; Gehman et al., 2023). It aligns with strategy approaches that emphasise connectivity and adaptation (Hsu, 2022). Arborescent open strategizing, on the other hand, modelled after tree-like structures, features centralisation, management-organisation, and linearity akin to 'roots, branches, and leaves' (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987). This form of open strategizing emphasises control, stability, and clear hierarchical structures, often within 'striated space' that are more rule intensive (Hsu, 2022).

In our study, rhizomatic open strategizing facilitated exploration and accomplishment of rapid growth. In contrast, arborescent open strategizing was employed to address high-risk growth opportunities, with more control over openness in strategy. Initially, TechMex utilised internal and external rhizomatic open strategizing. As the organisation faced heightened risks, it began using arborescent open strategizing and maintained a balance between existing strategizing and this management-led, controlled approach.

4.1. Using rhizomatic open strategizing internally

At its inception, Tech-Mex used what they described as an *"informal and pragmatic"* (int) approach to strategizing that was focused on exploring growth opportunities. This was self-organised and decentralised, as practices emerged gradually and non-linearly while TechMex's managers and employees developed collaborative strategizing methods. We refer to this as *rhizomatic open strategizing* and TechMex's co-founder and CEO emphasised that this helped to avoid bureaucracy and micro-management, which could negatively impact strategic activities and growth:

> *"We are acquiring a culture of high-quality and zero bureaucracy. We don't have to wait until a department tells us what we did and what is wrong, and it has worked very well … That is how we operate … without falling into micro-management … The communication across the organisation is very good and everyone understands their role and what is needed"* (int)

One senior manager envisaged that this is a form of strategizing "*that is made to deliver growth*" (int) whilst the organisation expressed that it offered *"opportunities for collaboration amongst all areas of our organisation on strategic issues"* (doc). This was evident in our data, with *"cross-department communication"* (int) and notions of *"teamwork", "co-working"*, and *"interaction"* (int) arising as common themes as participants discussed how they strategized. It was also evident that rhizomatic open strategizing had become central in shaping "*shared ownership of the strategic direction*" (int), by including everyone in "*open lines of communication*" (int) on strategic issues.

Rhizomatic open strategizing was largely being used through *creating decentralised spaces for strategy discussions*. The organisation's CMO explained that these ensured the organisation had the *"cohesion of a multidisciplinary team working under innovative processes"* (doc). One innovative process was the adoption of regular 'Scrum' meetings which involved quick and effective morning briefings and weekly setting or recapping of strategic goals. The Scrums were self-organised by different groups of employees at TechMex who had expertise and knowledge of "*managing projects, generating and validating project documentation through agile methodologies*" (int). They were formed on a drop-in basis, where "*being there was optional*" (int) and a range of strategic issues were discussed as and when needed, from product and service-specific issues to those focused on target markets, short-term strategic goals, and reviewing strategic analysis data. With time, these meetings became more prominent, and involved a range of employees to ensure teams were completing tasks but were discussing and collaborating often on strategic issues through these self-organised, decentralised spaces. For example, the CTO described how the Scrum meetings varied in size and composition and how the ones he had participated in were scheduled throughout the workweek to address a range of strategic issues:

> *"We take our Scrum board every Monday and we develop the first meeting of the week. We discuss everything that was left pending and what we have to do. From Tuesdays to Thursdays, we do Scrum meetings lasting 10–15 minutes … we focus on different issues relating to products, clients, and our overall goals"* (con)

Another practice was the use of short strategy catch-up meetings which had no set agenda or structure. Participants explained a need to have frequent exchanges about strategy, as teams across the organisation collaborated on achieving shared goals and objectives. While the Scrums had become a regular occurrence with a broadly consistent structure (i.e., Scrum board followed by short follow-up meetings known as 'sprints') employees also began to adopt these other short, unstructured meetings outside of this format to discuss strategic issues ad hoc. For instance, the Head of Products and Services mentioned that they happened as needed, such as when something related to strategy had changed and required discussions amongst stakeholders:

