

I SEE ME

A narrative research on doing management consulting with theatre

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Abstract

The objective of the research is to explore the practice of business theatre as a particular way of *doing* management consulting. My aim is to make sense how business theatre is done at the intersection of management consulting and participatory theatre. The point of the study is to gain insight into business theatre by combining theories from management consulting and theatre through the doing perspective and the concepts of practice, practitioner and praxis.

The data for the study is constructed by conducting interviews and by observing. Following the narrative research tradition, I have constructed an analysis in the form of a narrative inspired by ethnographical drama. The narrative is a way to tell the story of how business theatre is done and who are the practitioners involved, in this way describing and interpreting the practice of business theatre.

Based on the findings, management consulting is done with theatre by creating a space where the participants can actively take part in jointly constructing solutions to the organizational challenges. Also, dramatizing everyday organizational life with professional actors the routinized way of doing can be made visible. Moreover, theatre creates a space where alternative ways of doing can be tried out then and there within the safety of playfulness. From the practice-based doing perspective, when mirroring organizational life, the organization is not only being described, it is also constructed in the interaction.

Keywords business theatre, management consulting, participatory theatre, the 'doing' perspective, narrative research

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Tiivistelmä

Tutkimuksen tavoitteena on tutkia businesssteatteria käytänneteoreettiseen tekemisen näkökulmaan nojautuen eräänlaisena tapana tehdä liikkeenjohdon konsultointia. Tarkoitukseni on ymmärtää, kuinka liikkeenjohdon konsultointia tehdään juuri teatterin avulla. Tutkimuksen avulla pyrin rakentamaan ymmärrystä businesssteatterin käytänteestä liikkeenjohdon konsultoinnin ja teatterin teoriapohjia hyödyntäen tekemisen näkökulmasta katsottuna.

Aineisto on tuotettu sekä haastattelemalla että havainnoimalla. Narratiivista tutkimusperinnettä seuraten tutkimuksen analyysi on kirjoitettu tarinamuodossa etnografisen draaman innoittamana. Narratiivisuus merkitsee tutkimuksessa tapaa kertoa miten businesssteatteria tehdään, ketkä tekevät, tällä tavalla kuvaillen ja samalla tulkiten businesssteatterin käytännettä.

Tutkimuksen perusteella voin sanoa, että liikkeenjohdon konsultointia tehdään teatterin avulla luomalla tila ja mahdollisuus työntekijöille osallistua ratkaisujen määrittämiseen organisaatioissa. Organisaation arjen dramatisointi, tai peilaaminen, ammattinäyttelijöiden avulla voi auttaa tekemään tiedostamatonta ja näkymätöntä tekemisen tapaa näkyväksi. Teatteri myös mahdollistaa vaihtoehtoisten toimintatapojen kokeilemisen leikillisyyden avulla. Lopuksi, käytänneteoreettisesta näkökulmasta katsottuna organisaatioita ei vain kuvata dramatisoinnilla, vaan tuotetaan siinä hetkessä vuorovaikutuksessa.

Avainsanat businesssteatteri, liikkeenjohdon konsultointi, osallistava teatteri, tekemisen näkökulma, narratiivinen tutkimus

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Introduction: where to?

Prologue

Two women and a man sit around the office table having their usual morning coffee on a typical Monday morning. They work for a gardening company based in Central Finland.

They are casually chatting about how they spent their weekend when their manager enters the room. She is about to reveal big news to them. The manager announces that they have been selected as change agents for the upcoming renewal of machinery. They have been selected to educate and guide their colleagues on how to use the new machines.

The manager leaves the room and the murmuring instantly starts between the employees.

"What just happened?"

"What do I actually need to do, then?"

"What did she mean by becoming a change agent?"

"Okay and cut!"

*The manager then starts talking to the audience. But she is not the manager anymore. She steps out of the role of the manager and assumes the part of the director of a workshop done by *Busnessteatteri*, an organization applying theatre in their management consulting services. On the opposite side of the stage an audience of around forty people carefully observe the scene played out to them. The scene is based on the ongoing change their organization is currently facing.*

This short narrative is an example of how business theatre is done in action. It is based on a real workshop that took place in June 2016. You might wonder what this thing called business theatre is all about. I was certainly perplexed by this concept when I first came across it. Yet, these feelings of bafflement and curiousness were exactly the starting points for this master's thesis. In this introductory chapter I start to unravel the world of business theatre, the main character at the center of the stage. The concept of business theatre refers to two separate

points. Firstly, business theatre is the generally established concept used to describe a method combining theatrical tools for developing organizations. Secondly, *Businessteatteri* is the name of a Finnish organization doing management consulting with business theatre¹. This particular organization is the context for the research, as I study how business theatre is done with Process Theatre. Process Theatre is one of the methods provided by the *Businessteatteri* organization where professional actors dramatize scenes reflecting the everyday life of the client organization. The audience gets to direct the actors to try out new ways to do and say things in the scenes, thus creating a kind of social laboratory with the help of theatre.

I have chosen to unravel the mystery of business theatre from two ends, the ones of management consulting and theatre. I am interested in the peculiar union of management consulting and theatre, business theatre being the melting pot for the two worlds. The vantage point for the study is to view business theatre as a particular way of *doing* management consulting with theatrical methods instead of looking at it the other way around. This perspective is justified, as the business objectives are more prominent than the artistic ones.² These two perspectives are relevant as the practitioners of *Businessteatteri* perceive and discuss their services as a way of doing management consulting. To clarify, my intention with this study is not to try to define *Businessteatteri* as a type of management consulting company per se. Instead, management consulting and theatre are the theoretical perspectives I have assumed for the research. These two perspectives provide the theory and the concepts for me to explore and make sense of the practice of business theatre.³

Raising the curtain on the research, business theatre can be understood as a particular way of doing management consulting. The management consulting industry has grown rapidly in the past few decades leading to an economically significant industry (Engwall & Kipping 2013; Puutio & Kykyri 2015; Clark & Fincham 2002). Instead of being static in nature, management consultancy is being interpreted, shaped and negotiated as the consultants do their everyday work trying to better meet the needs of organizations (Clark & Fincham 2002, 2). This notion

¹ Throughout the research report, I use business theatre to refer to the concept on a general level and *Businessteatteri* to refer to the Finnish organization doing business theatre.

² I will discuss the pragmatist and aesthetical perspectives to doing business theatre in more depth in the sub-chapter 'Educational potential of participatory theatre'.

³ By saying *making sense* of business theatre I mean interpreting the practice and discovering how it could be perceived and researched instead of attempting to make claims about what business theatre *is*, which represents a positivist approach.

is the bridge to doing management consulting with theatre. In a more general sense, theatre and art have started to poke through the traditional boundaries, one manifestation being the blending of theatre into business (Korhonen 2014; Ventola 2013; Rusanen 2014). Finally, as you may have noticed already, I discuss business theatre as a way of *doing* management consulting. Using the particular word is not by any means a coincidence, as the concept is at the very core of the research. Assuming the 'doing' lens (Whittington 2006; Jarzabkowski et al. 2007) allows me to look at how business theatre is done and who are the ones doing it, thus helping me explore the practice of business theatre.

I argue that the research is relevant looking from both academic and practical perspectives, not forgetting my personal interest in the subject. To start, it is justified to study a more unconventional way of doing management consulting. The interplay of theatre and business has been researched from the theoretical framework of theatre as an educational medium in organizations (for example Jansson 2015). However, the practice of business theatre has not been researched before, nor has the learning potential of theatre been studied from the perspective of management consulting. In addition, process consulting, being one interpretation of management consulting, provides a novel perspective when combined with theatre.

Besides the gap in what has been researched, the theoretical framework of looking at business theatre as a particular way of *doing* management consulting brings something new to the table. The work of management consultants and what they actually do has been an under-researched area so far (Kykyri 2008; Clark & Fincham 2002; Puutio 2010; Sturdy et al. 2009; Lambrechts et al. 2009). In addition, the theatre aspect explored through the doing lens proves out to be an intriguing combination. Finally, the methodological approach of narrative research in the form of constructing an analysis in the form of a narrative brings a new dimension to the research regarding how the study is conducted.

Secondly, the purpose is to conduct a research that would provide the practitioners of *Businesssteatteri* with some practical insight. With the study I wish to provide a fresh point of view for the team presenting my interpretation of the practice drawing on the observations and interviews. In addition, exploring how business theatre is done could prove to be beneficial when discussing about the services and arguing for the use of the rather

unconventional method in management consulting business with their clients. More often than not, the ones buying the consulting services can turn out to be rather skeptical to the theatrical, non-traditional methods of educating (Rusanen 2014, 147).⁴

Finally, I would be lying if I said that the union of consulting and theatre did not make the researcher in me tick. Yearning to make sense of business theatre was the spark igniting the research journey in the first place. Also, in the fall of 2016 I enrolled to a study program of 'Theatre and education',⁵ which forms the minor studies for my master's degree. I believe that the program I embarked on last September was an integral factor in helping me to familiarize myself with the whole new world of theatre. This excitement towards the research, however, is something I have had to be reflexive over during the research journey. The interest towards business theatre has made the journey a meaningful one, yet I have had to pay attention not to lose the critical eye because of this enthusiastic attitude.

Shaping the question

I explore business theatre as something that combines management consulting and theatre, a particular (and peculiar) way of doing management consulting. The objective of this master's thesis is to make sense of the practice of business theatre by studying how business theatre is done in the form of Process Theatre by the practitioners of *Businesssteatteri*. The meaning of the study is to connect theories and perspectives in a way that has not been done before. I had to put a great deal of effort into coming to grips with what is even a meaningful way to approach business theatre and realize what I do not yet understand.

Moving on to the research question of the study, during the research journey I have kept coming back to the question guiding the study as it has continued to be shaped and sharpened throughout the research journey. Honing and reformulating the research question is indeed an integral part of conducting a successful study and something that should be done iteratively throughout the research (Eriksson & Kovalainen 2008, 37–38). The preliminary

⁴ I would like to point out that the research has not been done as a commission, which has allowed a set of free hands to me as a researcher. I have been able to determine for myself what to focus on in the thesis instead of being given strict frames or objectives for the study.

⁵ 'Basic studies in Theatre and Education' is a study module provided by the Open University at the University of the Arts of Helsinki. The course took place from September 2016 till May 2017. The module introduces the students to the central themes in theatre studies from an educational perspective.

research questions were concerned with how the practice of business theatre could be approached, what takes place in a business theatre workshop, how the participants experience the workshop and what type of feedback the participants give to the practitioners. Moving on with the research, the focus of the study became more precise as I went back and forth between the data and the literature. The research question for the study is:

How is management consulting done with theatre in the context of organizations?

The question helps me make sense of how this certain type of management consulting is done with theatre. Again, I am interested in the intersection of the two perspectives. The questions helping me to answer the main research question are based on a practice-based doing perspective (Whittington 2006; Jarzabkowski et al. 2007). I will look at:

What is the practice of Process Theatre like? (Practice)

Who are involved in doing of Process Theatre? (Practitioner)

How is Process Theatre done? (Praxis)

Finally, I aim to gain insight regarding the rationale behind the use of theatre in management consulting, which I see is embedded in the main research question. By exploring how management consulting can be done with theatre, I also touch upon what theatre enables as a method. I have had a unique position as the researcher having observed the doing of business theatre and conducted interviews with both the members of *Businessteatteri* and the participants of the workshop. Thus, my intention is to draw from these different viewpoints when trying to make sense of how business theatre is done.

Plotting the plot

What is to come regarding the research report? It is safe to say that the narrative research approach pervades the whole research report instead of merely being a method of analysis. I have attempted to write the report into a compelling story about how the research was conducted. The report starts off with looking at the relevant academic literature moving from the more general level towards the specific. I first shed a light on how management consulting has been discussed in the literature. Then I introduce process consulting as a specific way of doing management consulting. Moving on, I take a step to the world of theatre by first making

sense of the field and finally looking at what the literature says about theatre and the educational potential it carries. Finally, I propose a framework based on the doing perspective, which acts as a lens for the data and combines the theoretical perspectives of management consulting and theatre.

The methodology chapter comprises of a narrative of conducting the research, which leans to the narrative research tradition. I start by telling about the choices involved when first starting the research journey, the context for the research, as well as describing how I constructed the data by both observing and conducting interviews. Then I move on to discussing the narrative research tradition and how I applied it to analyzing data and constructing the analysis. Finally, I discuss the evaluation of the research from the viewpoints I believe to be relevant for the research.

The analysis is in the form of a narrative and consists of two acts and six scenes altogether. The point is to zoom into the doing of business theatre in the form of Process Theatre. Act one reveals more about the origins of business theatre and tells a story of what happens before the actual Process Theatre workshop. The act focuses on what actually ends up being acted in the workshop and how the client and the *Businessteatteri* team define this together. In act two I describe what is done in the workshop. Finally, I answer the research questions by discussing the findings with the relevant literature, thus wrapping up the research report. This is the plot of the research report in a nutshell. Without further ado, let's begin with exploring the literature.

The business and theatre of business theatre

In this chapter I present the theoretical touchpoints to the practice of business theatre. One of the first questions in the research journey was to decide how to approach the practice of business theatre considering the theoretical point of view. Deciding what to include in the theoretical part (and what exclude) has been integral to the study and itself a result of conducting the research. I will touch upon this process of juggling between theory and data in more detail at the end of the methodology chapter.

You could think of the structure of this chapter as in the shape of a funnel. I will start from the broader subject of management consulting and discuss how the relevant themes have been discussed in the literature. I will then move on to explore what the literature has to say about process consulting as a way of doing management consulting. The next part is dedicated to discussing both the theatre side of business theatre, introducing the central concepts of participatory theatre and Forum Theatre, and the educational potential embedded in theatrical methods. Finally, I introduce the framework for the study, which acts as the lens for approaching data.

The mirror: management consulting

The triumphal rise of management consulting during the past few decades has led to the immense growth of the consulting industry and established its place in the business arena (Engvall & Kipping 2013; Puutio & Kykyri 2015; Williams & Rattray 2004; Clark & Fincham, 2002). Thus, management consultants have become an inseparable part of the management knowledge industry (Engvall & Kipping 2013). Kubr (2002, 3–4) argues that management consulting can be viewed through two sets of lenses, which complement each other. Firstly, it can be defined as a method of providing practical advice, to put it simply, to provide help. From this point of view consulting appears as informal, done in the day-to-day organizational life, helping out a fellow manager with some task. Secondly, it can be seen as a professional service. This view is represented by Greiner and Metzger (1983, 7), who suggest in their seminal work that *“Management consulting is an advisory service contracted for and provided to organizations by specially trained and qualified persons who assist, in an objective and independent manner, the client organization to identify management problems, analyze such*

problems, recommend solutions to these problems, and help, when requested, in the implementation of solutions”.

Is management consulting only meant for management, then? Traditionally management consulting has focused on the problems faced by the executive management, as I mentioned earlier. This started to change at the end of the last century and now consulting is offered to a wider range of organizational actors. Some consultants choose to talk about business consulting instead of management consulting, because the name paints a far too narrow picture of the profession. (Kubr 2002, 26–27.)

Greiner and Metzger (1983, 9) also offer a perhaps more realistic alternative description of the profession by saying that management consulting is basically an uncertain and evolving process done by a foreign intruder, whose job is to muddle through by solving various kinds of problems, while in the meantime trying to maintain the high standards of professionalism and fulfilling the needs of their client. One of the key ideas in Greiner and Metzger’s definition is the notion of providing a view from outside, although I would like to point out that the idea of an objective perspective is not possible from the onto-epistemological stance I lean on. To conclude, it should be noted that the nature of management consulting, what is considered to be consulting in the first place, is constantly under negotiation and being transformed (Clark & Fincham 2002, 2).

Taking a look at the history, the development of management consulting is tightly linked to the one of management practice, the problems and hot topics of management providing a business opportunity for the consultants trying to solve them (Kipping 2011, 29). Hence, the most widely accepted theory is that management consulting has its roots in the latter part of the 19th century when large-scale organizations started to rise and management was acknowledged as a distinct activity (Engwall & Kipping 2013, 87). Kipping (2002) suggests that management consulting has developed in three main waves. Management consulting can be seen to have started from the first wave of Frederick Taylor and his scientific approach to management optimizing efficacy of the organizations at the beginning of the 20th century. The next wave crashed on the shores of management by the 1950’s, consisting of consulting top management on strategy and organizational matters (*ibid.*). Some academics view this particular wave as the start of what is considered to be management consulting (McKenna

2006; 1995). This was the era ruled by McKinsey & Company and Booz and Allen. The third wave happened in the form of IT consulting companies building networks and focusing on both internal and external communication, organizations such as IBM, Accenture and Deloitte being examples of this wave. (Engvall & Kipping 2013)

Today management consulting has become an essential feature in modern day management and our society (Engvall & Kipping 2013, 84) as the field of consultancy has expanded vastly in the past 20 years (Puutio & Kykyri 2015, 16). Management consulting companies are only one piece of a puzzle in the context of management knowledge construction. Consulting companies together with management education (mostly in business schools), the day-to-day practicing of management in organizations and management publications all interact with one another, negotiating what direction the practice of management is heading to (Engvall & Kipping 2013, 84–87).

