

ART COMES FIRST

How Collectivity, Values, History, and Democratic Principles Affect the Artistic and Organisational Work in Finnish Ensemble Theatre Companies

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ABSTRACT

Thesis

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| <p>Abstract</p> <p>This thesis investigates the daily operations and artistic production processes of four Helsinki-based ensemble theatres companies: KOM-teatteri, Ryhmäteatteri, Teater Viirus, and Q-teatteri. The study focuses on the formation of organisational identity and the impact of history, collectivity, and individual values on operational work, artistic choices, and art.</p> <p>This qualitative case study involved conducting interviews and a group discussion with members of ensemble theatre companies and one freelance director. The study employs a self-ethnographical approach as the author is a member of one of the companies under study. Data collection and analysis were targeted at three levels of organisation: organisational, groups, and individuals.</p> <p>The theoretical framework is based on arts management and organisation theories with a focus on systems theory, decision-making, identity, clans and networks, organisational identity, and values.</p> <p>The results indicate that ensemble theatre companies are self-organisations with shared leadership and clan type features. They emphasise collectivity and democratic principles through continuous self-referential process, mutual trust, as well as shared values and responsibility, which generate work motivation and pride in the organisation and its members. All members in the organisation maintain professional and artistic integrity and all organisational operations are in a causal relationship. Organisational identity is formed around the distinctive theatre art and the means and values with which it is created. Self-reference is a means to make artistic choices, monitor wellbeing and recruitment. However, collectivity and friendship can cause excessive cohesion, prevent recruitment of new artists and slow down organisational changes. Ensemble theatre companies are constructed of individuals with personal traits, values and aims, and covert social networks and alliances preventing the full implementation of democratic principles.</p> <p>This study contributes to the field of arts management, offering discussion about the values inherent in artistic processes in Finnish ensemble theatre companies as well as their complex organisational processes and social relations. This thesis gives a voice to all people working within the arts, regardless of their job title.</p> | |
| <p>Keywords</p> <p>Ensemble theatre company, collectivity, artistic process, organisational culture, arts organisation</p> | |
| <p>Additional information</p> | |

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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the study

This thesis investigates ensemble theatre companies in Finland. It concentrates especially on four publicly funded non-profit theatre companies based in Helsinki: Q-teatteri, KOM-teatteri, Teater Viirus, and Ryhmäteatteri. What connects these theatres is that they all employ educated and skilled actors, technical staff, and administrative staff. They produce new drama in collaboration with a variety of writers and directors as well as contemporary adaptations of classics. In addition, they run their own permanent venues and create visually impressive productions by employing freelance designers. These theatre companies have toured internationally and can be characterised as professional and organised. They have existed in the Finnish theatre field for a long time, the oldest one for 53 years and the youngest one for 30 years. (KOM-teatteri, n.d., Q-teatteri, n.d., Ryhmäteatteri n.d., Teater Viirus, n.d..)

The reason why these four theatre companies are interesting cases for this particular study is that their founding principles include the idea of uncompromising art, democratic principles and collectivity. They have been developing their organisational structures based on these principles for decades. How have these companies created their style, survived from many internal, financial, and artistic crises, renewed and yet kept their distinctive style and vigour?

Each of these theatre companies form a tight group with a fixed ensemble and a few selected staff members. Only a few people join the organisation with a permanent contract. The art that is created in these theatres can be seen on stage, but the knowledge of how the everyday life of these companies is operated is a knowledge shared by a small circle of people - mainly those who work there. Inevitably, there is a certain air of mystery around these theatre companies and their employees. The reason for this is that the recruiting principles seem to be based on networks and comradeship. Is it even possible for an outsider to grasp how these organisations work?

Being one of those who have worked in these places, I have a professional interest in uncovering the common principles that have guided these theatre companies and the individuals who belong to them. This thesis is the result of this self-motivated inquiry.