> *"[We have] frequent, short meetings of a maximum of 15 minutes in cases where there have been alerts or changes in the direction of the strategy"* (int)

A Senior Communications Manager noted that team members were also frequently finding ways of using digital devices and software to communicate virtually instead of face-to-face:

> *"We are often meeting to discuss strategy [with] different people and teams … I bring different solutions to help conversations such as Camunda and Excel to track and control issues and progress, and also Project Manager and PowerPoint … You know, sometimes it is just about quick communication on strategy too, maybe it is something about a product launch or a client issue, we can just use mail, [or] WhatsApp for fast and effective communication"* (int)

Complementary to these short, unstructured communications was also the use of 'Friday feedback sessions' which were consistent and focused on current objectives for different teams and to ensure everyone was on track but had an opportunity to share progress, issues, and ask questions and gain feedback. The sessions remained decentralised and self-organised in that they were not led by senior management, but rather were open discussions where employees of all levels could discuss strategy progress openly and share knowledge. For example, a Full Stack Lead and instigator of the sessions explained:

> *"On Fridays, we hold a strategy feedback session to make sure that our work does not lose sight of objectives"* (int)

The CEO further explained that these sessions represent an opportunity for everyone in the organisation to reach out and help each other, so that projects don't lose control:

> *"On Friday we have a retrospective meeting to see [how progress is going], ask for help, and make sure that the projects don't get out of control"* (int)

In addition to these various, decentralised strategy discussion spaces being created, there were also other instances where TechMex was *disseminating strategic information*. For example, a number of managers and employees began finding different ways to share strategy data and information openly so that everyone in the organisation could collectively analyse and understand the business and its growth. This included sharing "*big data of markets*" (int) to help "*improve decision-making*" including deciding on growth opportunities for different parts of the business. The Head of Products and Services summarised how their role included researching markets and then ensuring data was shared across the organisation to aid strategizing and growth:

> *'We do extensive research to verify the feasibility of our expansion. We also visit and explore different markets to see if it aligns with our desired characteristics for a market and expansion, and carry out a benchmark of the landscape and key competitors … we share this information with our people to inform our progress as an organisation"* (int)

The CTO explained that members of his team had experimented with developing a 'repository of knowledge' that could be used and updated to document information and knowledge and share this across TechMex. This gradually grew and started being used widely across the organisation. It ensured that such information could be distributed as knowledge to be accessed, edited, and utilised, leading to mutual understanding of key strategic issues:

> *"[We have] a repository of knowledge. We are documenting everything including our research. We are versioning and releasing this information on a regular basis [across the organisation]. It is important for understanding our strategy … this also helps to guide how our products are formed"* (int)

Strategizing by disseminating strategic information allowed stakeholders to self-organise and find ways to collaborate and facilitate the ongoing growth of business areas. For instance, an Advanced Analytics and Blockchain Specialist explained that these approaches "*assure that the development of business lines will grow*" (int) whilst a Blockchain Development Manager said that the collaborative approaches "*will allow us to grow into new markets*" (int).

4.2. Expanding rhizomatic open strategizing outside organisational boundaries

As TechMex scaled up, participants emphasised the importance of establishing demand across current and potential business areas and markets to better understand and navigate new growth opportunities. Although internal collaboration on strategy had become widespread, the ongoing ambition for growth led to the engagement of *external stakeholders for strategy input*. One example was different teams at TechMex hosting ad hoc product discussion meetings involving a range of both internal and external stakeholders

strategizing together on key issues and forming mutual decisions. For example, it was mentioned how frequent "*developmental cycles*" (email) were a crucial means of discussing strategic issues with external stakeholders. These cycles were fluid and interactive, with many employees and external stakeholders involved. They lacked a fixed structure and were organised differently by various teams depending on specific focus and need, but soon became a common method for strategizing. A Big Data and Analytics Lead explained, for instance, how they had used a design thinking approach in some instances to guide the cycles:

> "*We do design thinking for two things: First, we use it to design our internal prototypes and development teams can detect some opportunities based on the technology that we are testing and developing. We then start to ideate [with external stakeholders] … to be able to obtain a prototype, a proof of concept and then present it to the product or sales team to push out to markets*" (int)

The CEO highlighted that the cycles met the need for "*close interaction with clients and consumers in understanding demand*" (con) and also emphasised that external stakeholders were involved throughout stages of strategizing:

> "*The technological team detects an opportunity, and we begin to ideate and test the concept with them [with clients] … we include the client all the way through to inform our decision-making*" (int)

The Head of Products and Services also outlined that having consumers involved throughout different stages of strategizing was important so that their specific needs could be better understood and integrated into decisions:

> "*We invite them [clients] to take part in meetings and product sessions to understand their needs in detail and identify what they want from our products*"(int)

The CEO shared how approaches such as design thinking had been organised amongst teams inside TechMex initially, but that it was when external stakeholders, such as clients, were included that they began to get greater value from the practice. This presented an interesting tension with internal open strategizing and where there was a need for diverse ideas that could be brought by those external to TechMex to tackle potential knowledge gaps required for further growth:

> "*We use it [design thinking] to design our internal prototypes, for example [product name] … we start to ideate to be able to obtain a prototype, a proof of concept … however, up to now this has not been effective, as you see, [product name] has issues, we need someone to help us do this … what has worked for us with some customers such as [client name] is that they come with a specific need and can problem solve for that need*" (int)

Having these frequent discussions with external stakeholders was not only pertinent to understanding strategic issues such as demand and market requirements but also for TechMex *forming external strategic partnerships*. Participants mentioned that the organisation had started being part of "*partnerships with consortia*" (int) which included smaller and larger software companies that collectively share ideas and build "*strategic synergies*" (int). The importance of building these relationships was emphasised by TechMex's CEO who highlighted the need to have "*knowledge and constant investigation for developing strategic partnerships*" (doc). The Head of Products and Services similarly stated that "*we have growing relationships with a number of academics, public bodies, and consultancy firms*" (int) demonstrating the various ways that the organisation were involved in engaging external stakeholders in strategy.

One example was several managers and employees inviting contacts from other national firms to informally discuss potential partnerships. This began with some employees reaching out to establish opportunities and others following suit. For instance, a Sales Manager explained how this involved sharing strategic information with other organisations to locate mutual strategic opportunities and how this had sometimes led to fluid, self-organised brainstorming sessions:

> "*It was important for us to explore how we [with partners] might develop robust projects directly with potential clients. We were brainstorming and just seeing what happened, but it was based on trust too as we shared a lot with them*" (int).

One such collaboration led to TechMex becoming an independent software vendor (ISV) partner for a technology giant in the USA. A Product Manager also explained how a collaboration led to some employees at TechMex and another organisation developing a product that was ready to be pushed further to market:

> "*[During collaboration] the product was handed to us as a demo, with a very limited version and we have developed a robust project along with [partner name], who were very interested in a wider reach, and a strategy that goes as far as marketing and developing relationships with decision-makers at high levels*" (int)

TechMex was being more transparent about its current strategic activities too and was beginning to share more updates externally with the hope of forming partnerships. For example, a number of employees began taking part in engagement opportunities at leading universities as a pragmatic way of sharing information and insights about the organisation. In turn, this offered the opportunity to learn from these universities about their own research and innovation activities, that might eventually benefit TechMex's strategic endeavours. This was explained by the CEO in relation to the unique knowledge universities possess, and how these institutions can provide value for growing organisations in developing countries like TechMex:

> "*There is a lack of knowledge* [*in Mexico*] *which is rare [this lack of knowledge] in developed countries. At* [name of *UK/US universities*] *there are MScs and doctoral programs specialised in AI and emerging technology, and the level of knowledge is much more advanced. Investing in these research areas is where we can develop new methods*" (int)

Participants also mentioned other examples where they had been involved in engagement activities, including a number of employees who had "*attended and participated in many technology conferences, especially in [the] US and Mexico*" (int) to share insights

about strategic issues to increase visibility.