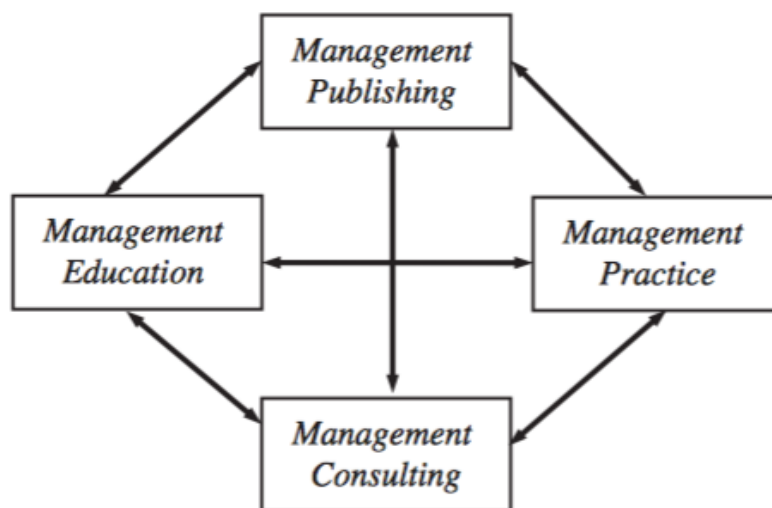


Figure 1: The production of management knowledge (Engvall & Kipping 2002, 5)

Regarding the literature, there is a fair share of material that concentrates on describing the best practices of the industry, managerial literature written by consultants to consultants, especially written before the mid-1990's (Sturdy et al. 2009, 247). The research attracting the interest of the academics has been concentrating on the consulting industry (Engvall & Kipping 2013; Kipping & Clark 2012; Kipping 2002; McKenna 2006), the relationship between the client and the consultant (Alvesson et al. 2009) and management consulting in management knowledge construction (Werr 2002; Sturdy & Wright 2011), to mention a few.

Clark and Fincham (2002) suggest two ways of looking at management consultancies: an organizational development point of view and a critical perspective. Organizational development is an approach stemming from behavioral science and it is concerned with improving the effectiveness of the client organization with a planned intervention (Clark & Fincham 2002, 5). However, the practice has also been inspected from a critical perspective from the 1990's, brought on by the ever-growing power of consulting companies in that era (Sturdy et al. 2009). Kykyri (2008, 11) argues that the critical perspective to management consulting derives from the academics, some of them having a clearly negative stance towards the profession (Alvesson & Johansson 2002; Clark & Fincham 2002). Articles like *Consulting Demons* (Pinault 2001) and *House of Lies* (Kihn 2005) are extreme yet depicting titles of this viewpoint. Fincham (1999) suggests two perspectives to the critical approach to consulting: strategic and structural. The first one means that the researcher focuses on the discursive practices to how consultants make themselves appear useful in the eyes of the client. The structural perspective shifts the focus to the macro-level by viewing the consultants and their methods as products of their context, that is the time and place they are situated in.

For example, consulting has been looked at from the point of view of how management fashions are produced (Abrahamsson 1996) by management gurus (Huczynski 1993) and the pompous language filled with fancy yet obscure terms, which Williams and Rattray (2004) name "consultobabble". Also, consultants have also been suggested to act as "merchants of meaning" influencing the process of how work issues are framed and how the meaning is created in organizational life (Czarniawska-Joerges 1990). The dramaturgical metaphor to consulting is also quite intriguing considering my research. The approach is mainly discussed by Timothy Clark (Clark & Salaman 1996;1998, Clark 1995) and the central idea is that management consulting can be seen as a dramatic activity where the consultant manages the impressions to achieve credibility in the eyes of the client. To conclude, this critical stance to management consulting has challenged the taken-for-granted assumptions about the practice. Yet it seems like the dichotomy in managerial literature has left the actual work of what consultants do in the shadows (Kykyri 2008, 11; Alvesson & Johansson 2002). The more neutral approach towards management consulting has been a starting point for the study, although I would say that no approach could ever be neutral in the purest sense of the word.

The what, who and how: three perspectives on management consulting

What

One central viewpoint on management consulting is the question of what is being consulted in the first place, what is paid attention to and what is not. Firstly, Greiner and Poulfelt (2005, 50–53) present the following areas where consulting in general is being done: information technology, strategy and organization, marketing, operations management and human resources. Nadler and Slywotsky (2005, 75) share Greiner and Poulfelt's view by suggesting that management consulting has traditionally been seen to have two separate branches, namely those of strategy and organization. Nadler and Slywotski (2005, 75–93) describe strategy consulting as consisting of consultants helping clients to pursue value using managerial models and tools. In organizational consulting the core idea is to look at organizations as complex systems with social dynamics, organizational structures as well as technical systems. (*ibid.*)

Puutio (2000,14) on the other hand argues that organizational consulting has been given many meanings in the literature and can thus be seen as a general concept to describe the joint effort in which the expert from outside or within the organization engages with the client to either solve a certain problem or reach a goal of some sort. According to Fagenson and Burke (1990, 286) there are two different aspects to organizational development: things and people. In the former the consulting is intended to develop the organizational structure, the tasks and the performance. The human side of things consists of the needs and values of employees and enhancing the group processes. According to Puutio (*op.cit.*) both management consulting and organizational development are concepts used in the literature around organizational consulting, organizational development establishing its place in the 1960's and 1970's stemming from behavioral sciences. The organizational development approach is concerned with increasing an organization's effectiveness through planned interventions (Kykyri 2008, 11).

To sum up, there is clearly conceptual ambiguity about what constitutes as management consulting, organizational consulting and organizational development. Nadler and Slywotski (2005) perceive management consulting as the general construct, under which strategy consulting and organizational consulting fall. Puutio (2000) on the other hand discusses

organizational consulting as the main construct, whereas management consulting and organizational development are different ways to do organizational consulting. In addition, it is fruitful to notice that the underlying assumptions of what is the object of consulting and what is considered to be *good* consulting is hardly discussed in the positivist and managerial literature, but are taken for granted, which in turn has been the starting point for the critical perspective (Clark & Fincham 2002, 4–7). Moreover, besides the question of what is being consulted, the question of client varies depending on the viewpoint. This brings us to the next topic of the client-consultant relationship.

Who

When talking about the client in the consulting context it is essential to ask who the client is to begin with and what their role is in the consulting process. When one gets a haircut, the roles are pretty straightforward: the professional hairdresser does the cutting and coloring while the customer's job is to sit tight and be served. Yet in management consulting the roles tend not to be that clear. Alvesson et al. (2009, 253) argue that consulting is a dynamic relationship between these two types of actors: consultants and clients. Only discussing the consultants' side or taking their perspective means disregarding the other side of the coin. They also add that the client organization, like all organizations, has a number of people inside it with different interests and pursuing different goals.

A classic typology, proposed by Schein (1999, 64–65), consists of six types of customers in a consulting project. *Contact clients* are the ones who reach the consultant first. *Intermediate clients*, on the other hand, are the ones getting involved in interviews and other activities. *Primary clients* are the group of people that the consulting is meant for in the first place and they are the ones who tend to pay the consulting bill as well. *Unwitting clients* are members of the organization connected to the primary clients who are being affected by the consulting intervention but are not aware of this impact. *Ultimate clients* are not directly concerned by the consulting, but who must be taken into consideration, for example the whole organization or community where the organization operates. Finally, *involved non-clients* have conflicting goals and tend to hinder the process. (*ibid.*)

This model acknowledges the client as an integral part of the consulting process, yet it has been criticized for being static, once again seeing the client only with the eyes of the

consultant, as well as ignoring the politics inherently involved in the process (Alvesson et al. 2009, 255). For example, the client might use consulting services in order to legitimize changes in the organization (Engvall & Kipping 2002). Literature in management consulting tends to assume the perspective of the consultant focusing on what the consultant does to the client, thus either neglecting the client altogether or depicting them as a passive (and sometimes rather gullible) drifter instead of an active agent (Sturdy et al. 2009). Moreover, the client has been seen as one fixed and homogenous entity (Alvesson et al. 2009).

Nikolova et al. (2009) on the other hand propose three models of client-consultant interaction. *The expert model* represents the traditional view where the consultant is the provider of information and the client is at the receiving end, as I just discussed. In the *critical model*, this stance of expert consultants is questioned, and the focus is on how consultants use language and manage impressions to construct their position of power. Finally, in the *social learning model* consultants and clients are viewed as equals, where the role of the consultant is to be a facilitator in diagnosing and solving client's problems. (*ibid.*)

Instead of seeing clients as poor and helpless victims of big bad consultants trying to rip them off, Sturdy (1997, 390) assumes a different kind of critical stance where consulting appears as something that is done together, not as a one-way street where the consulting is imposed on the client or the client is being tricked. Puutio (2000, 18) interprets Sturdy (*op.cit.*) by stating that his focus is on the mutual relationship between the consultant and the client and how they are both part of constructing that reality with one another, then and there. Puutio (2000, 20) argues that consultants do not merely *explain* what they perceive in organizations, but they *construct* the organization when engaging in the practice of consulting even though they might convey it as objective information. This perspective stems from social constructionist thinking, which is also the philosophical standpoint for my study.

How

Another interesting viewpoint to management consultancy is provided by David Maister⁶ (1993) who has constructed the concept of a *professional service firm* to describe

⁶ David Maister is acknowledged as one of the world's leading experts on managing professional service organizations having made a career of consulting the professional service firms in a variety of fields all around the world. Maister also taught in Harwards Business School before starting a career as a consultant. (<http://about.davidmaister.com>)

organizations from different fields that deliver more or less customized projects to their clients and also involve a good amount of contact with the clients. Accounting companies, architectural firms and investment banks are a few examples of these particular types of organizations, as are management consulting companies. With the concept of professional service firm, Maister highlights in particular the difference to manufacturing companies where the rules of standardization and receptiveness apply. The guiding thought in the work is that due to the customization of projects and contact with clients, professional service firms rely heavily on the people working there, their skills and knowledge. Thus, as an implication, management should not only focus on attiring new customers but also on making sure they lure the best workforce that sticks with the firm. (*ibid.*)

Continuing, Maister (1993, 4–21) ultimately categorizes the professional service practices according to the needs of the client. He proposes that there are three main types of projects: *brains*, *grey hair* and *procedure*. Lilja and Poulfelt (2001) understand these as different operating modes of consulting practices. In *brains* projects the client faces an extremely complex and unique problem. This needs to be matched with a high level of creativity and innovation, "new solutions to new problems". What the client needs is high level expertise. In *grey hair* projects on the other hand the problem or challenge faced is somewhat familiar and the actions suggested to fix the problem usually have similarities to past projects. The key word in this type of a project is expertise. The third type, a *procedure* project, most often has a problem that is quite easily recognizable and has been encountered many times before. Efficiency is what the professional service firm can deliver. (Maister 1993, 4–21.)

Looking at management consulting as a professional service helps to assume a wider perspective to the practice by zooming out. In other words, it enables us to look at management consulting companies as organizations delivering services to their clients. After presenting these three perspectives on management consulting I will discuss process consulting as a way of doing management consulting.

The helping relationship: process consulting

Process consulting is considered in the literature to be one way of doing organizational consulting (Pietiläinen et al. 2015, 220) where the core idea is for the consultant to help the

client to help themselves (Kykyri 2008). The reason why process consulting is discussed in more depth is the fact that it came up for discussion when interviewing Merita Petäjä, one of the founders of *Businessteatteri*. She suggests that the approach is in the background of how business theatre is done. Starting from the early days of process consulting, the story starts with Edgar Schein, an American professor in social psychology, who originally launched process consulting in 1969 when publishing his seminal work of *Process Consultation: Its Role in Organizational Development*. Schein (1988, vii) originally wrote about his new approach to his fellow academics and practitioners, as he wanted to describe the way he practiced consultation and why he thought it worked well.

Schein (1988, 11) defines process consultation in the following words: *“PC is a set of activities on the part of the consultant that help the client to perceive, understand, and act upon the process events that occur in the client’s environment in order to improve the situation as defined by the client”*. Process consultation is essentially about building a helping client-consultant relationship through a continuous effort of making sense of what is going on together, in order to make co-authored choices about how to proceed (Schein 1999, 6). Schein believes that managers do not usually know, and in fact cannot be expected to know, what it is in the organization that is not working. Therefore, Schein claims that in PC it is not only the solution that the consultant helps the client with, but also, they help figure out what should be solved in the first place. (Schein 1988, 4.) Fincham and Clark (2002, 4) perceive Schein’s process consulting to be a form of the organizational development approach. Schein (1988, 1) himself sees that PC is an underlying philosophical assumption to the organizational development approach in general.

Pietiläinen et al. (2015, based on Schein 1988) on the other hand suggest that there are three modes of organizational consulting: subscriber-oriented, producer-driven and process consulting. Schein (1988, 4–7) makes a distinction between the Purchase of Expertise, the Doctor-Patient and the Process Consultation models. In the subscriber-oriented model the client purchases expert information or service from the consultant. The buyer, who is usually an individual manager in the client organization, defines the need and thus the problem. In the producer-driven model the consultant acts as a doctor doing a check over for the client as a patient. In PC joint diagnostics between the client and the consultant is at the very core. (*ibid.*)

Process Consulting has for a long time constituted only a small fragment in both the fields of organizational development and management consulting. Yet, the (perceived) complexity of organizational life combined with the criticism towards the traditional way of consulting has led to the growing interest around process consulting once again (Puutio & Kykyri 2015, 26; Lambrechts et al. 2009, 2). Pietiläinen (2015) argues that the new wave of process consulting has emerged from the early 2000s, starting from the basic ideas of Schein yet developing the frame further with the critique in mind. However, Puutio and Kykyri (2015, 23) point out that different academics have since interpreted PC from their own stances and thus it should be seen as more of a wider approach than a narrow method. Pietiläinen et al. (2015, 229) argue that even though Schein highlights the diagnostics from the individuals' point of view, in the new wave of PC a broader view is typically applied: perhaps the point is not to only help the client diagnose their problems, but to create an encouraging space for employees to participate.

For instance, Puutio and Kykyri (2015) look at process consulting from a dialogic perspective focusing on the interaction and the relationship of the client and the consultant. Lambrechts et al. (2009) have re-conceptualized process consulting from a relational practice perspective, now perceiving PC as a socially constructed activity. Lambrechts et al. (*op.cit.*, 26) suggest that: *"Through stressing practices among the actors, the context is also involved in the interaction. The consultant as an active practitioner is engaging and inviting other actors in high quality relational practices to re-construct or to re-create jointly a new social reality."*

In conclusion, what I have learnt is that it is not so much about what is claimed, but the underlying, implicit assumptions behind these claims. Process consulting, like any practice, appears completely different depending on the theoretical framework based on onto-epistemological underpinnings one has assumed or built for themselves. Thus, the doing lens I have applied in the study is in fact useful to perceive this certain form of management consulting in a fresh light. Finally, one of the points of process consulting is to bring the things not discussed into the dialogue (Argyris 1990, 6). This is where theatre comes in, making the unseen visible. In the case of business theatre, I literally mean visible. This thought acts as the bridge to the next chapter on theatre.

To mirror: theatre

It is commonly acknowledged in theatre circles, that terminology is quite a messy bundle of overlapping definitions and contradictory views as it is negotiated by people coming from different backgrounds (Rusanen 2005; Ventola 2013; Heikkinen 2002). Firstly, there are the essential concepts of *theatre* and *drama*, which are quite often used as synonyms. To some scholars they go hand in hand, yet for others they appear as contradictory concepts. I adopt a broad view on theatre proposed by Finnish drama pedagogue Anna-Lena Østern (2001, 21) who argues that theatre is a rainbow-like concept that can be defined using the words of theatre as well as drama (see also Rusanen 2002).⁷ Action leading to a theatrical performance, the final product, is theatre. Dramatic methods applied in participatory theatre fall also under the grand concept of theatre, although no performance is prepared as the point is the process itself. Østern (2001, 25) elaborates that drama is a form of participatory theatre, its own form of art, aiming at creating meanings with the help of storytelling.

Moreover, according to Østern (2001, 21) the word theatre can also refer to the physical location where the play takes place, for example the National Theatre of Finland. Drama can be used to signify only a form of literature, yet has also been given a meaning of action and used more in educational contexts. This can be seen in the fact that drama pedagogy is used more as a term than theatre pedagogy, for instance (Korhonen 2014, 13). Finally, I find it important to acknowledge that the term theatre encapsulates the essence of what the concept is ultimately about. It is something that exists, or is created, in the relationship between the ones performing and the ones observing at that particular moment in time and place (Østern 2001, 16).

To engage: participatory theatre

In 1990's the theatre scene started to develop in a new direction. The border between performers and audience began to blur (Korhonen 2014; Teerijoki & Lintunen 2001). The field of theatre can be seen to have two parts: performing and participatory theatre (Rusanen 2002, 45–47). However, Rusanen points out that the lines between them are messy rather

⁷ In the study I consistently use the concept of *theatre*, mostly as the context for the study comes from an organization called *Businesssteatteri*. Assuming Østern's broad view on the construct the concept of drama could also be used, yet for the sake of conceptual clarity I won't mix the two concepts.

than fixed. Shortly, performing theatre means that the audience does not take part in any physical form. The performers perform and the audience observes. With participatory theatre a clear line between the audience and performers cannot be drawn, as they all take part in the performance in some way or another. (*ibid.*) In this study study I will focus on the participatory side of theatre and the concept is used throughout the research. However, other relevant concepts also exist, applied theatre and applied drama, Theatre in Education (TIE) and community theatre being examples of the myriad of possible concepts used to describe theatre in other contexts than the traditional performing arts.