1.2 Structure of the thesis

This thesis is constructed out of six chapters. In the first chapter, the background and the reasons for the choice of research subject are introduced. This chapter also presents the three research questions and defines the term “ensemble theatre company”. Further on, the historical background of ensemble theatre companies is described as well as how their founding moment and the first operational years were set in time and societal context. In the end of this chapter, the four case theatres and their organisational structure are presented. The second chapter includes the theoretical framework on which this study is based. The third chapter introduces the research methods and the relevant theories. The fourth chapter presents the research material divided into thematic sections. Further on, the research data are analysed and discussed in reference to research questions and the theoretical framework. The fifth chapter summarises the research findings. The sixth and the last chapter examines the research findings in the wider contexts of arts management and the current Finnish theatre field. Lastly, a few topical themes are highlighted for further study.

1.3 Ensemble theatre companies and the Finnish cultural financing system

The common term for collective theatre companies is a group theatre company, “ryhmäteatteri” in Finnish. In Finland, this definition refers to privately formed non-profit theatre companies that are publicly funded. As later introduced in the history section, they belong to the same wave of emerging group theatre companies that started in Europe after the Second World War. (Korsberg, 2010, p. 259). In this study, KOM-teatteri, Ryhmäteatteri, Teater Viirus, and Q-teatteri are defined as “ensemble theatre companies”. This term was chosen since these four companies are artistically structured around a fixed ensemble, which strongly defines their daily work. In the independent theatre field in Finland, it is not very common to have a permanent ensemble of actors. However, it is a common feature in most municipal theatre companies in Finland.

The four theatre companies call themselves group-formed state-financed (*vos*) theatre companies (*ryhmämuotoiset vos-teatterit*). This definition describes their unique position between the state-financed municipal theatres and independent state-financed

theatres. Based on their public funding, Finnish theatre companies are divided roughly into two groups: state-funded theatre companies (included in the “vos” funding system) and independent theatre companies (not included in the "vos" funding system). The so-called vos-system, The Finnish State Theatres and Orchestras Act established in 1993, was first based on the calculation system of the equivalent full-time personnel years and later also on the unit costs. All four ensemble theatre companies, Q-teatteri, KOM-teatteri, Ryhmäteatteri, and Teater Viirus managed to enter the system before it became more or less stagnant and closed. The professional theatre companies that failed to enter the system must apply for a discretionary subsidy from the state on an annual basis. The difference that is created due to this financing system is that since the funding is secured in vos-financed theatres, they can make long-term plans for their work. This practically means that they have permanent staff, venues, and ensemble. (Wilmer & Koski, 2006, pp. 141-147.) However, the statutory funding system has been under renewal since 2016 and a new system will be taken into use in 2022. The new law is expected to ease the situation of those professional theatres that were left out from the previous system. (Opetus- ja kulttuuriministeriö, n.d.). Generally, the Finnish theatre field is publicly funded by the state, municipalities, and private foundations. (Wilmer & Koski, 2006, pp. 146-147). However, similarly to all cultural organisations in Finland, vos-financed ensemble theatre companies are also heavily dependent on ticket sales and occupancy rates, hence, creating the pressure on artistic choices. (Yle, KOM-teatteri, Q-teatteri, Teater Viirus, Ryhmäteatteri, episode 1: Kenen silmille teatteria teemme?, 2020).

1.4 Problem formulation

Actor Hannu-Pekka Björkman (2007) aptly describes the specific nature of theatre art:

The writer finalises the book, an artist, the painting, but the actor returns to their piece of art evening after evening. (...) The work is continually undone. (...) The actor's work is constantly in motion; changing and flowing, but also disappearing. Only a little amount of concrete proof remains. A few newspaper clips, a fading photo, a program leaflet. It is said that an actor is as good as their latest role. Past roles have disappeared, no proof is left of them. There are only traces in the memory, dim references to masterpieces. The possible moments of defeat and glory have been

preserved to the people who have been sitting in the dark auditorium, their fragile, unreliable and before long fading recollections. (pp. 64-65.)