4.3. Co-existence of rhizomatic open strategizing and arborescent open strategizing

As growth continued over time, TechMex's founders and senior management began to recognise the importance of having *"more clarity of future goals and objectives"* (int). This was particularly important as the organisation began to encounter activities perceived as being high-risk, as *"every action has its consequences, and if the company wants to expand then risk is there, and we need to delegate correctly"* (int). The CTO stated that high-risk international growth, for example, *"requires more planning than what we have needed to do in the past"* (int), and other participants shared similar views, emphasising that increased *"due diligence was essential"* (int) as otherwise continued growth for the organised hinged on *"entering an unknown"* (int). Therefore, TechMex was focusing more on centralised, management-organised open strategizing as they navigated new and risky growth opportunities. We refer to this as *arborescent open strategizing*.

A key feature of this form of open strategizing was *increasing management control and centralisation of strategizing*. The organisation was, for example, embracing what managers labelled *"formal planning"* (int) which was focused on management taking more authority and control over open strategizing. The Head of Products and Services offered an overview of goal-setting initiatives including strategy success factors that were being used to provide more guidance from the top in open strategizing. This included ways for employees to consider more about strategic positioning, continued building of strategic relationships, and expansion to new markets. Although strategizing was still open, the new approach meant management providing more guidance and control including through defined, centralised planning cycles:

> *"We need to have a clear vision and business strategy for the next 6 months to decide the best way to invest money and time. This will minimise risk and maximise benefits; not only monetary, but in terms of positioning, image, public relationships, and market value. If you are a large company, you can invest a lot in capital when expanding to new markets, but this is not our case, so we need to do more formal planning"* (int)

A prominent high-risk issue that required a shift to centralised, management-organised open strategizing was international growth, including movement into a European market with one of the organisation's product lines. TechMex had explored expansion, but this was unviable owing to a lack of suitable internal expertise, as also explained by the CEO:

> *"There are still many decision-makers in companies who are afraid of new technologies and not only AI, even cloud. There are laws in [target country] which limited access to cloud in certain situations and there is a lack of knowledge, so we realised that [target country] particularly requires a certain process to be able to sell there, and this does not happen [expansion into target country for TechMex]"* (int)

Therefore, TechMex was realising that such failures meant management had to have more control and oversight, making strategizing more centralised so the whole organisation could better understand opportunities and risks. A key example of arborescent open strategizing was the intervention by top management in what they labelled *"market research meetings"* (email) which were focused on the *"discovery of opportunities and threats in the [target] market"* (int) and the intention was *"coordination with different areas at our company"* (email). The CMO explained that these meetings, whilst open and involving stakeholders from all areas of the business, enabled management to have more control over the conversation. This included setting agendas to focus discussions and track implementation of strategic priorities over time:

> *"[We need] constant involvement with the technical area, business, marketing, and administration to ensure they are following the strategy and execution … we are doing these meetings [market research] now so they know what to expect in their work and so everyone can discuss their duties, problems, and how we can progress the strategy [priorities]"* (int)

The Head of Products and Services expressed how these meetings were important given that larger-scale international expansion was a key goal, and that having more managerial control and centralisation of inclusive strategy meetings provided an 'agenda' which was important in guiding strategizing:

> *"Expansion and globalisation are a natural step in the technological world. Of course, it brings financial and legal risks, but the team is sufficiently solid, and these [meetings] have an agenda now and are making us prepared to overcome challenges and threats and make this company a strong international competitor in the business lines it focuses on"* (int)

As a further example, the CMO highlighted the role of new board meetings which had a formal agenda for oversight of strategy implementation, including reviewing the progress of strategic projects. Although board meetings are often 'closed' in nature, management ensured continued openness by sharing the content of these with all stakeholders in the organisation. This ensured quick and effective dissemination of strategy and opportunities for further discussion across the whole organisation, guided by board meeting agendas and drop-in discussions. This shows an interesting parallel to the aforementioned Scrum meetings (particularly the use of 'sprints'), but with agenda-setting guiding the meetings which were more controlled in terms of scope and participation:

> *"Every week we have a board meeting where we review the progress, challenges, [and] individual projects. We also present Gantt diagrams, and we deploy progress [to other employees] through a sprint [short meetings], to address alerts quickly and keep moving forward on all projects"* (int)

Therefore, although openness remained key to strategizing (e.g., creating strategy discussion spaces, and ways of sharing strategy

data/information), arborescent open strategizing meant that some practices were more centralised and management-organised. However, the CEO explained that maintaining TechMex's focus on finding innovative ways to collaborate on strategic issues, as had been a benefit of rhizomatic open strategizing as the organisation accomplished rapid growth, was also important and must be aligned with the emerging need for centralised, management-organised open strategizing. They frequently described this as a move towards having a guiding *"corporate strategy"* (int). This involved *using co-existing forms of open strategizing*, in that, although arborescent open strategizing was now important, there was still a need to maintain rhizomatic open strategizing where appropriate:

> *"We have to constantly improve our technology and processes and maintain a strategy focused on innovation … Our corporate strategy and [existing] culture [ways of strategizing] need to be aligned"* (int)

Other participants also stressed that changes to their strategizing approach did not mean that their focus on rhizomatic open strategizing ceased. Participants mentioned that rhizomatic open strategizing activities both internally and externally had continued, including how *"the clients still participate throughout the different phases of the product generation: prototyping, testing, and iteration"* (int) and how *"besides [changes to strategizing], our meetings and daily sprints are routinised behaviours"* (int). These decentralised, self-organised practices were being balanced with controlled open strategizing guided by managers. An Artificial Intelligence Lead stressed that a tension of being open and having more centralisation in strategy discussions was clear, and that they must not neglect their focus on current ways of collaborating, including with clients:

> *"We need an aligned growth strategy in every sense, for example, we need to plan a dual structure [use of both rhizomatic and arborescent open strategizing] in such a way that we can impact new markets whilst we develop, research, and continue innovating in the markets we have become established in from the beginning"* (int)

Rhizomatic and arborescent forms thus co-existed at TechMex for both continued exploration and accomplishment of growth and for addressing new, high-risk growth opportunities.

5. Discussion and contributions

In response to our research question, we have developed a model as shown in Fig. 3. Rather than demonstrating a linear strategy and scaling-up process, our model instead captures how rhizomatic and arborescent forms of open strategizing represent a dynamic interplay between their distinct characteristics and how these are used by organisations for navigating rapid growth.

Our model shows how TechMex used rhizomatic open strategizing to explore and accomplish rapid growth opportunities (*Point A*). This was a decentralised and self-organised approach to strategizing (*Point B*) which, as participants noted, minimised micro-management and bureaucracy. Several open strategizing practices emerged in this decentralised and self-organised manner, from having short strategy discussions with various formats to establishing ways of sharing strategy information. With growth, the organisation also recognised the need to capture advantages derived from strategizing with those outside organisational boundaries too (e. g., Whittington et al., 2011). This demonstrated inter-organisational strategizing (e.g., Seidl and Werle, 2018). In particular, the use of design thinking for prototyping extends insights that have emphasised the potential of such techniques in strategizing, particularly in "how strategy gets opened up to new voices, such as those of customers" (Knight et al., 2020, p.37). This also helped the organisation to develop new strategic relationships for open strategizing (Chesbrough and Appleyard, 2007; DeSantola and Gulati, 2017). Therefore, there was a need for diverse ideas that could be brought by those external to TechMex to tackle potential knowledge gaps that would help advance growth.
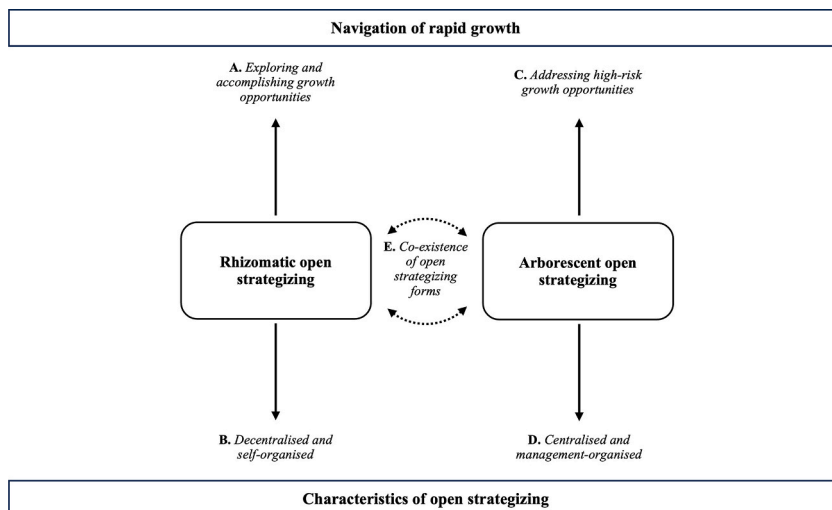