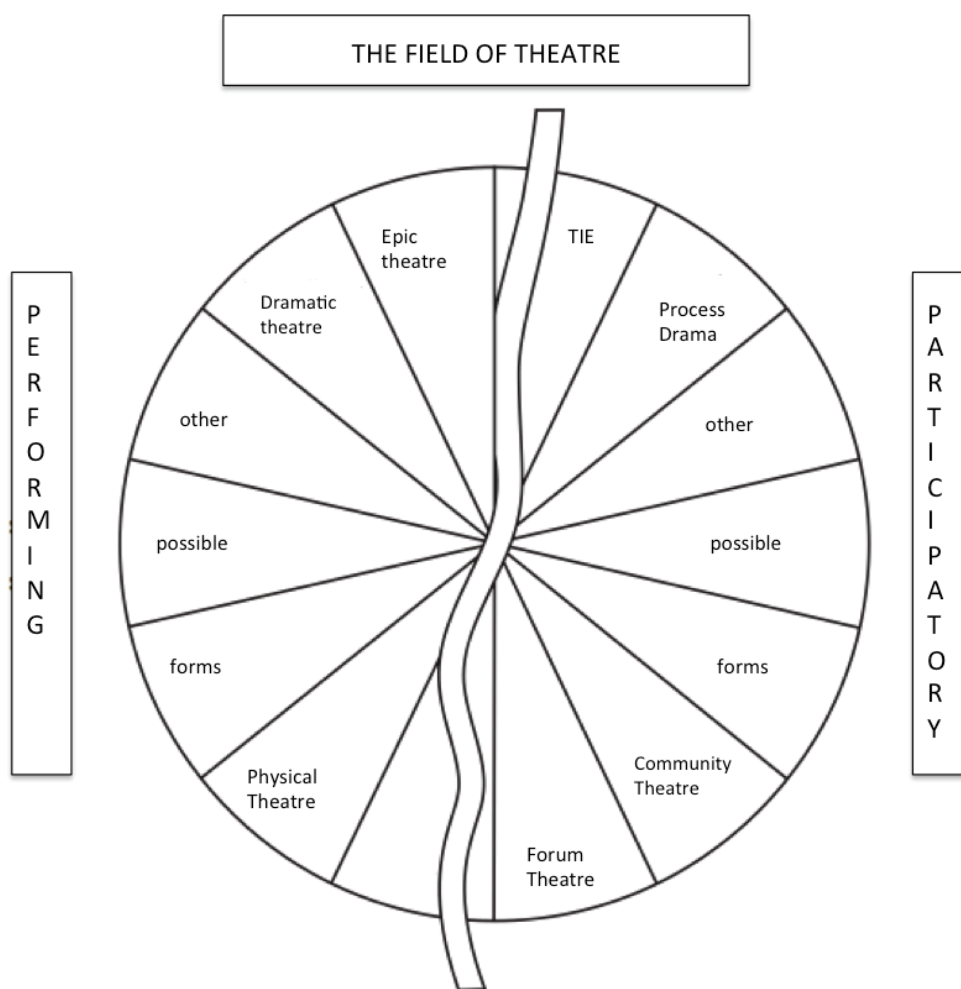


Figure 2: The field of theatre (translated from Rusanen 2002, 46)

Applied drama is referred to as drama that is done in unconventional contexts, outside the traditional theatre institutions and has a specific purpose of benefitting the individuals or communities involved (Nicholson 2005, 3–5). Teerijoki and Lintunen (2001, 131) argue that

participatory and applied theatre (or drama) are used to mean more or less the same thing. However, Rasmussen (2000 in Ventola 2013, 88) argue that different forms of theatre have typically been valued against “the real” theatre, that is, theatre as an art form. The concept “applied” is thus a manifestation of this hidden assumption. With this in mind, I choose to utilize the concept of participatory theatre. I also believe it captures the active role of the audience, thus being more accurate of a term for my research.

Teerijoki and Lintunen (2001, 131–132) argue that the field of participatory theatre contains a number of different genres that could be categorized in many different ways. Firstly, they can be categorized on the basis of their aims: educational, community-oriented or therapeutic. Secondly, they can be perceived from the dramaturgical point of view: the level of structure or text. Finally, they can be seen from the perspective of audience participation, to what extent is the audience taking part in the performance: observing and commenting or actively taking part in the performance. The different approaches share the common goals of making a change, doing and thinking differently as well as crossing borders and discussing things together rather than finding pre-packaged solutions (Korhonen 2014, 21). Rusanen (2005, 24) suggests that in participatory theatre the point is to inspect the cultural meanings of how we do things in our everyday life through roles and symbols such as voice, body, language, props, lighting, space and time. To sum up, Ventola (2013) argues that nowadays participatory theatre appears as a hybrid that molds into the specific needs of the society at that certain time in space drawing from critical theory and playing a part in steering the society. One example of this is something called Forum Theatre, which is explored in the next sub-chapter.

To challenge: Forum Theatre

Can theatre be seen as weapon? Forum theatre is a form of community and political theatre invented by a Brazilian drama pedagogue Augusto Boal (1931–2009). This particular method is perhaps the most common way of practicing the Theatre of the Oppressed, a whole branch of participatory theatre created by Boal himself. Boal was influenced by his fellow Brazilian educational philosopher Paulo Freire and the Pedagogy of the Oppressed. (Boal 1998; Boal 2008.) Freire’s pedagogy stems from the 1970’s Latin America, a society with a great class division, and the central thought in his educational philosophy is to open people’s eyes to the

possibility of change, the role of their own agency in the change, and question the taken-for-structures reproducing oppression in society (Freire 1970). Boal indeed sees theatre as a weapon for liberation, a weapon for social transformation to change the injustice in the social systems. In Boal's view, however, all theatre is political, not merely Forum Theatre as all people's actions are inherently political. (2008, xxiii.)

While conducting the interviews for this research, I found out that Forum Theatre has been in the background as an inspiration for *Businesssteatteri* and especially for the method of Process Theatre. Boal describes the Theatre of the Oppressed to be a system of theatrical methods utilizing improvisation and physical exercises, thus using theatre as a tool in order to shed light and find solutions on a personal or social problem in a community (Boal 1998, 14). Other scholars have described Forum theatre to be a theatrical exercise striving to activate the audience to practice strategies for individual as well as social change when making acts of oppression visible for the audience and making the passive audience, spectators, into active spect-actors (Shutzman & Cohen-Cruz 2002, 1).

Starting from Latin America and the need for social change, nowadays Forum theatre has been applied to a plethora of different contexts. For example, the experiences of refugees and homelessness in schools have been explored (Day 2002), nursing students have been prepared to the end-of-life moments they will encounter in the future (Tuxbury et al. 2012), and a fair play attitude among adolescent soccer teams has been endorsed (Rutten et al. 2010). The applications to healthcare education and youth (Conrad 2004) are especially popular. Also, Forum Theatre has also been applied to the business context, which I will discuss further in the beginning of the next sub-chapter.

Forum Theatre has specific roles and a specific set of activities regarding how it is played out. There are the roles of spect-actors, professional actors and a joker. The spect-actor is Boal's term for an active audience taking part in the process. Professional actors play out a scene where oppression occurs, and the audience has the power to stop the performance and make changes how the scene is carried out. The joker's job is to facilitate the interaction and dialogue between these two groups of actors. (Boal 1995, Rusanen 2014, Ventola 2013, Day 2002.) The central idea is to make the oppression visible to the spect-actors to see and most importantly to intervene. Yet, Dwyer (2004) points out that the joker actually has a lot of

power in directing in what is being explored and what is being left out, providing the frames for the spect-actors interventions. Ventola (2013, 172) suggests that Forum theatre is an invitation to a collective sense making process, where the important thing is, that the solutions come from the spectators themselves.

To educate: the potential of participatory theatre

After discussing participatory theatre and Forum Theatre as an example of it, it is most important to think about why we utilize theatre in educational contexts in the first place. I feel the need to mention at this point that this particular question could be explored in its own master's thesis as the subject and the potential perspectives are endless. Yet, going to back to the research questions and the purpose of the study, my goal here is to provide a basic understanding of the dialogue of what the educational potential of theatre is founded on.

To begin with, four areas of learning are commonly acknowledged regarding theatre as an educational medium: learning about the theme at hand (substance knowledge), improving social skills, learning about oneself, and finally, learning about drama as an art form (Kettula 2012, 166; Heikkinen 2001a, 91). Somers (2008, 63) on the other hand suggests that there are four different principles in participatory theatre regarding its potential for education. Firstly, theatre enables the construction of a social laboratory where reality can be modeled. Secondly, compared to only talking, theatre provides better ways to explore attitudes and (often hidden) assumptions. Thirdly, learning occurs when fiction meets reality, a phenomenon also called aesthetic doubling. Finally, serious topics can be explored with the help of playfulness and certain lightness. (*ibid.*) Next, I will discuss these principles with the help of the concepts of *aesthetic experience*, *metaxis* and *playfulness*.

The name of the American philosopher and educational reformer John Dewey kept on popping up in the literature around every corner during the research process. Thus, it clearly appears to form a basis for the academic dialogue regarding the learning potential of drama and theatre. Dewey discusses the essential concept of *an aesthetic experience*. Aesthetic means that something is related to the senses (Boal 1998, 28). According to Dewey's philosophy, an experience is created when a person actively interacts with their surroundings including both

the physical environment and its objects but also the social one, how we interact with one another (Alhanen 2013, 50–57).

Basically, it is said that when doing theatre, we engage in experiences where the learning occurs, or is done (Heikkinen 2001a, 102). Learning in art, including theatre, is embedded in aesthetic experiences. It is a turning point, a sense of harmony and wholeness, which yet leads to a change in how we perceive and thus experience the world around us (Heikkinen *op.cit*; Alhanen 2013, 182). Irgens (2014) discusses art and science in management education based on the philosophy of Cassirer (1944) who suggests that whereas science works through the mode of abstraction and is about conceptual interpretation, art is about concentration and intensification.

“A certain blindness gradually develops and becomes habitual. We thus may have encountered an object of our usual sense experience numerous times without ever having seen its form” (Irgens 2004, 89).

Aesthetic doubling, which some scholars call *metaxis*, means quite simply the simultaneous existence of fiction and reality, creating a space for learning. The doubling occurs in three different levels: in role, time and space. (Van Bakelen 1993, 9–11.) When assuming a role, let’s say the role of Hamlet, in that moment when stepping into the role you become Hamlet, yet you are still you. The time of the performance might take place in the cold winter day in Helsinki, yet the performance could occur on a warm sunny evening in Medieval Denmark. Importantly, Østern (2000, 7) argues that meaningful learning lies in the very interface of the role-me and true-me. One can experience the feelings and thoughts of the character, and then reflect upon them as oneself. Boal (1998, 42) describes these two worlds as the reality of image and the image of reality that is being constructed in that time and place.

In participatory theatre cultural meanings can be examined by making the invisible visible (Rusanen 2014, 154). Ventola (2013, 178) argues that in participatory theatre knowledge is unloaded in the level of experience and allows one to build a more personal relationship to it by doing and discussing together. Theatre has the power to interpret reality and its phenomena with the tools of art: by using metaphors, abstraction and narratives (Korhonen 2014, 22–23). Ventola (2005, in Rusanen 2014, 155) argues that observing a fictive situation

allows the participant to evaluate and contrast how they act in their surroundings. Esslin (1980, 20–26) suggests that drama is a method that has the power to translate abstract concepts into concrete experiences and situations. It is like a laboratory of human interaction, like Somers (2008) also suggests.

Relating to the idea of a social laboratory, O'Toole (1992, 43–44) suggests that with theatre comes the opportunity to assume multiple perspectives to the same scene. Also, the scenes can be reconstructed over and over again, thus different ways of doing and saying can be tried out. Boal (1998, 13) describes that theatre provides an aesthetic space, an imaginary mirror, the essence of theatre residing in the observation of oneself in action: *"man can see himself in the act of seeing, in the act of acting, in the act of feeling, the act of thinking. Feel himself feeling, think himself thinking"*. With this consciousness comes the observation of what is and what could be (*ibid.*). Boal (1998, 20–28) describes theatre through three perspectives. Firstly, plasticity enables creativity: everything is possible, as the rules from the real world do not apply. Secondly, theatre liberates memory and imagination. Thirdly, theatre is tele-microscopic, which means that everything is magnified and becomes clearer, thus allowing actions and words to be better observed: *"on stage it is difficult almost impossible, to hide"* (op.cit., 27).

Continuing, Rusanen (2014, 148) argues that art enables a holistic approach on education acknowledging the importance of embodiment, the social aspect as well as intellectual learning instead of reducing us into talking heads. Through theatre and drama, meaning is created by doing, as meaning is given form through physical movement and making things visible, as well as kinetically (Jansson 2015; Nicholson 2005, 56). In other words, one's skills can be practiced by taking part in the drama process by doing or observing other people perform and through reflecting on what you have witnessed (Rusanen 2014, 147). Heikkinen (2001a, 102) suggests that learning in drama occurs both consciously and unconsciously. In some cases, we are aware of the fact that we are learning at the very moment we are involved in doing drama. Sometimes, on the other hand, we need to take a step back and reflect afterwards in order to make sense of what happened during the drama exercise. Håkämies (2007, 75) discusses this as reflection in action, and reflection on action.

Regarding the aspect of playfulness, O'Toole (1992, 74–75) suggests that the transition to the fictive world requires that we create frames, where different rules exist compared to the real world. These rules are true within the frames and are taken seriously. O'Toole compares this contract on creating frames of the fictive world to children's plays and games. Heikkinen (2002) uses the term *serious playfulness* to describe this phenomenon and argues that with theatre other ways of being may be explored and actually experienced. Eriksson (2009) discusses distancing as an aesthetic principle, which acts as a protection creating a safe environment for the participants to explore. Also, in an organizational context, the distancing and element of playfulness could mean that issues, that would be difficult to bring up otherwise, can be explored.

The synthesis: business theatre as a way of doing management consulting

So far, I have discussed management consulting and theatre separately painting a picture of how they have been researched in the relevant literature. This is where things get interesting, as I intend to build a bridge between management consulting and theatre leading to the practice of business theatre. Firstly, I discuss how the interplay of business and theatre has been researched before. Then I introduce the doing perspective, which will act as the said bridge linking management consulting to theatre. Finally, I propose a framework for the study and explore how the doing lens brings together management consulting and theatre.

As I argued at the very beginning, management consulting and theatrical methods have not been discussed extensively together in previous research, providing an excellent gap for this master's thesis. However, theatre for educational purposes in business has indeed been a subject of interest among scholars. The core message in the literature is clear: new approaches and perspectives to organizations are much required. The concept of *artification* is used to describe how the barriers between art and the surrounding world are becoming more and more blurred, with artistic endeavors getting incorporated with the field of business (Levanto et al. 2005).

The incorporation of art into business has been given many forms from art as decoration to applying artistic methods to how organizations do strategy (Schiuma 2011; Darso 2004; Taylor & Ladkin 2009). The chaotic and turbulent nature of the start of the 21st century is one

of the reasons why business has turned to art (Adler 2006). Renewing and developing organizations cannot (or should not) be done with only the old logic of industrialized society (Päsilä 2014; Korhonen 2014; Adler 2006; Weick 2007, Taylor & Ladkin 2009). Jansson (2015) continues that in the context of organizational development the work has been traditionally seen as transferring knowledge into the rationally behaving and thinking employee, ignoring emotions altogether.

The use of improvisational theatre exercises in management education and development has been researched rather widely (for example Gibb 2004; Corsun et al. 2006; Biehl-Missal 2010; Huffaker & West 2005; Moshavi 2001). Forum theatre has been applied for instance in the context of diversity in organizations (Ojelay-Surtees 2004) and communication skills in the healthcare education (Middlewick 2012). Jansson (2014) has developed a theatrical method called work community theatre, an interpretation of Forum Theatre to the context of organizational development. Organizational development has benefited from the use of applied arts in the form of leadership, innovation and change management to name a few (Jansson 2015, 22).

Finally, an interesting and important point to discuss is the critique of seeing art as an instrument, using art to serve the needs of business and society (Ventola 2013, 61). On one hand, art has the ideal of being independent and autonomous, on the other hand it has been seen to be entangled with social and economic structures, and to have the opportunity to have an impact on other areas besides the context of art (Korhonen 2014, 15). Shüsterman (2000) challenges Dewey's claims of the contradiction between the pragmatic and the aesthetic in the first place and views art from a broader perspective seeing aesthetics to be embedded in our everyday lives.

The 'doing' lens

Next, I will look at business theatre as a particular way of doing management consulting. The operative word in the sentence is the one of *doing*, which acts as the lens for the entire research. In other words, I am interested in the mundane actions of how this particular type of management consulting is actually done and who are the ones involved in this doing. The plot throughout this study is looking at this particular type of consulting and the client

organizations as something that is actively produced as opposed to something that just magically occurs. Applying the doing lens helps me make sense of business theatre and the intersection of management consulting and theatre thorough concretizing the practice.