The essence of theatre is conveyed through artists, theatre makers, and the audience being in the same space. Furthermore, this art form cannot be recorded as it is: each performance night it is created anew and always different. When the production is over, the art work vanishes and it cannot be reproduced. This is also the beauty of this art form: disappearing art. The only thing that is left is the memories and thoughts and tacit experiences it has produced to the audience members and for the people who have been involved in creating the art work.

Due to the fragile nature of this art form and the difficulty of capturing the essence of it, theatre is often a tight community of like-minded people. The process of creating theatre is multifaceted and tied to nuances, moments, individuals, and atmospheres. I have experienced this during my own career in the theatre. My theatre background includes working in an ensemble-based Von Krahl theatre company in Estonia as well as Teater Viirus in Helsinki. Both theatre companies are independently run, with a small staff of 10-15 employees, their own venue and decades of theatre history behind them. Von Krahl was the first theatre company, and the first avant-garde theatre company, established in the free and newly independent Estonia in 1991. (Von Krahl Teater, n.d.). Teater Viirus is a Swedish-speaking theatre company established to be a mischievous counterforce to the larger and conventional theatre companies. (Teater Viirus, n.d.). What connects them is the strive for art without compromises and being a group of like-minded professionals aiming at the same goal. When I joined these theatre companies nearly 20 and 30 years after they had been established, I had no difficulties in adopting their core principles and feel proud of it. I felt that I belonged to a group. Why is it so?

These theatre companies are demanding work places. Independent ensemble theatre companies ask their members what they can give to the theatre company and the collective, not what the theatre company can offer to individuals. One must be ready to execute different tasks at hand, be flexible and adaptable, respect the work of the co-workers and embrace the company's artistic choices. If one craves to be a star or the centre of attention or a lone genius, the ensemble theatre company might not be a suitable place for them.

Working in ensemble theatre companies led me to reflect on how these like-minded people find each other and what the special features of working together in an ensemble theatre company are. When the art is placed first, the organisation members' relation to art and the organising of work must be of specific kind. From my personal point of view, the relationship is positive. Based on my experience in working for organisations of different sizes and structures, a workplace I feel most at home is an ensemble theatre company. Furthermore, it seems that these theatre companies require a certain kind of work ethic and a state of mind from its employees. They distinctly prefer democratic principles and collectivity, but are these only ideals and the truth is something different?

The Finnish state-financed municipal theatres have been created from the need to offer cultural services to the citizens. In contrast, ensemble theatre companies have been established from the individual need to create theatre art that responds to personal taste. (Wilmer & Koski, 2006, pp. 130-131). They were conceived from the desire to collaborate with like-minded people and organise the work according to the needs of the group. Compared to the independent professional theatres outside the state financing, the steady financing base gives the possibility to develop long-term artistic style, working methods, and group work. Some could say that it is theatre made in ideal circumstances and others could say that they are stagnant, institutionalised, and isolated units fixed in their past. Their position can be interpreted as being either relics or trailblazers. Therefore, the company's relationship to its history can be complex.

The key questions are, how do people working in ensemble theatre companies see themselves and what can they offer to contemporary theatre in Finland?

1.5 Aim of the study

All four theatre companies that have been chosen for this study have a long tradition and various phases of change in their history. Does history and the founding idea influence the present day? How are the core idea and the core artistic idea of the theatre company retained even though members of the theatre company change? What is the individual member's role in the theatre company: how do they collaborate, make decisions, communicate and, hence, reproduce the core idea of a theatre company?

The research questions are the following:

1) *How are the three primary founding principles (collectivity, democratic principles, and the concept of aiming for high-quality art) of ensemble theatre companies implemented in practice?*

2) *What are the artistic values and core values of an ensemble theatre company and how are they reproduced in the daily work?*

3) *What kinds of individuals join ensemble theatre companies? How does this process happen?*

Theatre organisations feature three levels that all exist and affect each other simultaneously: the individual, the group, and the organisational level.