Fig. 3. The use of open strategizing as organisations navigate rapid growth.

However, as TechMex continued to grow, participants expressed a tension in how the organisation needed to address high-risk growth opportunities (*Point C*). This was particularly important to TechMex adopting arborescent open strategizing. Specifically, in navigating rapid growth this form of open strategizing was centralised with heightened control in that it was management-organised (*Point D*). This included varied use of goal- and agenda-setting to guide inclusive strategy discussions (e.g., Luedicke et al., 2017; Morton et al., 2020). There were also instances where management controlled the scope of participation, such as in new board meetings, but then shared outputs from these discussions and established different ways for employees to discuss these further. Arborescent open strategizing co-existed with rhizomatic open strategizing (*Point E*) the latter of which had and continued to help the organisation accomplish growth in existing areas. In contrast, the former could address emerging higher-risk growth opportunities. Ultimately, our model shows how open strategizing is used during rapid growth (Appleyard and Chesbrough, 2017; Gegenhuber and Dobusch, 2017) including the specific role and characteristics of rhizomatic and arborescent open strategizing. It also illustrates how such strategizing endures and changes (DeSantola and Gulati, 2017) as organisations navigate growth opportunities.

Our first contribution is to the limited but promising body of literature in management that explores rhizomatic and arborescent assemblages in organising, using Deleuze and Guattari's (1987) rhizome–tree distinction. We use this "theoretical toolkit" (Gehman et al., 2023, p.289) to conceptualise and compare diverse forms of open strategizing and their role in rapid growth. This approach helps us to understand not only how open strategizing is used to navigate rapid growth but also how it changes as organisations scale-up. Our work complements prior open strategy literature that places strategizing on a continuum of 'closed' to 'open' (Dobusch et al., 2019; Morton, 2023; Vaara and Rantakari, 2024) including hierarchical (e.g., Mack and Szulanski, 2017), community-based (e.g., Plotnikova et al., 2021), and even 'radical' forms (e.g., Luedicke et al., 2017). We extend this by showing that open strategizing can be decentralised and self-organised, as well as more centralised and management-organised, and how these forms can co-exist. This aligns with Deleuze and Guattari's assertion about the harmony between rhizomatic and arborescent systems: "there are knots of arborescence in rhizomes, and rhizomatic offshoots in roots" (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987, p.2). In management research, the existence of the two systems has been suggested as a form of isomorphism (Hsu, 2022) which our work reveals empirically and in the context of open strategy. Our insights also reveal how openness can manifest in various forms with different degrees of managerial control (e.g., Mack and Szulanski, 2017; Dobusch et al., 2019; Whittington and Yakis-Douglas, 2020).