I first stumbled across the doing perspective in the literature on strategy, where the strategy-as-practice approach has gained popularity ever since the early years of the new millennium (Jarzabkowski et al. 2007). Besides strategy, the doing lens has also been utilized in gender studies (Tienari & Nentwich 2012) and science as doing (Pickering 1990). I will first discuss the doing lens as a part of the practice-based approach also exploring promptly what meanings the practice perspective has been given in the literature. Before proposing the framework for the study, I discuss the central concepts of *practice*, *practitioner* and *praxis*.

According to Corradi et al. (2010, 269) looking at what people *do* is merely one area of interest in practice-oriented research. When discussing the history and the future tracks of the “*bandwagon of practice-based studies*”, Corradi et al. (2010) form a chronology of practice-based studies that include practice-based learning (Raelin 1997), the practice lens (Orlikowski 2000) as well as knowing in organizations (Gherardi 2000). It could be said that there has been a great practice turn in social theory in general, which has been expanding since the 1980’s (Shatzki et al. 2001; Reckwitz 2002). The idea of a bandwagon is accurate as practice-based research is not merely one approach, but an umbrella of different kinds of ways of applying the practice approach to research (Corradi et al. 2010, 278), Nicolini (2012, 8) also suggest that one unified thing called practice theory does not exist.

Räsänen and Trux (2012, 53) argue that in practice-based studies researchers quite simply study what people do and how they decide to do it. According to Corradi et al. (2010, 277–278) the concept of practice can be seen to have three dimensions. Firstly, there is the dimension of activity, that is the doing of things, which is most prevalent in this research as well. The second one is sense-making, focusing on the discursive practices, which direct what is being done. Finally, the dimension of reproduction is concerned with the doing, yet in the larger sense: instead of looking at the doing in the micro-level of individuals the interest is in the doing of society-level structures. (*ibid.*)

For this study I apply the ‘doing’ perspective (Whittington 2006; Jarzabkowski et al. 2007) from the context of strategy to help me to perceive and discuss of how business theatre is

done in action. The three central concepts of the conceptual framework are *practice*, *practitioner* and *praxis*. They are three sides of the same coin. Both Whittington and Jarzabkowski et al. lean on the definition of Reckwitz (2002, 250) who describes practices as a “*routinized way in which bodies are moved, objects are handled, subjects are treated, things are described and the world is understood.*” In other words, as routinized ways of doing, speaking, understanding and desiring. Wenger (1998, 51–52) describes practices as how we experience our everyday life in a way that gives meaning to what we do. Whittington (2006) also suggests that from an organizational perspective, practices exist in a different level. There are the practices that are produced in the organization. There are also the ones of in the wider social fields of the organization itself. Finally, there are the practices of the societal level.

Reckwitz (*op.cit.*) suggests that practitioners are carriers of practices, the socially constructed patterns of behavior, thinking and feeling, stressing the embodied nature of both practitioners and practices. Thus, practices come to life, are done, in our daily actions through our bodies. On the other hand, practices are what move us and make us do what we do. Thus, we are both the products and producers of the context we find ourselves in. Praxis means the activity itself, what is actually done. Whittington describes praxis “*as an artful and improvisatory performance*” (2006, 620). Reckwitz (2002, 249) on the other hand calls praxis as “*the whole of human action*”. Thus, praxis is also described as the flow of activity (Jarzabkowski et al. 2007, 6).

Although the three concepts are discussed here separately, in reality they are all tightly interwoven with one another as Whittington (*op.cit.*) argues. Practices are what guide what practitioners do and how, praxis that is, by enabling or blocking certain kind of behavior in certain situations. Yet, practitioners are the ones making practices come alive, as they exist in us and are constructed by us and interpreted and negotiated by our everyday mundane actions. The practices guiding our actions are then either reproduced, when doing things like we have always done, or negotiated, and in that manner shaped in our actions, in praxis. New practices also stem from when we do something differently in action. Practitioners are not merely passive drifters in the ocean of practices, but interpret them in everyday actions.

Tying the loose ends: the framework

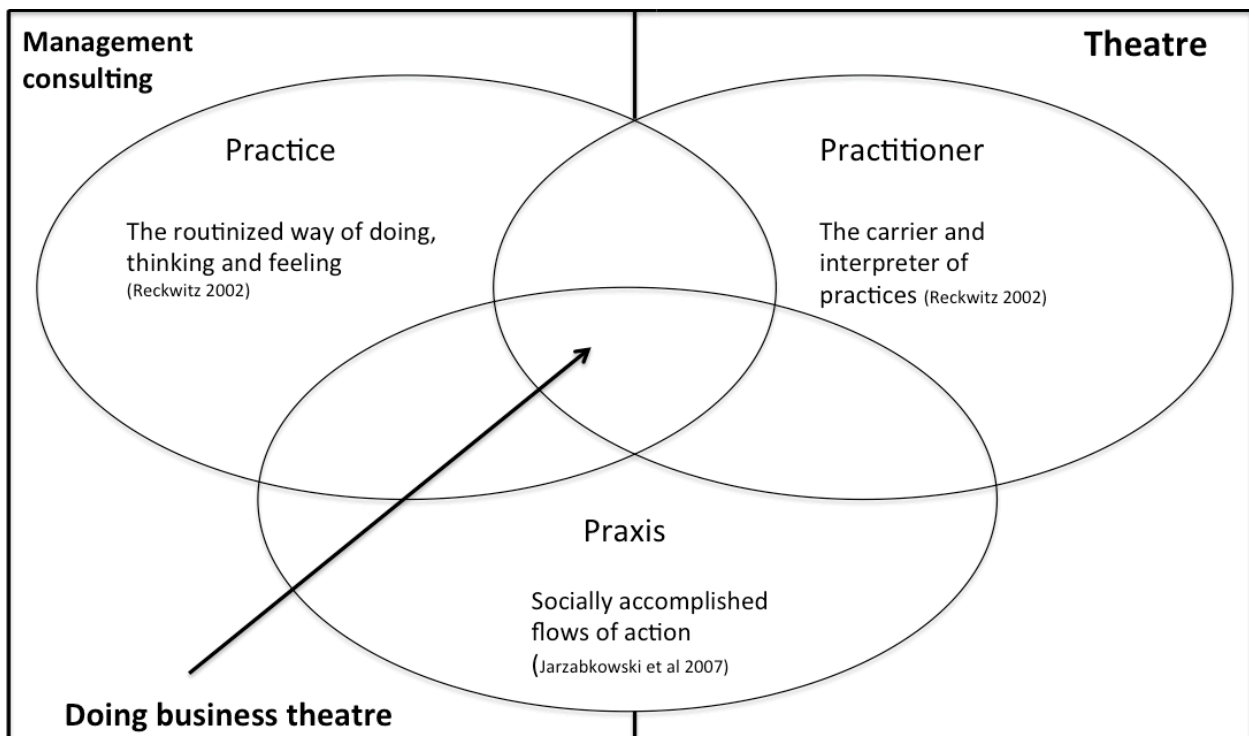


Figure 3: The Framework of perceiving business theatre as doing (applied from Jarzabkowski 2007, 8)

To sum up, through the doing lens the practice of business theatre, and importantly the client organization, like all organizations, appear as something that are produced in the everyday life rather than being static entities. Perceiving business theatre as something that is done enables me to explore and make sense of the practice, thus allowing me to answer the research questions. Also, the doing lens helps me to understand the practice of business theatre as being done at the intersection of management consulting. The conceptual framework of practice, practitioner and praxis provide me with the words for constructing the analysis for this research report. In the conclusion I will discuss the findings based on the data with the relevant literature introduced in this chapter. Next, I will move on to tell a story about my research journey and give an outline of my methodological approach.

Telling tales: on the path of doing research

J.R.R Tolkien wrote a poem in his novel *the Hobbit* about Bilbo Baggins setting out on a great adventure from his doorsteps by stepping on the road, not quite knowing where it would take him. This is exactly how I felt when stepping on to this path we call research. Indeed, I deliberately have decided to discuss the research as a path or journey instead of a process to better capture the fact that the road has been winding and full of twists and turns instead of a straightforward tunnel. The methodological choices are the steps that eventually have made up the research path I have wandered. As I suggested in the introduction, the aim of this study is to research how management consulting is done with the help of theatre. Thus, the focus is to explore the interplay of management consulting and participatory theatre. Regarding literature, I already started to engage these two perspectives into a dialogue in the previous chapter. Continuing, in the empirical part of the research the objective is to look at the doing of business theatre in the form of Process Theatre to understand this interplay.

In this methodological chapter I describe the methodological choices and the rationale behind them. Thus, I will tell the story of my research journey, following the narrative research tradition, which has curiously enough ended up being a much more central choice considering the study, although I did not realize it at first. I start with describing the first steps on the path that has set the direction for the research. Then I describe the context for the study and how I constructed the data by observing and interviewing. Continuing, I move on to discuss the narrative research tradition and how I applied it to analyzing the data and constructing the analysis. Finally, I ponder how the research should be evaluated discussing the relevant factors for this particular study.

Embarking on the path

My story with *Businessteatteri* began when I joined the Diversity and Equality group of the Aalto University School of Business and was introduced to Merita Petäjä, the school psychologist and one of the founders of *Businessteatteri*. We went to have lunch together and soon we discovered that we both have a passion for theatre. *Businessteatteri* came up and I remember thinking that it sounded like something I had been pondering somewhere at the back of my head in some unformed shape of an idea. Having sat on endless lectures during my

years in the university made my thoughts sometimes wander and made me think about possible different ways to learn. Then on that very day at lunch, there it was: a management consulting company somehow utilizing theatre. At that time, I was contemplating on what to research in my master's thesis and it is safe to say that I was immediately fascinated by this concept. Somehow the idea of conducting the thesis around *Busnessteatteri* was formed. It is hard to remember how exactly, but I believe it first started as a half joke. Now when I had discovered what to study I had to start to figure out how exactly to study it.

Describing the context

The organization *Busnessteatteri* is the context for the study⁸. *Busnessteatteri* with its tools is one interpretation of the practice of business theatre. I will go further into the background for *Busnessteatteri* in the empirical section, but at this point I can reveal that the organization was founded in 2009 and now has a team of nine people coming from both business and theatrical backgrounds, in most cases both. There have been nearly two hundred projects in the past eight years since *Busnessteatteri* started its operations. On the website *Busnessteatteri* is described as “theatre for developing work communities”. In the interview, however, Merita Petäjä used the concepts of management consulting and organizational consulting when discussing *Busnessteatteri*, which is why I chose to look at business theatre as a way of doing management consulting instead of organizational development. The client companies range in size from smaller organizations to large corporations and are varied in their fields of operations. These include for example Skanska, Terveystalo and Alko.

There are different ways to do business theatre, with Process Theatre being one of the tools. *Busnessteatteri* also offers other methods in their consulting services that utilize theatre, two of the other most important ones being Training Theatre and Solution Theatre. Where Process Theatre is meant for mirroring organizational life and looking at how things are and constructing how they could be, Training Theatre is created for the participants to hone their interaction skills that they need in order to make the change happen. Solution Theatre workshop, on the other hand, focuses on one particular conflict or problem, where the solution is developed together by the participants of the workshop. In addition, *Busnessteatteri* offers coaching in speech and performing.

⁸ For further information visit www.busnessteatteri.com

In Germany, from where business theatre was brought to Finland, there are dozens of business theatres. Some of them deliver more educational services while others provide more of an entertainment value, quite many of them engaging in both of the activities. Thus, it could be said that there are several interpretations of the practice itself. When co-founder Merita Petäjä brought the concept to Helsinki, there were no other business theatres during that time, so they got to claim the trademark in Finland. Due to Finland's significantly smaller market size, there are only a handful of organizations combining theatre with educational purposes in the organizational context.

For instance, the organization called *Theatreworks* offers coaching services based on theatrical methods and drama pedagogy for development work. One of the founders, Satu-Mari Jansson, has developed a method called Work community theatre, which I previously mentioned in the literature review. *Suomen Puheopisto* focuses on developing interaction and communication skills in organizations, also with theatrical methods. *Stella Polaris* on the other hand is a famous improvisation theatre group, yet they also have services for educational purposes. On their website, they present the different actors with their special skills in a catalogue-type way. In *Stella Polaris*, the coaching is sold with the personas, as some of the actors are very well known in Finnish households.

Discussing the foundations of the research

The only thing that was clear to me right from the start was the fact that I would conduct a qualitative study as opposed to a quantitative one. Defining qualitative research has proven out to be tricky and more often than not qualitative research is defined by contrasting it to its quantitative sibling (Eskola & Suoranta 2008; Koskinen et al. 2005; Eriksson & Kovalainen 2008). In a qualitative study the researcher aims to understand a phenomenon in a holistic manner whereas in a quantitative study the research approach is often based on explaining how something is by testing a hypothesis (Eriksson & Kovalainen 2008, 5). So, using a qualitative approach enabled me to make sense of the practice of business theatre. This sensemaking is especially relevant when the research phenomenon has not been extensively studied yet (Eskola & Suoranta 2008, 19). In other words, my intention is not to try to pry out any truths or generalizable theories from the data as, in my view, that is not meaningful, nor even possible. The context and the complexity of the research phenomenon are the starting

points for the study and are discussed thoroughly, rather than being something that is swept under the rug (Miller et al. 2004, 332).

Another important question to think about in the first few steps of the research journey were the philosophical underpinnings of the study. The ontological and epistemological questions are concerned with how I perceive the nature of reality (ontology) and knowledge (epistemology) to be (Eriksson & Kovalainen 2008, 13–15). With the practice-based framework the research leans on the philosophical position, or paradigm, of social constructionism (Berger & Luckmann 1967; Burr 2003). Berger and Luckmann (1967) argue in their seminal work that human reality is ultimately being produced through social practices. From this stance, reality is subjective and there is no objective world somewhere out there that we try to grasp with research. By looking at how business theatre is done with the help of the concepts of practice, practitioner and praxis, I will be able to discuss business theatre as words and actions said and done by people. Organizations are not considered as separate or fixed entities existing detached from people, but as something that are socially constructed as meanings are negotiated by the organizational actors in everyday life (Ronkainen 1999). Organizations do not exist on their own, they are done through the everyday actions and words around a particular time and place.

As a final note I would like to discuss the perception of reality in the literature of theatre from the social constructionist perspective, as it is something that caught my attention. The hidden assumption tends to be that with theatrical methods organizations are described or represented. However, from the standpoint of social constructionism it could be said that instead of just passively representing reality, with theatre meanings from everyday life are actively being reproduced and negotiated. In a similar manner, language can be perceived as a representation of reality or as something that constructs reality depending on the researcher's onto-epistemological stance (Jokinen et al. 1993, 9). Also, in the management consultant literature, it can be viewed that consultants do not only interpret stories from the organizations but when doing consulting work they are also a part of shaping the course of the organization with their choices (Sturdy 1997; Puutio 2000). Thus, theatre as a method can be seen as a way to construct the organizational reality then and there instead of merely describing it. Next, I will tell more about the research tradition I chose to follow, namely narrative research, which has its roots in social constructionism.

Having multiple touchpoints

The primary data I have utilized in my research consists of both interviews and observation. The first step was to find a client organization that was willing and kind enough to allow me to be a fly on the wall and observe the consulting process from the beginning to the end. This proved out to be somewhat challenging, as the first clients did not want any extra people to be lurking around with their notepads. I made use of this time by conducting preliminary, approximately hour-long, pilot interviews with both Merita Petäjä and Munich-based Ulrich Hartmann via Skype. Hartmann is one of the founders of the German organization called Art of Change and the key person regarding how business theatre ended up in Finland. I also explored both the websites of *Businesssteatteri* as well as the ones of the German Art of Change in order to start unraveling the mystery. At the beginning the focus was to grasp how business theatre could be studied and approached in the first place.

Regarding all the interviews conducted, I have followed the principles of semi-structured interviews. Hirsjärvi and Hurme (2009, 47–48) argue that a unified definition of the concept of semi-structured interview does not exist. However, the benefit of semi-structured interviews lies in the fact that they provide the interviewer structure to some extent, yet also freedom for the dialogue to flow towards meaningful directions (*ibid.*). Eriksson and Kovalainen (2008, 82) argue that a definite advantage with semi-structured interviews is the conversational nature combined with the extensive and well-rounded data. I discovered that when conducting semi-structured interviews, the trick indeed was finding balance between the predetermined structure, while being alert and seizing opportunities arising from the dialogue. Riessman (1993, 8–15) describes this well when talking about how we deal with representations of reality as no interviewer, no matter how skillful, can tap into someone's experiences directly. In other words, the transcripts are treated as an interpretation of reality rather than reality per se (*ibid.*).

The next phase of the study involved observing the doing of Process Theatre from beginning to end. I believe that observing the workshop process has helped me with my study in two ways. First of all, combining observation and interviewing allowed me to form a broader perspective on the practice at hand compared to using a single method of data construction. Secondly, seeing the whole workshop with my own eyes was essential as I got to witness what

was actually done. Being a fly in the wall and observing also helped to think about what to discuss in the participant interviews. Applying the idea of four dimensions in observation by Eriksson and Kovalainen (2008, 86) I engaged in a non-participant, non-disguised, semi-structured observation in the natural setting of the action. The research questions and the chosen methodology path did not require participant observation that usually takes a longer period of time. I informed the facilitators and participants about the research, as it was clearly the ethical thing to do. To continue, in order to guide the observation of the workshop I created a frame to help me focus on the essentials, yet I wanted to leave space for also seeing something I did not first know I was looking for.