The individuals who work in an organisation have personal, sociological, historical, and educational backgrounds and complex combinations of knowledge, skills, values, habits, and memories. *Groups* consist of individuals who operate within a given context. This context can be, for example, a theatre company and the professional group such as actors in a theatre company. However, individuals can simultaneously belong to several groups that have been formed, for example, through friendship, family, or profession. *The organisation* is an entity that consists of individuals and groups that represent and operate through a commonly agreed idea and aim.

The aim of this research is to examine this three-level division of the four ensemble theatre companies operating in Helsinki: KOM-teatteri, Q-teatteri, Teater Viirus, and Ryhmäteatteri. The first reason for choosing these theatre companies for this case study is that there are similarities between their founding principles, operating principles, structure, financing base, size, and artistic aims.

The second reason is that each of these theatre companies has generated their unique way of working and creating art. However, this work has not been researched much as a whole, in the context of Finnish vos-financed group theatre companies. Their shared ideas of

democratic principles, collectivity, and aim to create high-quality art from personal starting points are fascinating and timely topics. The understanding of high-quality art and what is “good” theatre can be seen as implemented through this specific structure.

The third reason is that their founding principles are different from those of municipal theatres and the funding base is different from that of independent theatre groups outside the state-financing system. Furthermore, the artistic core is based on the idea of a fixed ensemble.

The fourth reason is that over the recent years, these theatre companies have started to cooperate with each other by sharing knowledge, creating projects, and lending technical equipment. Therefore, they have also acknowledged their similarity and its benefits. From the research point of view, the alliance of these theatre companies can be seen as being naturally organised. It existed prior to and independent of this study. Therefore, it is a relevant and true phenomenon worth examining.

At the same time, one must acknowledge the difficulty to study the operations of an arts organisation. As Paavolainen (2002) remarks, as a research subject, the organisation's operational culture is both tempting and problematic. It is tempting, since it can describe the production processes of a work of theatrical art, ways of working, circumstances and possibilities in its pervasiveness. Organisation culture includes spoken and unspoken principles that guide the work at large, as well as visible and invisible power structures. Its problem lies in the same principles: so many and all things belong to it that it is difficult to structure the history of separate events into a whole. However, as Paavolainen admits, it is useful, since its focus is on the actual theatre work and it sets aside the history of individual performances and audience relations. (p. 136.) This is also the aim in this study: the theatre work is researched from the internal viewpoint instead of analysing the history through performances and how the audience or critics have reacted to them.

1.6 Research approach

The thesis is a qualitative case study. The research topic was approached through interviews with one freelance theatre director and six members of ensemble theatre companies with

different job titles. Additionally, one group discussion was conducted among the members of one ensemble theatre company.

The reason for choosing the qualitative research approach is the nature of research consisting of interpretive practices and through them “making the world visible”. Furthermore, subjects are researched in their natural settings. (Denzin & Lincoln 2011, as cited in Creswell, 2013, pp. 40-41). The interpretive approach involves understanding the research topic through its own logic and settings. It also acknowledges that the reality is based on human interaction and, therefore, it has a changing nature. (Rosenthal, 2018, pp. 14-16). The acquired research data, the interviews, open the view of the world that ensemble theatre company members have. Confidential one-to-one interview situations at best give interviewees a chance to describe quite freely and in their own words their approach to work and theatre art. Furthermore, my position as a researcher and member of one of the researched organisations gives the process a self-ethnographic basis where closeness to the research theme gives access to the organisations. Through my own work experiences, it also provides thematic depth.

The aim in this research is to determine how each person in the ensemble theatre company experiences and understands their organisation and to identify the similarities and differences in their experiences. The material is analysed through theory-related analysis and the topic is examined by combining management theories and organizational theories. However, the management theories as such seldom work in the context of the artistic process.