A second contribution of our work extends prior literature on open strategizing that has explored its role in relation to rapid growth (Appleyard and Chesbrough, 2017), including in new ventures (Gegenhuber and Dobusch, 2017). We provide finer-grained insights into our theorised two forms of open strategizing and their use in navigating growth. We unpack our proposed tension or 'dilemma' of managing open strategizing in such contexts. While open strategizing can be beneficial for growth, organisations may need to adapt and increase managerial control as growth occurs (Cardinal et al., 2004; Mack and Szulanski, 2017; Amrollahi and Rowlands, 2018; Lee, 2021). This need for control can conflict with the resource-intensive nature of open strategy, leading to a potential "dysfunctional escalation of openness" (Hautz et al., 2017, p.301). Organisations may need to partially revert to more 'closed' strategizing to "secure greater control" (Appleyard and Chesbrough, 2017, p.310) or to free up resources (Gegenhuber and Dobusch, 2017). Our case shows that while open strategy changes with growth, existing rhizomatic open strategizing can co-exist with arborescent open strategizing that is based on heightened centralisation and is management-organised. The adaptation, particularly for high-risk growth opportunities, illustrates the importance of balancing self-organised approaches with necessary managerial control. This is akin to open strategizing becoming a 'time bomb' ripe for reconsideration during growth (Alexy et al., 2021; Schou, 2023, p.716). This also responds to calls for research on how decision-makers manage open organising (and strategizing) when facing a lack of authority and control (Splitter et al., 2023a).

Lastly, our work contributes to the literature on growth and scaling-up. Previous studies have called for exploration into how aspects of organising and strategizing endure during rapid growth, whether conditions from inception are embedded or require adaptation (DeSantola and Gulati, 2017). For instance, there have been calls to better understand how and why priorities in organising and strategizing change with growth, including in times of increasing complexity (Alexy et al., 2021). Our study shows that while open strategizing endures, it simultaneously faces change as organisations navigate the challenges of rapid growth. Specifically, this challenge involves addressing high-risk growth opportunities (Motley et al., 2023). We demonstrate that both endurance and change are key for organisations (DeSantola and Gulati, 2017) as they use open strategizing in different ways to navigate growth. Specifically, we show that exploring and accomplishing growth through rhizomatic open strategizing is beneficial. However, as organisations face high-risk growth opportunities the nature of openness needs to shift, to some extent, to arborescent open strategizing. This discussion also aligns with work on the design of organisations during growth (e.g., Alexy et al., 2021), showing that while open strategizing may persist, it may also require adaptation and for forms to co-exist.

6. Conclusion

We identify practical implications from our work. Broadly, it demonstrates how organisations can use open strategizing to aid or complement growth imperatives. In doing so, our work also attends to a challenge for organisations in maintaining organising and strategizing over time. Specifically, while open strategizing can be beneficial during growth, how it is used may need to change, especially with high-risk growth. This offers direct guidance to managers in growing organisations. We also recognise that this work does have certain boundary conditions. Our case was a new venture which adopted specific strategizing approaches and, this considered, open strategizing might manifest in different ways in other organisations. Further, cultural differences in new ventures dependent on location, founders' personality, and preferences, amongst other considerations will likely impact the nature, and degree, of open strategizing and how this might present. However, we expect our findings will transfer to other settings such as organisations of comparable size or in similar or adjacent industries. In response, future research might choose to examine whether our findings hold in

similar or different settings, where stakeholders' principles and focus on strategizing has a diverse composition. Another opportunity for future research involves studying the use of open strategy in organisations over longer periods of growth, including as they reach more maturity along their life-cycle, to gain a more expansive, longitudinal picture of how open strategizing might aid scaling and how it might change with time. This focus on the role of open strategizing, and indeed other forms of openness, in relation to growth is an exciting area that offers fruitful potential in the future. Further, while we draw on the work of Deleuze and Guattari (e.g., 1983; 1987) we do so at quite a general level of analysis and acknowledge the potential to go deeper into the dynamics of rhizomatic and arborescent strategizing including during growth. We look forward to research that continues to shed light on this important yet understudied area at the intersection of open strategy and rapid growth.

CRediT authorship contribution statement

Josh Morton: Writing – review & editing, Writing – original draft, Supervision, Methodology, Formal analysis, Conceptualization. **Rocío Iglesias Ruiz:** Writing – original draft, Investigation, Formal analysis, Data curation.

Data availability

The data that has been used is confidential.

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