First, I attended the meeting where the *Businessteatteri* team members met with the client representatives to discuss the project. After that, I went along to the rehearsal where the team started to plan the workshop based on their research and the meeting. The main observation event was the workshop, which I videotaped. I created a frame for guiding the observation focusing on how the interaction between the *Businessteatteri* team and participants was constructed. I also conducted eight short (under a minute) bullet-point interviews on the day of the workshop, where I asked both the actors and some participants short questions in order to find out what they thought was taking place or how they felt in that very moment in time. Finally, I participated in the meeting where the workshop day was discussed some weeks after the workshop. Regarding observing, I wrote down field notes either on my laptop or on my notebook from all the events in order to remember what went on afterwards.

Over a period of two weeks after the workshop, I conducted three of the four participant interviews (and the final one around a month afterwards) aiming to choose interviewees who have worked for the client company for different amounts of time. I feel it is important to reflect here upon the fact that it was not too easy to land interviews with the participants. It is understandable, because people tend to be busy with their work. However, it could mean that the people who agreed to the interviews had a more positive approach to the workshop and the methods involved. With the participant interviews I aimed to understand how they experienced Process Theatre. One interview had to be done by telephone, the other three were held at the office of the client organization. The interviews lasted about thirty minutes each.

Finally, I conducted a second interview with Merita Petäjä as I had many more questions to ask based on the workshop and the participant interviews. I should probably mention that one part of my data production involved having semi-regular lunches with Petäjä. I believe that these informal gatherings aided my research a great deal, as I could discuss the topics that I was contemplating on in that moment. Perhaps it could be said that although the process of constructing the data was done in a planned manner, the more informal side in the form of lunches was also an integral part of the research. As a final note, wanting to get more perspective on the theatre side of things, I interviewed theatre pedagogue Sami Nieminen, who was one of the two teachers of the Theatre and education module I was doing for my minor studies.

Constructing a narrative of doing business theatre

Starting to familiarize myself with the work of *Qualitative Methods in Business Research* written by Eriksson and Kovalainen (2008), it very quickly dawned on me that there is a wide spread of different methodological approaches I could apply to the thesis. This indulgence of options felt actually rather overwhelming. How was I supposed to choose one? After considering all the possibilities available, I chose to embark on a path of narrative research. It was originally the social constructionist perspective that led me towards narrative research, not to mention pure curiosity towards the research tradition. Essentially, the narrative research tradition uses storytelling, or narratives, as a way to construct knowledge. In this chapter I will describe how narrative research is discussed in the literature and explain why I picked this particular approach. I will also describe how I actually constructed the narrative analysis for the research in as much detail as possible.

Narratives are all around us

What became very clear to me is that there are countless ways to do narrative research, as scholars are applying its methods in a multitude of ways. Also, there are a variety of different epistemological approaches to doing narrative research (LaPointe 2014; Chase 2005). At the core of the tradition is the idea that stories or narratives reproduce and negotiate meaning and are a part of how we make sense of the world around us (Gabriel 2000, 4–6; Heikkinen 2001b, 116). Czarniawska (2004, 3) uses the term “narrative turn” to describe the way the

tradition has found its way into social studies from the late 1970's. It started from the political science and worked its way to psychology and sociology, ultimately gaining more and more popularity in business research (Eriksson & Kovalainen 2008, 211). On the one hand, narrative research is a phenomenon of the social sciences, and on the other hand, it is the method (Clandelin & Connelly 2000, 18).

The core concepts of *narrative* and *story* have been under debate in the research community (Riessman 1993, 17). Often the researchers treat the constructs as synonyms (for instance Polkinghorne 1988). Gabriel (2000, 5) argues that this is the most predominant approach in the field of organizational studies. Yet he prefers to perceive narratives as the broader concept and stories as certain types of narratives that have a plot and characters and most importantly, generate emotion in both the ones telling the story and the ones reading it (Gabriel 2000, 239). Elliott (2005, 3–4) builds on top of the ideas of Hinchman and Hinchman (1997) by suggesting that a narrative is temporal, meaningful and social in nature. In other words, a narrative links events in a chronological manner, is meaningful to its audience and is social by nature as it is constructed for a specific audience in time and place. To continue, Boje (2001, 1) adds that traditionally a narrative is considered to be linear with a clear plot and coherence. He questions this level of orchestration in narratives and suggests an alternative concept of *antenarrative*, which better captures the chaotic, incoherent nature of stories in organization studies. I have decided to use the concept of narrative as I believe it fits the way I have chosen to apply narrative research: constructing a narrative having a specific point of view, for a specific purpose and with a clear plot.

Moving on from the definitions, I mentioned before that social constructionism led me towards narratives and now I would like to get back to this claim. One of the aspects of narratives suggested by Elliott (2005, 4) was that they are socially constructed. Let's explore this notion further. To start, Czarniawska (2004) argues that the narrative modes of being, knowing and communicating can be seen as something that profoundly pervade and define our lives. Thus, narratives are a part of what we do and are, how we make sense of the world around us and how we communicate our experiences to others. Narratives are inherently social, as they never are told, made sense of or lived in a vacuum but in a specific context, time and surrounded by people.

Firstly, we use narration as a way to communicate with each other. A compelling story has a beginning, middle and an end in the Aristotelean manner (Eskola & Suoranta 2008, 22). Eriksson and Kovalainen (2008, 210) argue that stories are richer, thicker, compelling, memorable and most importantly, provide their reader with a context. Yet, what is considered to be rich, thick and compelling is always in relation to the context the narrative is constructed for. When writing this master's thesis, I need to be aware of the conventions and rules of academic writing in the organizational research context in order to create something that is compelling. Also, when you know the rules you know when and where to deliberately push the boundaries like I intend to with the study. You'll see what I mean with this soon enough.

Secondly, Czarniawska (2004, 6–10) and Polkinghorne (1988, 11) suggest that we make sense, in other words, give meaning to our experiences with the help of narratives. Ellis (2004, 196) suggests, "*When people tell their stories they apply analytic techniques to interpret their world. Stories are themselves analytic.*" This occurs, for instance, in how we make connections between our experiences and how we put them in order (Lapointe 2014, 58). Polkinghorne (1988, 18–19) adds that a central concept is the one of *plot* acting like glue connecting complex events into a meaningful story, a narrative.

Thirdly, Czarniawska (2004) suggests that our actions in everyday life can be viewed as enacted narratives. This view is based on Alasdair McIntyre's (1981) view that all social life can be seen as narratives.⁹ Clandinin and Connelly (2000, 18–20) approach this notion with the construct of experience, thus being influenced by John Dewey's philosophy on experience, which I already touched upon in the context of art and theatre. They argue that narrative research, or narrative inquiry as they call it, is first and foremost about both representing and understanding experiences. They suggest that an experience is a story we live and tell. (*ibid.*) Narrative inquiry can also be seen as an experience lived and told about the experience: "*It is a collaboration between the researcher and participants, over time, in a place of a series of places, and in social interaction of milieus*" (Clandelin & Connelly 2000, 20). Here the role of the researcher is thus acknowledged. To conclude, narratives can be viewed to pervade our lives in multiple levels.

⁹ This is not a far stretch from the sociologist Erving Goffman who suggests in his seminal piece of *The presentation of self in everyday life* in 1954 (Goffman 1990) that life is inherently theatrical in nature as we can be seen playing ourselves in our day-to-day life.

Linking narratives and practices, LaPointe (2014) applies a practice-based approach to narratives in her doctoral thesis when researching identities as narrative practices. Like language, narrative can be perceived to be referential, an end product, from the constructivist stance. From the social constructionist position narratives construct or *do* things, like identities. (LaPointe 2014, 58.) To conclude, narratives can be seen as interactional practices that are done in everyday life through embodied experience, in a particular context and co-constructed by the narrator and the audience (De Fina & Georgakopoulou 2008; LaPointe 2014, 57–60).

Why did I choose narratives for this study? As mentioned before, I was led towards this research tradition by the social constructionist paradigm. Firstly, I thought that narrative analysis would simply provide me the means to tell a story of doing business theatre, a meaningful way to construct the analysis that would also be interesting to read. However, the deeper I dived, the more it dawned on me that narratives, the doing lens and theatre were all intertwined in ways I could not even have dreamt of when first starting the journey. The pieces of the research puzzle started to find their places. As discussed before, Czarniawska (2004) argues that narratives are a way of communicating and making sense, and even our everyday life can be viewed as an enacted narrative. Social practices can be viewed to be narrative in nature as LaPointe (2014) suggests and thus storytelling is something profoundly built in us humans (Gabriel 2000). Considering the practice of theatre, the core idea is to tell a story, to construct a narrative, in an embodied way. I realized that for this study narrative research is not only a way to construct the analysis, but something pervading the entire study. In retrospect, it certainly paid off to follow the silent voice of intuition that nudged me towards the path of narrative research at the very beginning.

Doing narrative analysis

Narrative research tradition allows the researcher to construct knowledge in the form of a narrative or by constructing data in a narrative form, not to forget that it is possible to do both. Two main modes of narrative research are *analysis of narratives* and *narrative analysis*. In the first, data is in narrative form and in the latter the analysis is constructed in the form of a narrative. (Polkinghorne 1988, 161–177.) Carolyn Ellis (2004, 197) expresses this eloquently as she describes analysis of narratives to be *about a story* and narrative analysis *with a story*. Heikkinen (2001b, 123) argues that these two modes of analysis, suggested by

Polkinghorne, stem from the dual modes of knowing proposed by Bruner (1986): in analysis of narratives the narratives are usually broken into pieces by coding and categorizing (*paradigmatic knowing*) whereas in narrative analysis a synthesis from the data is constructed in the form of a narrative (*narrative knowing*).

I first assumed that the study leans clearly to the latter one, a narrative analysis. Narrative analysis was a way for me to make the doing of business theatre visible, a narrative way of communicating as Czarniawska (2004) suggests. Diving more and more into the literature, I discovered that elements of the analysis of narratives could also be seen under the surface. If we view life as enacted narratives and assume the narrative mode of knowing, also discussed by Czarniawska (2004), how business theatre is done could be seen as an enacted narrative. We could make sense of the doing in a narrative way by seeing story with a plot and characters. From this point of view, the analysis could be seen to be about a story within a story, as Ellis (2004) would express it, combining the two main modes.

Moreover, Elliott (2005) proposes two different typologies regarding narrative methods of analysis. The first one is proposed by Mishler (1995) and applied also by Riessman (2008), who suggest that there are three aspects the researcher can focus on in a narrative: *thematic* analysis of the content (what is said), *structural* analysis (how something is said) and the *interactional* aspect, which Riessman (*ibid.*) calls the dialogical and performance aspect concentrating on how stories are produced in social interaction in a certain context. The other typology is proposed by Lieblich et al. (1998, 12) and has two dimensions to narrative research: content versus form and holistic versus categorical. The first dichotomy is the traditional way to categorize narrative research, also present in the ideas of Mishler and Riessman discussed before. In holistic narrative research the narrative is preserved and interpreted as a whole whereas in categorical the narrative is broken into pieces by coding and categorized. (*ibid.*) Elliot (2005, 38) interprets that the categorical approach is much similar to the traditional content analysis.

I apply the ideas of Heikkinen (2001b, 122), who crystallizes that narrative analysis is about constructing a new narrative stemming from the data, highlighting essential themes for my research questions. How, exactly, did I do the analysis, then? Daymond and Holloway (2010, 304) suggest that the analysis of qualitative research usually consists of three parts:

organizing and managing the data by, for instance, coding and summarizing, asking questions of the data that are relevant to your research problem and finally interpreting the data by bringing meaning into the data and discussing the findings with previous research. Next, I aim to describe the choices in as much detail as possible in order to paint a picture of this part of the research journey.

Firstly, I learnt that analyzing the data and constructing a narrative is first and foremost an intuitive and creative process. I started the organizing with transcribing the recorded interviews. Ruusuvuori (2010, 424–425) suggests that the accuracy of the transcribing should be customized according to the research questions and the methodological approach. When interested in what is being said, thus the content, Ruusuvuori adds that the transcriber does not need to be overly accurate. Hence, I focused on transcribing the interviews to the extent of using the spoken language and wrote the long pauses and the laughter. Transcribing the interviews took a long time, to say the least, yet it was an effective way to get to know what was being said in the interviews. I also carefully familiarized myself with the field notes from the observation and watched the video material of the workshop day. To sum up, I gathered all the constructed data and transformed it into written form, thus also familiarizing myself with the data.

I then created a plotline, the sequence of events about how Process Theatre was done based on the field notes, transcripts and the video material of doing the Process Theatre workshop. Next, I started to explore the transcripts of both the *Businessteatteri* side as well as the participants to find reoccurring themes, hence mainly applying the ideas from thematic narrative analysis proposed by Riessman (2008) and Mishler (1995). I applied the ideas of Daymond and Holloway (2010, 307–316) to the coding process, writing codes in the margins of the transcripts to help make sense of the data, both in vivo, exact words from the transcripts, as well as topic codes (Richards 2005) where I would describe what was being discussed in the data. I developed these codes further into categories and constructed a board of how the categories fit the plotline I created.

When it comes to the actual analysis steps, Maitlis (2012, 495–496) discusses the contradiction of breaking the narratives up in order to discover the themes, but also preserving the context of the themes, to some extent. In my view, the codes helped me find

reoccurring themes among the participants' transcripts as well as make sense of the practice of business theatre discussed by Ulrich Hartmann and Merita Petäjä. The plot acted as something tangible for the codes and categories to hang onto. I see that for my research, the trick was to balance between the holistic and categorical modes of narrative analysis suggested by Lieblich et al. (1998) instead of viewing them as contradictory stances.

The next phase consisted of crystallizing the research questions as they determined what I would ultimately end up with. I also had to figure out how to construct the narrative that would present the fruit of my labor, so far having constructed a raw version of the analysis with the help of codes and categories and the plot. The style of the narrative I constructed is inspired by an analysis method called ethnodrama, or ethnographic drama, which is a way to construct an analysis in a dramatized way with a plot and characters (Petersen 2003; Saldana 2005). In my view, the research has indeed been inspired by an ethnographic approach, yet I do not intend to say that it has been an ethnography per se, as in ethnographic methods the observation usually requires a longer timespan (Eriksson & Kovalainen 2008, 141).

A narrative inspired by ethnodrama allows me to make sense of the doing of business theatre. With it, I can tell who the practitioners are and what they do, in other words, the characters of the narrative. The praxis acts as the enacted plot of the doing of Process Theatre. I wrote the dialogue around the themes I had discovered with the help of coding and categorizing the data. The character of the narrator is an important one. The narrator's character is the voice that guides the reader through the analysis possessing the ability to present insights from the data, expanding the plot of doing Process Theatre by drawing from the participant interviews, for instance. Although the narrator's voice is ultimately the voice of the researcher, my voice, I decided to separate that voice from the one of the researcher in order to emphasize that the narrator is capable of drawing insight from all of the data, hence being an omnipotent narrator. However, I would like to make it clear that this choice does not mean that I have tried to blot out the role of the researcher when constructing the analysis. It occurred to me that the analysis could be seen to be a narrative of an embodied and staged narrative interpreted from the organization teeming with the narratives of everyday life. Quite the brainteaser, isn't it?

Another important question to think about when it comes to ethnodrama is the matter of what is fact and what is fiction. Clandelin and Connelly (2000, 179) argue that in narrative

inquiry what is fact and what is fiction is often a hazy business. Petersen (2013, 297) argues that among the scholars who apply ethnodrama in their research, the perception of how much “artistic license” should be taken when writing varies greatly. When it comes to my study, I have stayed true to what I observed when it comes to constructing the plot of the narrative. In the dialogue I have included the most important themes from the data highlighting the relevant ones for my research questions. What is included and what on the other hand is excluded is an integral part of constructing the analysis. The narrative I have constructed is my interpretation of the doing of business theatre, told from a certain perspective, to a specific audience with particular research questions guiding the choices. Indeed, there could have been many alternative narratives constructed from the data depending on the research questions and the focus of the study.

Petersen (2003) proposes the concept of *creata*, which is something that exists in the twilight zone being simultaneously both data and analysis (or perhaps neither). This is an interesting perspective to think about, as I surely scratched my head a couple times when writing the narrative and contemplating whether it is an actual analysis or merely condensed data. I came to the conclusion that if data is seen as a construction done by the researcher (the social constructionist approach), then the analysis is a construction of that original construction that has been filtered to express the issues relevant to the research. In other words, the researcher constructs both data and analysis. Once again, I believe it comes down to the researcher to explicitly address their view on what they think is data and analysis.

Finally, after constructing the narrative inspired by ethnodrama, I started to think about the findings of the study and what they mean in the light of the research questions and the literature explored (Daymond & Holloway 2003, 329). I discovered that this occurred simultaneously when analyzing the data and constructing the narrative. The grand epiphanies mostly occurred while sitting in a bus or walking to the university or unfortunately quite often in the exact moment of dozing off when trying to fall asleep. This is why a researcher should always have some paper and a pen in the nightstand. The point I am trying to make here is that the process of coming up with the findings was iterative and taking place simultaneously with analyzing the data, constructing the narrative and exploring the literature.