As Stahl and Tröndle (2019) remark, applying the management theories to art have caused constant concern about the autonomy of art and endangering the artists' freedom by planning and organising. The process involves through theories that are originally developed for the purposes of creating financial profit, standardisation, and rationality. If art is all about “novelty, surprise, beauty, mindfulness, engagement, and the unpredictable, all getting manifested into an aesthetic experience”, how can management theories offer tools for producing an aesthetic experience? (p. 247.) Therefore, this study employs sociologically based organization theories to understand the context of creating theatre art. Organization theories are especially suitable when aiming to phenomenologically understand the experience and concepts of individual members belonging to a tight group. Furthermore, the

ambiguous and even incomprehensive ways of creating art demand knowledge regarding how people collaborate and position their view of the world in relation to art.

As Stahl and Tröndle (2019) emphasise, most arts organisations are not created around the operational structure and strategy, but rather around the partly unconscious concept of core artistic values:

But first and foremost, the discussion in the organisation will be about their self-understanding (mission), the aesthetics they stand for, why they exist, and what program they will offer to their audiences, whether it be a bit more critical, historical, beauty, or community based. The director and the employees will carefully select the artists/artworks and build their programs, and only after this artistic decision has been made, all other decisions to enable this artistic experience will follow—financial, managerial, or pedagogical ones. (p. 251.)

In the field of arts management, there is an actual need to study how individuals in organisations collaborate to create art. Moreover, there is only a limited amount of research into the Finnish theatre, let alone ensemble theatre companies, from the point of view of the structures and working methods of contemporary theatre. The artistic themes, methods, and individual experiences of creating art are important and well covered in theatre studies, yet, what is still lacking is how people collaborate in theatre. To be more precise, when collaboration is studied, it is often studied from the point of view of the core artistic process. However, it is similarly interesting how individuals working in different positions in an art-led theatre company experience their role in creating art. For example, Rautavuoma (2015) has acknowledged this:

In conventional theatre work, the division of artistic and non-artistic work creates an illusion of a setting where the artistic is something that is not production-related, applied, or technical - and vice versa. Hence, two categories are created as follows: artistic and non-artistic work. (...) All theatre work should be primarily understood as artistic work and only secondarily, according to the person's actual work tasks, for example as production-related, applied or technical, i.e. one division of an artistic work. This does not mean that all people working in a theatre are artists, but

rather that each employee should perceive themselves implementing artistic work if one is with their own work affecting and aiming for the artistic end result. (p. 109.)

People working in smaller (10-15 employees) theatre company organisations seem to have a personal interest in working in the theatre field. Ensemble theatre companies, which are based on the principle of collaboration, are, therefore, relevant study objects. Furthermore, Q-teatteri, KOM-teatteri, Ryhmäteatteri, and Teater Viirus, have a visible and stable position in the Finnish theatre field. Yet, surprisingly little has been written about them in the academic field. Therefore, there still might be some stories untold.

1.7 Background on the Finnish theatre field

This subchapter describes the societal context, artistic tendencies as well as the structural and financial circumstances that affected the founding of group theatre companies in Finland in from the 1960s till 1990s. It focuses mainly on features related to collective thinking and democratic principles and how they influenced the foundation of the four theatre organisations of this case study.

1.7.1 Founding principles of ensemble theatre companies

The initial aim for founding the vos-financed ensemble theatre companies is different from the state-and municipal financed municipal theatres. Therefore, it is vital to pinpoint the reasons behind the founding of an ensemble theatre company. The three main themes have been assembled from literature depicting Finnish theatre, as well as three anniversary books written about ensemble theatre companies. These reasons summarised here seem to apply to all of the four ensemble theatre companies regardless of when they have been founded. These can be called the *general founding principles* of vos-financed ensemble theatre companies.