Looking back and pondering

This was the story of the research journey. The first thought that comes to my head when thinking about the path wandered is the fact that I have done my best to follow my intuition. Not seeing the path ahead of me clearly, I have merely had a faint sense of direction. The path has then unraveled with each step taken. I realized that I did not dive into the research with a theoretical cookie cutter, yet attempted to start as afresh as possible, from the perspective of pure wonderment and not knowing. In retrospect, considering the logic behind the research, the study leans more to the inductive side than the deductive end, on what I visualize as the continuum of approaches. Simply put, the research has been driven more by empirical data rather than theory. Like I have discovered during this thesis journey, and as Eriksson and Kovalainen (2008, 23) argue, conducting a research is an iterative process where the researcher has to balance between the two modes of induction and deduction, between data and theory.

I only grasped the meaning of the concept of hermeneutic circle once I got my own experience when conducting the research. According to Eriksson and Kovalainen (2008, 33) the hermeneutic circle refers to the circular way of doing research. I went back and forth between data and literature and thus making sense of the research phenomenon and building this understanding one step at a time, yo-yoing between data and theory. It has been excruciatingly hard to conduct research under this uncertainty of not knowing where I am headed. Yet, I have this odd feeling that this research has chosen me as much I have chosen it. But I guess this is what qualitative research is ultimately about. What is the point in conducting research if you know exactly what you will get and where you will end up? If it does not feel easy, you are probably onto something. Also, I have pondered quite much on how this particular study could (and should) be evaluated, which I will discuss next.

The dilemma of evaluation

What makes a study *good*? How can I ensure that I have done a good job with my master's thesis? Eriksson and Kovalainen (2008, 294) suggest that there are three possible approaches when it comes to evaluating qualitative research. Firstly, you could opt for the traditional evaluation criteria of reliability, validity and generalizability stemming from quantitative research and positivist philosophical position and interpret them to fit the qualitative study.

Another option is to adopt the common criteria of trustworthiness proposed by Lincoln and Guba (1985) to better match the nature of qualitative research. Lincoln and Guba suggest that trustworthiness consists of four elements: credibility, transferability, dependability and conformability. Thirdly, the researcher could choose to go rogue and abandon the whole idea that there could even be a common set of criteria of evaluation for qualitative research and come up with criteria that derive from the particular context of the study. After careful consideration that is exactly what I have decided to do.

I draw inspiration from the *research onion* proposed by Saunders et al. (2009, 138). The research onion is a way to present the methodological choices of the study in a concise manner displaying the different levels of methodological choices. I decided to make the evaluation of the research pervade the study from the outer layer of onto-epistemological stance, to the criteria of evaluating a qualitative study, to the choices of data construction and finally, the chosen research tradition of narrative analysis. Thus, I choose the following criteria of reflexivity, dependability, triangulation of data as well as plot and style as the concepts that, in my view, best capture the evaluation of this master's thesis.

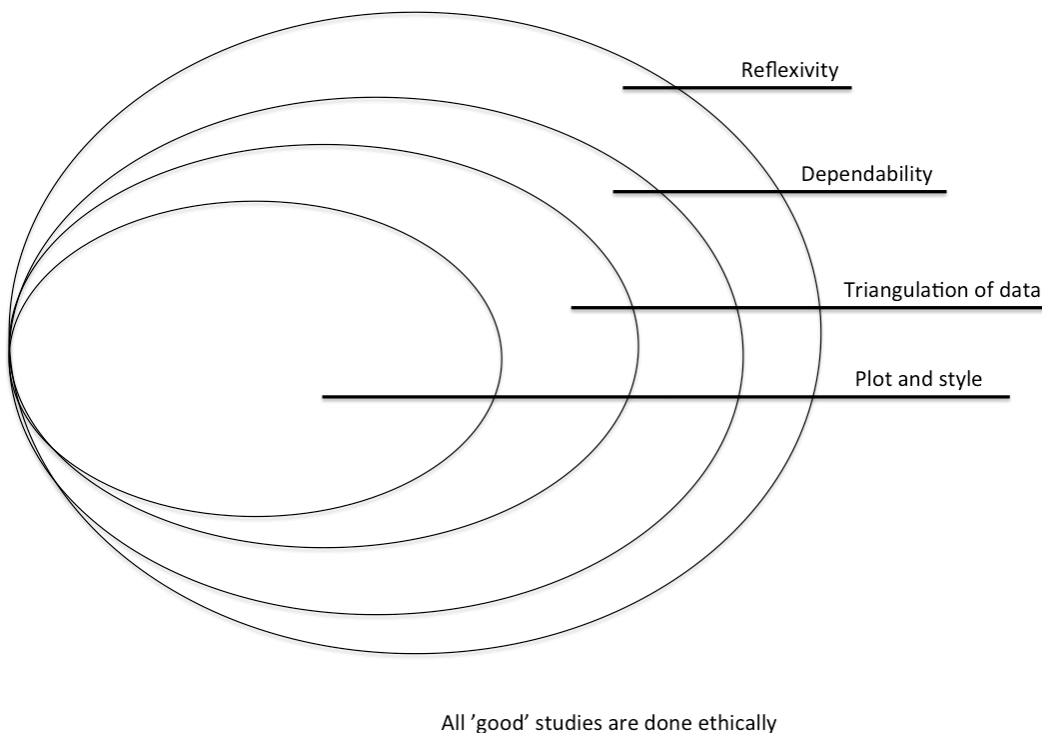


Figure 4: Framework for evaluating the research

To begin with, reading quite a few research reports, usually the ethical questions of the study are discussed separately from the evaluation of the study. I believe strongly that a study cannot be *good* if it is not conducted ethically. Eskola and Suoranta (2008, 52) argue that the ethical questions include both the construction and use of the data. Regarding the ethical questions involved in my research, I have had to consider the issue of confidentiality towards both *Businessteatteri* and their client company. Therefore, I signed a non-disclosure agreement with the client organization agreeing that their company cannot be recognized from the research report and giving them the opportunity to go through the report before submitting it. Also, I have discussed with Merita Petäjä about what she might consider to be discrete information for their organization that should not be included in the report. Secondly, in order to consider the ethics in my research, I have been as transparent as I can throughout the data construction process. All the participants were informed of the research when doing the observing of the business theatre activities. To conclude, in my idea the ethical questions go hand in hand with the evaluation of the research and I have done my very best to take these issues into account.

Furthermore, conducting a qualitative research based on social constructionism means that reflexivity should be an integral part of the study and thus the position of the researcher is acknowledged and discussed, rather than being concealed (Eriksson & Kovalainen 2008). Thus, I acknowledge my role in producing knowledge and the part I have played in the research process. For instance, when justifying choices, I try to actively avoid the passive form of writing, thus resigning from the pseudo-objectivity it implicitly carries with it. The report did not write itself. I wrote it. The choices were not snatched from thin air. I made them. In other words, my intention is not by any means to try to hide the active role I have played in the research process, but I have, on the contrary, attempted to make it visible by reflecting upon the said role and being aware of it throughout the report.

Reflecting on how my position as a researcher affects the study is expected when doing a social constructionist, narrative research. It is in fact impossible to know how my presence influenced the doing of Process Theatre, yet this is something worth expressing here explicitly versus pretending it did not have any effect whatsoever. Also, when it comes to the construction of data, it is indeed constructed and not collected when looked at from the social constructionist stance. Riessman (2008, 27–50) reminds that the transcripts are imperfect

and selective representations of the discourses as the interviewer has the power to determine what is spoken of and what is not. I influence the data with my presence as well as questions.

Lincoln and Guba (1985) suggest the concept of *dependability* as one of the factors for evaluating the trustworthiness of qualitative research in their seminal typology. With dependability they mean that the researcher needs to be open about the steps involved in the research process. I found that the concept is especially important for the study, as I have chosen to conduct a more unconventional type of analysis. Thus, I have described with my best ability what choices the research journey has involved and what has been the rationale behind them, which brings me back to the importance of reflexivity. That is why I have also put some extra effort into describing how I constructed and analyzed the data. In addition, I have attempted to make the referencing as open and accurate as possible marking the page numbers, excluding the cases where I refer to the entire article or book.

Regarding data construction, triangulation is a process of using multiple perspectives to refine and clarify the findings of the research. Triangulation of data means that the researcher uses more than one source of data in their research (Eriksson & Kovalainen 2008, 292; Hirsjärvi & Hurme, 2009, 38–39). Producing data with more than just one method expands the horizons of what is researched, thus enhancing the trustworthiness of the study. I wanted to gain multiple touchpoints to business theatre by both observing and interviewing. Also, there is a temporal aspect to the data construction, as I conducted interviews both before and after the workshop.

Finally, there is the cherry on top, the plot and style, which indeed are relevant for the study, especially due to choosing the narrative research tradition. I have utilized the narrative approach to the methodology chapter to tell a story of doing the research. I have also paid attention to the plot of the research report by creating an engaging beginning, a thorough middle and an end that wraps it all up. Considering the style of the report, my aim was to write a compelling report that is enjoyable and easy to follow. Although writing an academic piece of text, I chose not to bury my personal voice by applying the ideas of stylish academic writing with imagination and originality, not forgetting the art of storytelling (Sword 2006).

Typically, the virtues of academic writing are considered to be neutrality and objectivity,

whereas a more compelling way of writing might be considered to be manipulative (Kniivilä et al. 2012, 158). Yet, it could be said that this view goes hand in hand with the positivist perspective, which assumes that the researcher neutrally reports about the truths discovered of the world. Yet, as Eskola and Suoranta (2008, 230) point out, reporting a research inherently involves rhetorical strategies, which the scientific and pseudo-neutral style of writing is one example of.

To sum up, I have discussed the elements I believe to be central for the evaluation of this particular study. At the end of the day, I will leave the actual evaluation to the ones reading this, to you. What is considered to be a good study depends on the philosophical position, not to forget the personal preferences of the reader. What I have aimed to do in this chapter is to provide you with as much information about the choices I made along the way and explain the rationale behind them. Next, I present the analysis part of the research report in the form of a narrative.

The narrative of doing Process Theatre

The pink tractor in the room

Characters¹⁰

Narrator

Researcher: Stiina

Busnessteatteri

Producer/Actor 1: Milla

Director: Merita

Actor 2: Stefan

Actor 3: Krista

The client

Project manager: Kirsi

Development Planner: Heidi

Information service manager: Pirkko

Technical designer: Terhi

35 change agents



¹⁰ The names of the Busnessteatteri team have not been changed, as I was allowed to present them in this thesis report. However, the names of the client company have been changed in order to maintaining anonymity.

Act 1: what is going on?

Narrator:

I managed to refuse the great desire to start with “once upon a time” and begin by saying that not that far in the past, in June 2016 to be exact, one journey between a team from the organization of *Busnessteatteri* and their client had just started. This is a narrative of how a certain Process Theatre was done. It could be said that this narrative is indeed an interpretation based on all the data in form of both interviews and observations all rolled into what I certainly hope to be a captivating story of the practice, practitioner and praxis of doing business theatre in the form of Process Theatre. Without further ado, let’s take a quick look back into the past to find out how exactly *Busnessteatteri* ended up here in Helsinki.

Scene 1: flashback

Narrator:

In order to trace the roots of doing management consulting with theatre, we need to travel back in time to the early ears of the new millennium to Munich, Germany. At the beginning of the 2000s Ulrich Hartmann, graduating from acting school was contemplating on his future career:

“I went in to an acting school after being a teacher for a couple of years and I changed profession to an acting school in Munich. During these four years of study I was already kind of starting to get an idea about what I am going to do with that, I mean I wasn't the youngest anymore. Usually people in these schools are in the age of 22 or something like that and not 30-something so it was kind of tricky, making the big career. It was already a bit too late and I also wasn't the actor type”

Hartmann decided to put the pieces together from his education, combining training in acting, the interest in consulting. The idea for consulting with the help of theatre began to take shape. Hartmann started to bring together people to form a team and so the company *Art of Change* was born. Starting to develop the services Hartmann and his colleagues were contemplating what could be offered, what was the point of linking theatre and management consulting.

“When we worked together we were thinking together and thinking about, okay, what is the advantage of acting, of having actors, what is the benefit for the

company. Then we quite quickly discovered that okay that mirroring of attitudes, of behavior of the things that need to be discussed...well this mirroring is nice and it is important so that the company see on stage their own faces, their own habits, their own, you know, attitudes, behaviors. But then we started thinking, okay, is it enough to just mirror it, to just give it to the people and say, okay now you know how you behave...Then we started to think about, no, actually what we could offer, and this is the name of Process Theatre. We should do a bit more because otherwise people could maybe get mad seeing their own habits."

Our story continues from 2009 when Merita Petäjä had promised to do a workshop based on theatrical methods for a kickoff event in the autumn for a large Finnish media organization. Before she had started thinking about the execution of the workshop she stumbled across Hartmann and the business theatre concept in a theatre workshop in Norway.

"I was going to Norway in 2009, I had signed up for a theatre workshop in a congress. I was doing training work at that time trying many kinds of dramatic methods, playback theatre and sociodrama for example. But I had this feeling the whole time that they don't actually respond that well to the needs of organizations. Here they have solved what theatre for organizations can be in a way that answered my questions. And the point was that professional actors were utilized, and the starting point was the real problems in the organizations, explore them and make them visible and in the meantime, it can be seen to work as a pedagogical method where participants themselves get to solve the problems what they see on the stage."

Ulrich Hartmann trained the founders of *Busnessteatteri* in Finland, yet *Busnessteatteri* is an independent organization continuing to develop in their own terms, learning by doing and responding to the needs of their customers. One important thing in the background, that should be mentioned, is the concept of systemic constellation, which is one of the frameworks behind business theatre, both for Hartmann and Merita Petäjä. Systemic constellation is an approach to look at social systems, groups of people and what happens when they interact. The method was created by a German psychotherapist Bert Hellinger at the end of the previous century. Systemic constellation approach has also been applied to the organizational context. (Roman 2011.) Hartmann discusses the systemic constellation approach and theatre:

“So, if you put these systems and not only the singular behaviors but the whole system on stage and you start to influence it, it affects their own, the original system so there’s a system on the stage which is an image of the company system. And if you start to move the system on the stage people are so much involved that their own system is at least starting to, let’s say shake. I wouldn’t say maybe to move...it should be a bit more than that, but it starts to get shaken, to get irritated.”

Narrator:

After exploring the background, we may get back to the actual storyline.

Scene 2: meeting

A conference room of one department of a municipal organization in Southern Finland.

Businessteatteri practitioners, the researcher and the project management team sit by a large, grey rectangle table. It is two o’clock on a rather sunny Wednesday afternoon in June.

Project Manager:

Welcome everyone. I am Kirsi, the project manager. I have spoken with Milla about the upcoming project on the phone. As you already know, we are launching a major software change in the organization, which we call T.E.D.¹¹ It will renew and streamline the way we do things here. Some would even say that we could be considered as pioneers with this change.

Development planner:

The change will ultimately concern hundreds of employees altogether. We wanted to try something different in carrying out the change. Where you, Businessteatteri, come in is creating a workshop for the change agents, the thirtyish people who have been selected to help their colleagues to face the change. But before going into further into details, should we do an introduction round?

Project manager:

Yeah that is probably a good idea. So, as mentioned, I am Kirsi and as the project manager my job is to run this project.

¹¹ The name of the project has also been changed for the report.

Development planner:

Hi everyone. My name is Heidi, the development planner of the project. Shortly, I oversee the change management of the project and communication.

Information service manager:

Welcome on my behalf as well. I'm Pirkko, the process owner of the information service aspect of the change. In my work I am in charge of the administrative process, developing data systems and utilizing statistics.

Technical designer:

Hello, my name is Terhi and I work as a technical designer in the organization. In this project I am also doing the change management and planning of the operations model.

Producer/Actor 1:

Hi! I'm Milla, the producer of this project from Businesssteatteri. I also participate in the acting of the Process Theatre. My background is in acting, drama pedagogy and speech coaching.

Director:

It is nice to meet you all. I'm Merita, my role in the workshop is the one of a director, a moderator of the workshop. I have a background in working as a psychologist as well as working in business consulting and coaching. Considering the theatre side, I have done directing of a method called Playback Theatre and studies in body awareness.

Actor 2:

Hi. I am Stefan, one of the actors of the workshop. I am a professional actor and a teacher of improvisation theatre.

Actor 3:

Hey everyone, I am Krista, also one of the actors. I have made a career in working as a professional actor since graduating from the Theatre Academy.

Researcher:

Hi there, I'm Stiina and I am conducting my master's thesis on business theatre. I study in Aalto University School of Business in the department of management and international business.

Narrator:

The client of the project can be seen to be the top management team sitting around the table, but also the participants of the approaching workshop. The Businesssteatteri team members have specific roles in the project. The producer facilitates the process from the Businesssteatteri organization's perspective. They are the key contact with the management team. The main task of the director is to facilitate the interaction in the Process Theatre workshop, being a kind of host and acting as the link between the participants of the workshop and the actors. Finally, the actors are the ones on the stage mirroring the scenes interpreted from the organizational life. Quite often one person might play several roles in the project.

Project manager:

What makes this change challenging is the fact that the software, T.E.D, doesn't in fact exist yet, but we are working on it with the supplier. This defining work will take place starting in autumn.

Actor 3:

Okay. And about the workshop, what do you wish to achieve with it?

Information service manager:

Well, the change agents have been coached about project work in general and about their role in the big picture. With this particular workshop we would like to prepare them for being change agents and how to deal with the resistance coming from their colleagues. And perhaps face their own bit of resistance as well. There are rumors and murmuring going on about this change and how it's going to affect how things are done here.

Development planner:

Continuing from what Pirkko said, we are looking for a positive way to approach the change, a positive mindset. We know that there are a lot of doubt and worries in the air regarding the change. There is so much yet to be figured out about T.E.D, about how it will turn out to be and how it affects everyone, including the change agents.

Narrator:

The change agents have been assigned from different departments in the previous autumn in 2015. According to the preliminary interviews the Businesssteatteri team have conducted, there is a fair amount of negative thoughts about the change. People are worried whether or not the new software is really going to be better than the old one, whether they have the time to be a change agent on top of their own work, as well as about the future of their post. In addition, people are afraid that the software is going to be designed by people who don't know anything about it and what the end-users' need.

Director:

I have this idea from a framework we could use in the workshop. It's called six windows to change and the thing with it is that they would have an opportunity to acknowledge their stand themselves regarding the change. Should we perhaps start with the change agents' own doubts about this T.E.D before moving on to how to face their colleagues and their worries? Then the actors could improvise some lines from the conversations of the groups.

The project management team nods their heads in agreement.

Project Manager:

I think that sounds like a good idea.

Director:

The actual Process Theatre workshop could be approached from the perspective of the blocks of change: thinking, feeling and doing.

Producer/Actor 1:

Could we concretize the worries attached to the change? It appears it has become somewhat of monster that is lurking behind the corner.

Actor 2:

What we could also try to do is to make the worries visible through some sort of metaphor, so that we don't focus on unnecessary things.

Producer/Actor 1:

There are a lot of ideas now on the table, what direction would you like to go?

Narrator:

The rest of the meeting they discuss the details of the workshop. The project team seems to be pleased with the suggestions presented. Merita told me later on that it is quite brave of the management team to also allow the apparent doubts and worries some space in the workshop instead of just starting to spread the joy of the change. What is mentioned several times in the interviews is that the starting point is to accept all the feelings expressed by the change agents.

The meeting ends, and everyone leaves the room.

Scene 3: rehearsal

Rehearsal at the client organization's interactive space on Wednesday afternoon straight after the meeting. The Businessteatteri team and the researcher familiarize themselves with the space, where the Process Theatre workshop will take place. The room is fairly large, filled with different kind of chairs and office-type armchairs in vibrant colors, a flipper machine randomly placed in one corner. The researcher sits in a chair and takes the notepad from her canvas bag.

Narrator:

So, the Businessteatteri team has already conducted the interviews with the change agents. For Process Theatre a certain number of participants are interviewed to get to the gist of

things. The questions include finding out about what the change agent does on a typical day at work and about the attitude towards the ongoing change.

Director:

Let's build a theatre!

Narrator:

After pondering for the best place for the theatre, they start to move chairs for the audience to sit on, forming a circular stage for the Process Theatre. When everyone is pleased with the result they start constructing the script for the workshop based on what was discussed in the meeting as well as what has been discovered in the interviews.

Producer/Actor 1:

So, about the structure, should we start with the windows of change, what Merita suggested in the meeting?

Director:

Yeah that could work as a smooth slide to the Process Theatre part. To let them have a minute to think about how they actually feel about this T.E.D and being a change agent. They would go to the window they feel like speaks to them the most, what captures their feeling towards the change. Then they could discuss it in groups.

Narrator:

One of the interviewees said that the change is quite the "boogeyman" lurking in the corner for them, too. Another said that she doesn't appreciate any hype around it and likes to talk about things as they really are. The carrying idea in the workshop thus is that the change agents can express their own worries related to the change as well.

Actor 2:

We could also improvise short clips from the discussion, to give a sort of a teaser of what is about to come.

Producer/Actor 1:

Yeah, I like that.

Director:

I think it would be show the change agents that we give them the space to utter their feelings instead of forcing something down their throats. I have a hunch that we need something to warm them up a bit before the real thing starts.

Producer/Actor 1:

So, okay, say we start with this exercise. That covers the first half an hour. Then we go into the actual Process Theatre?

Director:

Exactly. Should we start by improvising, building from the framework of doing, feeling and thinking?

Narrator:

The three actors start to search the physical movement and gestures for the different blocks for change. All of the actors choose a different block to take on and embody.

Director:

I got an idea. What if we started with a scene where the boss comes and declares that you have been chosen to be change agents? I could play the boss. Because that's pretty much how it played out in real life as we heard in the interviews. Then we start with the scenes, the actors could all have their own block to express.

Actor 2:

Then we build the characters? With the hot seat.

Narrator:

A hot seat is a theatrical tool, where the actor is seated on a specific chair. A chair, where he or she has to be honest about their feelings and thoughts in that place and moment in time. It is utilized in order to tap into what the character thinks and feels at that very moment.

Director:

Yeah and then the advice and re-run.

Narrator:

The actors start to try out different ways to do the first scenes. It is sometimes hard to tell when the actors are in their roles and when they are speaking as themselves, what is the scene and what is meta-level talk.

Director:

What's the thing here? I feel like we're stuck.

Actor 3:

Should we try to come up with the metaphor for the organization like we discussed earlier?

Producer/Actor 1:

Okay let's try a clothing shop. In that way we are focusing on the relevant stuff, the phenomena. Plus, how hard is the lingo in this field. I almost broke my brain trying to make sense of the T.E.Ds and what nots, the other shortenings for the names of the departments.

Director:

I feel you, it's so complicated. I agree with creating a metaphor. It's in line with our motto anyway: keep it simple, stupid.

Narrator:

They continue with the improvisation. At some point the clothing company changes into a gardening company.

Actor 2:

What if we pretend that the new software is a new tractor the employees have to learn how to use?

Actor 3:

So, we would have something tangible to refer to. And we could call it B.O.B.

Producer:

Should we then bring something to the stage, some kind of tractor?

Director:

Could turn out to be quite difficult...hmm...Maybe we could pretend that it's behind these curtains, behind the stage.

Producer/Actor 1:

Yeah, I like that, it's a very authentic a theatrical solution. You could say Merita, in the introduction scene when the boss makes the nomination for change agents, that the new tractor is waiting behind the curtains and you can show it to them.

Actor 3:

Let's try that!

Narrator:

When the gardening metaphor has been established, they get deeper into the character building, which is based on a Chekhovian character building method (see Chekhov 2013). The actors start by only doing movements with their body trying out different postures and facial gestures. No words are used. One of the actors takes on the block in thinking, the other one in feeling and the third in doing. Continuing, they start to add simple phrases. They decide that in the first scene, the actors act based on the block and their manager does not know or want to encounter them in a productive way leading to a catastrophic scene where the change agents do not feel heard nor are their feelings acknowledged. Next these scenes are then tested with the characters they have built so far. Next the characters are built into more detail with the help of a method called the hot seat, where the actor is put on a stool in the stage and the director asks questions from the actor.

Director:

What is your name?

Actor 2:

I'm...umm...Hans-Kalle.

Director:

How long have you worked for this gardening company?

Actor 2:

Mmh...Ten years next fall. I'm having a big party for everyone then.

Director:

How old are you?

Actor 2:

I'm 37.

Director:

What hobbies do you have?

Actor 2:

I like my cars. They are my babies.

Narrator:

They continue with the hot seat exercise with each of the three characters. Hans-Kalle is followed by Tiina and Kaisa. During the rehearsal, a loose script for the workshop is formed as a result of an organically flowing brainstorm session based on the findings of the interviews conducted. Also, the prototypes of the characters are built. At the end of the rehearsal Merita promises to send the script with the scene descriptions, an outline of scenes for everyone. The characters and scripts for scenes are loose and leave space for improvisation so that they can modify the characters on the spot, or online as the people from *Businessteatteri* call it. They also discuss the props and costumes that are needed to make the gardening metaphor come alive.

To sum up, the point in Process Theatre is to set up a laboratory for observing and inspecting interaction. Merita describes that *"it's not about increasing the amount of information but how we can transfer the knowledge into action...theatre provides this laboratory, which brings the element of affect to the workshop"*. Ulrich Hartmann describes this as *"having feelings towards*

my own person on stage”, which relates to what Boal (1998) describes being at the core of theatre as discussed before.

They change the chairs back to how they were before they came and go home.

Act 2: the workshop

Scene 4: rooms of change

About a week later after the rehearsal, the Businesssteatteri team comes to the same interactive room and start building the theatre. It is midday and shockingly for a Finnish summer the sun is beaming through the windows. The researcher sets up shop between the chairs for the audience and the stage and sets up the GoPro action camera.

Narrator:

There is good nervous energy buzzing in the air as the team sets up the stage. This is partly due to the fact that this particular gig is slightly unusual for them. Usually Process Theatre is used to mirror existing organizational reality, what goes on in the organization at that particular time. Quite often this means that there is a specific predefined change on the way, everyone knows what is to come. Sometimes the focus is on past events, to inspect what has been going on in the organization so far. In this case however, the team takes on a task of mirroring something that is merely a blurry hunch, far in the future and doesn't in fact exist yet. The software change and everything that comes with it is looming behind the corner but has not been entirely revealed yet.

The client's project team also appears when everything is set up.

Narrator:

The project team discusses with Merita should they also take part in the workshop and wonders what their role should be. Merita convinces that they absolutely should, as it would set an example for the participants. Eventually after considering it for a moment, the project team decides to participate.

The participants start arriving. They start taking places in the audience. Most of them carry a cup of coffee and a Brunberg's strawberry kiss in the iconic red and bronze wrapper.

Narrator:

It starts to dawn on the Businesssteatteri team that the participants have no idea what is about to happen in the next three hours. Most of them look slightly skeptical. The minority looks somewhat curious. The bafflement is evident. Interviewing Merita, she said that usually the participants are given the information beforehand that the workshop is conducted with theatrical tools. But this time there was a hiccup in communication and only the change agents who were interviewed beforehand had some hunch about what was going to happen, but the great majority was kept completely in the dark. Most of them thought it was just a standard training workshop, which they had had a couple of in the past since being chosen to become change agents. And there they were, amidst a theatre workshop about to take place.

All of the thirty-five change agents have taken a seat in the audience. The Businesssteatteri team stands together at the stage. The workshop has started.

Project manager:

Welcome everyone to the last T.E.D workshop for this season. Today is going to be a different day compared to the previous ones. Today we have a theatre here, Businesssteatteri to be exact. I hope you keep your minds open for insights. I now hand over the stage to you , Merita.

Director:

Welcome on my and Businesssteatteri's behalf as well. I am Merita Petäjä from Businesssteatteri and here we have our actors.

The actors stand up and greet the audience. Stiina tells about the study she is conducting and the non-disclosure agreement assuring that no one will be recognized in the final research report.

Narrator:

According to the interviews with the participants, some of their fellow change agents had told the interviewees that at this point they were thinking that "*there's absolutely no way I am going to perform today*". The ones interviewed had more curious expectations towards the

unusual training method. One of the interviewees however revealed that he had been out on an outdoors excursion that day and had to leave earlier in order to attend the workshop: *"I realized that, shit, there was this theatre thing going on. Why did I have to come here when I could have spent a pleasant day out there as we are doing just some goofy stuff?"*

Director:

As Kirsi said, today is indeed going to be something different and I am excited about the three-hour session we are about to begin. Let's start with a warm up.

Narrator:

Merita asks the change agents who has worked for the company for more than five years. Quite a few people stand up. Then ten, twenty and the last one to stand up is an employee who has been with the firm for more than thirty years. The audience applauds.

Director:

The idea with this afternoon is to share what you know, we didn't come here to tell you how to be change agents. The idea is to explore the phenomena of organizations with the help of the professional actors. So that means that you don't have to step on the stage and act.

Producer/Actor 1:

But if you want to, the stage is all yours.

Director:

Those are sometimes the best moments when someone from the audience comes up to the stage and shows how it's done. But mainly for the acting purposes we have our professional actors here. But what we do need from you is participation, you need to help our actor-change-agents as they are in trouble. This was also an interesting challenge for us as our job is to mirror a change that is looming somewhere behind the corner. You will see how we resolved this soon enough. About the structure for today's workshop, we are going to do an introduction first where the point is to map out where you are with the change and also to get to know our actors. After that we start the actual Process Theatre where we simulate situations that could happen in the future with this change and try to find solutions to them together. How does this sound like to you?

After a moment of silence some change agents quietly mumble something reminiscent of acceptance.

Narrator:

Merita said that more often than not the audience warms up slowly, so the team is used to having to work for lifting the spirit up and gain the trust of the participants. In this case, however, the warming up took a bit longer partly perhaps due to the fact that they were unintentionally taken by surprise.

Change agent 1:

(Looking skeptical) How is this going to benefit us? I mean is this for the benefit of the process or us or what are we supposed to take away from this?

Director:

That is an excellent question, thank you for asking. I hope that after this afternoon you would be more aware of what kind of phenomena you are dealing with regarding this upcoming change and the change resistance you are going to face. We truly believe that the professionals like you learn best from each other and that is what we are going to do here. Did I manage to answer your question?

Change agent 1:

Yeah.

Director:

So, we have four papers attached to the walls all of them filled with different kinds of questions you might have considered since the start of this change process.

Narrator:

Merita goes to each paper and reads them out loud. The first one discusses the possibilities the change brings about, the other is about what the upcoming change means to the change agents themselves. The third is about the doubts and controversies and the fourth and final one is about the change agents' commitment to the change.

Director:

I would like for you to choose the one you think describes best your own feelings towards the change, what you think are relevant at this very moment in time. After picking the one you feel like you relate to most, discuss together in a group around the questions presented and I will join you a bit later.

Change agents stand up and start circulating in the room to have a look at the different papers.

Narrator:

Slowly the groups start to form around the papers and the discussions begin. Merita circles around to listen and participate in these discussions in order to pick up some central phrases to be used by the actors. The researcher goes around listening and observing. It is not difficult to notice that only two change agents have chosen to discuss about their commitment to the change and the biggest group seems to be the one with doubts.

Director:

Okay, let's have two actors here on the stage to dramatize some of the quotes I picked from your discussions. The first group had the opportunities that come with the change and the quotes are "possibility to get to define stuff" and "we will get what we want".

Narrator:

Krista and Milla act out a short scene using the said quotes. The other themes are then carried out in the same manner. The introduction is a way to make the feelings and thoughts visible the change agents have towards the change. Also, it gives a little taste for what is about to come with the main course, Process theatre, and is a way to introduce the actors to the participants. Observing the situation, it was a high wall for the team to climb. Merita said that she believed that the turning point was to start with acknowledging the doubts the change agents themselves had towards the change thus showing that they didn't want to impose anything on them. Ironically, the workshop about change resistance included the change agents' own resistance towards the change as well as to the workshop at the beginning.

Scene 5: mirroring the change

Then it's time for the Process Theatre to start. The change agents go back to their seats in the audience. The actors pull yellow curtains hanging from the ceiling in order to create the stage for the Process Theatre.

Director:

The idea with this introduction was to give you the opportunity to think about your own questions regarding the change, which are important to recognize and acknowledge in order helping your colleagues with what is to come. I have to say, when doing the research, we all thought that the content was not the easiest to get a grip on and that is why we had an idea to use another kind of organization as an example. The consultants you will soon meet work for a mid-size gardening company. The company is about to acquire a new tractor from a manufacturer called Deutcher, the tractor goes by the name B.O.B. We create a laboratory of change, where you can say stop and try out a different approach unlike in the real world. What do you think? Do you buy the idea of a gardening organization?

Short silence.

Change agent 2:

Let's go with it.

Narrator:

The actors play out the scene, which was in the prologue of the introduction. The manager, Merita, comes to the stage and announces that the gardening company's employees have been made into change consultants and the new tractor is waiting behind the curtain for them to try it out. The boss wants the change agents to learn how to use the new tractor and then spread the joy to their colleagues.

Director:

Let's first get to know the change agents.

The first Change agent, named Kaisa (played by Actor 3, Krista) comes to the stage and shakes the director's hand.

Director:

Well Kaisa, you have now been named as a change agent, what do you think about this?

Actor 3:

Uh, I don't know. Maybe it says something about the effort I have put in my work so far. Or I'm not sure. I'm not sure about the criteria that have played part in the choosing process.

Director:

(Asking the audience) What could be the criteria why Kaisa was chosen to become a change agent?

Change agent 3:

Because she opened her mouth in the wrong situation.

The audience bursts into laughter.

Director:

(To Kaisa) So you have been quite convincing.

Actor 3:

Fair enough *(nods her head with a smirk on her face)*.

Merita starts to ask questions from the audience to create the character.

Director:

How long has Kaisa worked for the company?

Change Agent 4:

She's probably been there more than ten years.

Change agent 5:

If she has opened her mouth in the wrong situation she cannot have worked there more than two years.

Narrator:

The audience laughs again. In the interviews the importance of humor came into conversation multiple times. The interviewees mentioned how it affected the ambience and made them want to pay attention instead of playing with their phones.

Change agent 5:

Or she hasn't learnt how to shut up.

More laughter.

Director:

Okay what about hobbies, what hobbies does Kaisa have?

Change agent 6:

She does agility with her dog.

Director:

What kind of dog does she have?

Change agent 7:

Some kind of big, stern dog. Like a German shepherd.

Actor 3:

I have two German shepherds, Rocco and Poju, and I train with them at least three times in a week. It's a great way to exercise, too.

Director:

Let's look two weeks in the future from the day in the coffee room. She faces Satu who comes to work, and your job is to get to introduce B.O.B the tractor to Satu. Let's see what happens.

The scene begins. Satu (played out by producer/actor 1 Milla) steps on to the stage with a navy-blue raincoat with the hood on. Clearly in the imagined scene it is raining. She also has a pitchfork in her hand. Satu searches for the tractor keys in the office but they seem to have gone missing. Kaisa also steps to the stage from the curtains.

Actor 3:

Satu, it was you I was looking for. I have great news for you. Today is your big day. Remember when I told you about the new tractor way back, two years ago? Well it's here now. It's outside there on the yard and I would like for you to drive it today.

Producer/Actor 1:

But...but I don't want to. Seriously. I...want the old one back. Where are the keys?

Actor 3:

They are disposed of, the old tractors have all been disposed of appropriately. We don't have them anymore.

Producer/Actor 1:

But...please, I can't do it. Why do I have to? I'm feeling sick. I think I'm having an anxiety attack.

Actor 3:

Hey, come here and have a quick look at it from the window.

Kaisa opens the curtains slightly at the back of the stage to show Satu the B.O.B.

Producer/Actor 1:

I can't drive that, that's massive! It must be at least four meters high. What if I fall down from there? Have you thought about that? I just learnt how to use the old one, can't deal with the new one right now.

Actor 3:

4,2 to be exact (*she says with pride and awe in her voice*). But we have a really good manual on how to use it. Don't worry. We still have to do some testing, though, as we have experienced teeny tiny problems with the breaks. But I'm sure it will all sort out when we start using it.

Narrator:

Finally, Satu makes up an excuse about a doctor's appointment and sneaks off the stage as fast as she can.

Director takes one of the stools that are around the round tall table and places it at the center of the stage.

Director:

Okay, Kaisa you can sit here. This is called a hot seat and it means that when sitting on the chair one must tell the truth. How do you think that went?

Actor 3:

Well...as you probably saw, it didn't go that well at all.

Director:

What happened?

Actor 3:

(*Being pensive for a moment before answering*) I guess I didn't leave her much room for choice. I get it that she is freaking out a bit, but we must go forward. We just have to move on with the technology, you know.

Narrator:

What was mentioned in the previous act already, the point is to dramatize what happens when an employee who is clearly scared of the new tractor encounters a change consultant who gives logical arguments, thus ending up in a mismatch. The scene is improvised based on the script written in the rehearsal session.

Two more scenes follow the first one. In the second scene change consultant named Tiina encounters Hans-Kalle, who does not *want* to start using the new tractor. Stefan's character Hans-Kalle wins the audience over with simply being hilarious in his own stubbornness. It seems to lift the mood of the workshop even more. The third change agent Pete encounters Irmeli, who has the block in the area of *thinking* and she tries to get the grips with the manual of the new machine. The change agent characters are wearing neon yellow construction vests to so it's easier to keep track of who they are, especially when they all play a double role.

Director:

(To the audience) So my question for you is, how could you help the change agents with their encounters? To help you out, we have a paper that helps you come up with the concrete recommendations. It is based on a framework of how to face change resistance. It's probably easiest if you divide into two groups within the three colors. I'll give you 15 minutes for the discussion, then choose one of each group to be the advisor for the change agents.

Small groups of about five change agents are formed and the discussions start promptly.

Director:

(After 15-some minutes) Could the first ones come here to the front, let's start with the groups who had red wristbands, you will give advice to Kaisa. The blue groups will help out Tiina and the yellow ones will assist Pete.

The first two advisors come forward and Kaisa takes her place at the center of the stage. Advisors start giving recommendations.

Advisor 1:

You could suggest that you go together to have a look at the tractor. It isn't probably best to be like here's the key, good luck pal.

Advisor 2:

You could tell about the vision for the future, paint a bright picture for Kaisa.

Advisor 1:

You should also try to gain her trust. You could say something like, yeah, I was scared too the first time I saw B.O.B.

Director:

So, let's try the scene again, let's pretend that the previous one never happened and start with a clean slate.

Narrator:

The scene is played out again with the actors adjusting to the instructions given by the advisers. Kaisa stops the scene quite a few times to ask for more instructions of what to say and do from the designated advisors when the interaction hits a barrier. The idea is clearly to hone the scene piece by piece instead of making it perfect from the start so that there is much interaction with the advisors and the rest of the participants. By doing so, the important points become highlighted. The scene ends when Satu agrees to go and come to have a look at the new pink tractor after a long battle.

The other two scenes between Tiina (Milla) and Hans-Kalle (Stefan) as well as Irmeli (Krista) and Pete (Stefan) are then done in the same manner, first hearing the recommendations of the advisers and then re-taking the scenes. Tiina faces an epic struggle as she faces the most stubborn colleague, Hans-Kalle, creating the most laughter among the participants so far. Tiina has to shout "cut" multiple times and ask what to do with the man. The last group has one advisor that really swims like a fish in the water when giving out recommendations. This youngish change agent talks to the actor-change-agent directly leading the show.

Scene 6: take-away

Director:

Now I would like for you to think about the key points from today, what you think was important. I'll give you ten minutes to have a discussion in the same groups and again, choose one who will shortly present the key points of your discussions. We will then end today's workshop with these thoughts.

Change agent, group 1:

(Stands up and reads from her notes) Well shortly put, what we discussed is that what we saw here today is that people indeed are different and should be encountered keeping that thought in mind. Basically, it's about people. And about the importance of communication.

Change agent, group 2:

We also discussed about the same themes, how to encounter different kinds of people. And how hard it can be sometimes. We talked about how listening is indeed important but also how to interact with someone and ask questions not just make our assumptions straight away.

Change agent, group 3:

I recognized myself in the character Kaisa, who tries to argue only with the facts. If that doesn't sink in, then too bad. I recognized the same in other areas of life too. I guess...this was something new for me.

Narrator:

Also, in the interviews the change agents discussed the same thing: recognizing themselves in the characters. A participant told amidst the workshop that they have already encountered the colleagues or subordinates who are skeptical about the change. A participant also said that *"well I recognized myself in Tiina, I'm also enthusiastic like her"*. Thus, it could be argued that according to the interviews the scenes were relevant and real at least for some of the participants. Secondly, throughout the workshop it can be seen that the participants have clearly assumed the language of the workshop, talking about the characters with their names, saying B.O.B instead of T.E.D and using the gardening metaphor. This was also evident in the interviews. The interviewees also said that the metaphor worked well. One of them said that *"they made us feel that there was really something there behind the curtain...so it kind of sucks you into that world"*.

Change agent, group 4:

We discussed most about how to encounter groups, not just individuals and how that affects our work.

Change agent, group 5:

When looking at the scenes we did recognize ourselves in the characters, their attitudes and approaches, although they might have been a bit exaggerated. We thought it was a good way to get a chance to think about our own attitude, which itself is not neutral for most of us. It also gave a chance to inspect the scenes from the outside when the possible situations were concretized.

Narrator:

The interviewees also brought up the matter of exaggeration. Someone said *“well all the clichés have certainly been put to the table...they are present everyday no matter what.”* However, to some the exaggeration did not work and they criticized that it was too far-fetched not concentrating on the relevant things. All in all, most of the last discussion at the end of the workshop moved on the level of what they had realized or learnt during the day. Some people also reflected on their own attitudes towards the change and made links to their personal life outside work.

Director:

Thank you for your participation today. Good luck with the pink tractor that is waiting for you around the corner.

Project manager:

Tomorrow the training continues in the morning. You get to actually have a peek behind the curtain.

The Businesssteatteri team says goodbye to the change agents getting some direct feedback from a number of the participants. The team puts everything back to their place and leaves.

Conclusion: then what?

At the beginning there was only a faint sense of direction as this research journey started from the wonderment and not knowing, transforming into a yearning to make sense of what business theatre is about. The aim was to explore how business theatre is done with the tool of Process Theatre in the context of the *Busnessteatteri* organization. The theoretical framework was shaped into looking at business theatre as a way of doing management consulting with participatory theatre. This intersection was explored through the doing lens and the core concepts of practice, practitioner and praxis. With the lens in my back pocket I constructed an analysis drawing from the narrative research tradition and inspired by Petersen's (2013) ethnographic drama. When constructing the narrative analysis with an ethnodramatic twist, I made sense of the data through a narrative lens. Also, doing business theatre can be seen as an enacted, embodied narrative from real life.

All in all, the further I wandered on the study path the more it all started to make sense (after a long period of fogginess and being lost I might add). It dawned on me how theatre, narratives, practices, the philosophical position of social constructionism and the concepts of reality and fiction are inherently intertwined. Intuition led me towards discovery. Now in the conclusion chapter I step back from the buzz of actions and words to explore the findings in relation to the literature discussed and answer to the research questions proposed in the introduction. The doing lens has been the window to the practice, through which *Busnessteatteri* and the client organization appear as actions and words that are constructed in social interaction.

Exploring the doing of business theatre

The narrative explores the doing of business theatre by telling a story of the praxis of doing Process Theatre. As it can be read from the narrative, professional actors interpret and dramatize (or mirror) scenes from the client organization. The interpretations are based on interviews conducted with some of the participants of the workshop. On the first round the scenes are only played out in an improvisational manner. The participants discuss in groups what kind of advice they could provide for the actors during the second round of the scene. The core idea is that the participants, or spect-actors as Boal would call them, are actively

taking part and direct the actors in constructing the re-takes of the scenes. The different characters, in other words, the practitioners, are the ones doing the praxis. They are the ones from the *Businessteatteri* organization and the ones from the client organization. The practitioners of *Businessteatteri* have different roles as we could see in the narrative. The practitioners of the client organization include both the project management teams as well as the participants of the workshop. Together, the narrative describes the practice of business theatre.

How is management consulting done with theatre, then? Having a soft spot for anecdotes, I must recall something that happened a while ago. At the start of my thesis journey, as I was going through the literature of management consulting, I got a vivid flashback of a lecture taking place around four years ago. The course was called *Leadership in organizations* and the topic for that day was on the notion of perception, how we perceive the world around us. The lecturer, Susanna Kantelinen, told us about a child of a friend of hers, three-year-old Onni, who had uttered something very simple yet insightful. *One cannot see themselves*. I couldn't help but to think that Onni could have been talking about the practice of management consulting. One indeed cannot see themselves and that is why we need best friends, thesis supervisors, therapists and in the organizational context, consultants. In business theatre these consultants mirror the organizational reality so that one could better see oneself.

An integral point is that the scenes played out are constructed based on the client organization instead of being universal to all organizations. As discussed in the analysis, research in the form of interviews and sometimes observation is conducted to find out what is the situation at the client organization. It is surely a different thing to be able to observe a scene based on their experiences from the everyday organizational life as opposed to observing a workshop that could be done at any organization. I argue that when the participants are able to recognize the similarities, although a metaphor might be used, the workshop comes closer to the participants.

Also, importantly, when doing Process Theatre, the client produces the solutions to the problems or challenges. The change agents were heard in the form of interviews, so that the organizational narratives being mirrored are based on the participants' experiences instead of being imposed on them from the management team. In that way the participants are defining

both the first improvised scene and giving recommendations to what should be done in the retake. In the follow-up interview with the client and *Businesssteatteri* team the project manager said that there were some things brought up in the workshop that she was not at all aware of. Granted, the management team contacts the consulting company having objectives for the project, yet Process Theatre creates a space for the participants to voice their feelings and thoughts through the interviews and in the workshop. This facilitative role links business theatre to the core ideas of process consulting as discussed by Pietiläinen et al. (2015) who suggest that the new wave of process consulting is more about creating opportunities for the employees to participate in defining and solving organizational challenges, which business theatre is first and foremost about.

Continuing, a thought occurred to me when writing the analysis. Perhaps the practice of business theatre could be seen as constructing a mirror that aims to the act of mirroring inwards, in other words, self-reflection. As discussed in the narrative, some of the participants told that they could relate to the characters, recognize the similar way of doing and speaking. In the interviews some of the participants said that they felt like they were given a chance to reflect upon and make sense of their experiences from everyday life. When doing business theatre could be seen as creating opportunities for aesthetic experiences introduced by John Dewey. In an aesthetic space both an image of reality and the reality of image are present, leading to the liberation of both imagination and memory (Boal 1998).

Moreover, business theatre is not about pouring knowledge into participants' heads, but acknowledging them as embodied beings that surely think but also feel and want. To give an example, quite recently I was lucky enough to take part in one of the Process Theatre workshops as an actor. At this workshop Milla played a manager who was going through a rough time with her divorce. I vividly remember when one of the participants said that she feels so bad for the character that she was almost brought to tears. During that scene the atmosphere was palpable, nobody made a sound, nobody moved. It could be compared to watching a scary movie and feeling anxious although we know that we are completely safe. To conclude, theatre creates a space for thinking, feeling and also doing in the form of participation as well as thinking about own thinking, feeling and doing in the organizational life.

Also, integral when it comes to doing management consulting with theatre are the concepts of distancing as well as humor. In business theatre a fictive space is created to explore organizational phenomena with fictive scenes. In the narrative this meant that the metaphor of a gardening company and B.O.B the tractor were introduced instead of discussing the actual organization and the software change. In this manner certain people are not singled out and even sorer subjects can be discussed, as they are taken further away from the everyday life and the people in it. Theatre and the use of a metaphor create a safer space for the participants to share their thoughts and feelings. Humor, for example with the exaggeration of certain reactions of the characters, was important for the ambience of the workshop, especially as people tend to be rather skeptical with the theatrical methods in the organizational context. Also, humor is a way to make the workshop interesting and engaging to participate in. All in all, doing business theatre is as itself a way to do the distancing, with or without switching software for pink tractors. As Goffman (1954) suggest, theatre is itself a metaphor for life.

Beyond the question of how business theatre is done there is the notion of reality as a social construction, which I would like to go back to at the final steps of this research report. As LaPointe (2014) argues, language does not only describe and explain things, but *does* them. The same could be said about theatre – and business theatre. From the social constructionist viewpoint doing management consulting and doing theatre are actually about constructing and negotiating meanings whether it was in the organizational context or not. When interpreting the narratives of the organization and when reconstructing the scenes with the participants, meanings around the organization are negotiated. The organization is *done* in the playful, yet serious practice of business theatre. When doing scenes during Process Theatre, in those moments everyone is in the reality of theatre. It could be seen that in that reality of theatre, also the reality of the organization is being (re)produced right then and there.

To conclude, theatre could be seen as an embodied language, through which stories are narrated. Rusanen (2005) argues that theatre enables to explore the implicit social rules, which affect what and how we do things in a certain context. Rusanen does not mention the word practice yet in my opinion that is exactly what she talks about. Keeping the definition of practices proposed by Reckwitz (2002, 250) in mind, dramatizing scenes interpreted from the

organization can make the highly routinized way of making wanting, moving and feeling visible. When something is made visible it can be discussed. When something can be discussed perhaps it can be changed. Somers (2008) and Esslin (1980) suggest theatre can be seen as a social laboratory to study interaction, how people say and do. Most importantly, doing business theatre may help to remind us about the live laboratory we find ourselves in: the everyday (organizational) life where things do not happen, but are done as Brunila and Isopahkala-Bouret (2010, 320) suggest.

Epilogue

From the start I have tried to accept the fact that this is a preliminary type of research, a scouting of the territory if you will. I have had to fight back the ever so luring side paths and sticking to the research questions acting as guiding lights on the long road. Considering the opportunities for the future research, the paths yet to be wandered, it would be interesting to zoom in on a specific aspect of doing business theatre, for example the element of playfulness and humor, the concept of metaxis or imagination, to mention a few options. The doing lens could also be utilized, but the certain theatrical element or elements would be magnified. I believe it would be beneficial to gain more insight on the finesses of doing business theatre in order to gain practical understanding of the practice itself. Regarding the limitations of this study, as discussed in the methodology chapter, I restate that the research is my interpretation of the practice of business theatre. What I have tried to achieve in this study report is to tell about how I have conducted the research, justifying and most importantly reflecting the choices made.

At the end of the road there is a sense of fulfillment. The not knowing what I do not know has turned more into not knowing of what I do know, yet is too close for me to actually see, which I realized when writing the conclusion chapter. It indeed is hard to see yourself. Continuing from this thought, at some point down the road I realized that conducting this thesis reminds me a great deal of how business theatre is done. First there is the research process and then you present the findings. For *Businessteatteri* theatre is a means to present the findings, for me it has been the narrative way of constructing the analysis. For *Businessteatteri* the end product, so to say, is the workshop, whereas for my research it is this very report you are reading at this moment.

The thought of closing the final loop put a smile on my face.

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Appendices

Appendix 1: Data

Interviews

Pilot interviews

18.5.2016, Merita Petäjä

8.6.2016, Ulrich Hartmann (via skype)

Bullet-point interviews

8.6.2016, Participants and Busnessteatteri team

Participant interviews

17.6. 2016, Participant

22.6.2016, Participant

22.6. 2016, Participant

12.7.2016, Participant

Second-round interview

13.9.2016, Merita Petäjä

17.2.2017 Sami Nieminen (M.A. in drama pedagogy)

Observation

8.6.2016, Client meeting

14.6.2016, Process Theatre workshop

30.6.2016, Follow-up meeting with the client

Appendix 2: Frame for participant interviews

Theme 1: Expectations before the workshop

Theme 2: Experience of Process Theatre

Theme 3: Thoughts and feelings after the workshop

Theme 4: Reflecting on learning

Theme 5: Feedback

Appendix 3: Frame for observation

What is done?

Who does?

What is the space like?

What is said?

How is interaction facilitated?

How is feedback given?