1) *Aiming for high-quality art*: The ensemble theatre companies were created from the artists' individual need to make art that responds to their own world view and make theatre that cannot be found from the institutional theatres. The concept of

high-quality, “a good art”, is based strongly on personal perceptions. The founders wanted to make artistic decisions collectively and free from intervention of the theatre board or external opinions. The artists wanted to work together with carefully chosen people to create a distinctive style. They preferred artistic risk-taking and uncompromised ideas to maintain the artistic quality. Ensemble theatre companies were seen as a counterbalance to larger institutional theatres as they presented new and often young theatre professionals and artists from different backgrounds.

2) *Collectivity and democratic principles*: Ensemble theatre companies wanted to create a collective-based and professional working environment following the democratic principles. They also wanted to develop new ways of working both to everyday operations and artistic creation. Through the themes of the performances and ways of working, the collective mirrored the individuals' values and perspectives into the current society and time.

(Kemppi & Säkö, 2016; Nåls, 2007; Ollikainen & Tanskanen, 2013; Paavolainen, 2002; Yleisradio, KOM-teatteri, Q-teatteri, Teater Viirus, Ryhmäteatteri, 2020)

In the next subchapters the historical background of the group theatre movement in Europe and especially in Finland is examined and the context for creation of these four specific ensemble theatre companies is introduced.

1.7.2 The first wave of group theatre companies in Finland

The movement of group theatre companies started in Europe after the Second World War as many theatre venues were destroyed and the temporary activities started in smaller, often temporary premises. Due to this, the actors' expressions changed artistically; gestures and the voice technique pursued the intimate style that suited the smaller studio stages. The close contact with the audience was paramount and the emphasis was on new drama written by local writers. In Finland, the movement started in the 1950s when for example Intimiteater, Teatteri Jurkka and Lilla Teatern were established. During that time the European new drama was especially important and shaped both the artists' expression and programming.

(Korsberg, 2010, pp. 259-260.) In the 1960s, the actors' education started to change from individual expression and elocutionary style to the physical group work. At the same time, the authoritarian directing style was replaced by collaboration with the actors, writers, and dramaturgs. The Brechtian political movement in the 1960s and 1970s brought along the urge for the democratisation of theatre professions and tasks as well as the artistic process.

Meanwhile, especially the actors grew more frustrated with the stiff production structure of municipal theatres and the system where municipal politicians sitting on the board made artistic decisions over repertoire. The long-term production planning led to “safe” programming where artistic risks were not taken and the non-artistic staff was in the majority. Actors felt that their voice was not heard and their position had been diminished.

The model for the group theatre company movement in Finland was taken for example from Eugenio Barba's Odense-theatre and Théâtre du Soleil in France. The main focus was on changing the practices of theatre work into a democratised system both artistically and practically.

Siikala, as cited in Seppälä and Tanskanen (2010), wrote in 1969 that the theatre staff should be formed through gathering like-minded people who have the same approach to their work as well as one or two dynamic initiators.

Ryhmäteatteri was established in 1968 and in 1971 the group announced:

We want to make theatre for as wide an audience base as possible and so that everyone can afford to buy the ticket. The theatre venue should be such that people dare to attend without the need to disguise themselves with evening dresses. The art of Ryhmäteatteri means that everyone in the theatre company can answer questions such as what, why, and for whom? (Seppälä & Tanskanen, 2010, pp. 301-329.)

KOM-teatteri was established in 1971 and in 1974 Kaj Chydenius described the ensemble:

KOM is a relatively small theatre collective that demands from their members not only professionalism, but also readiness to execute tasks from running errands to managerial duties. Each member's capacity is tested comprehensively, and the crucial motivator is the excellent group spirit. When profound analysis of the task at

hand is combined with resourceful technical solutions, a group theatre company can bring something truly new to the already rich Finnish theatre life. (Seppälä & Tanskanen, 2010, pp. 327-328.)

It is notable that both theatre companies were initially established without regular state support and as a radical alternative to the conventional municipal theatre culture. (Wilmer & Koski, 2006, p. 48).

One important feature of ensemble theatre companies, especially in KOM-teatteri, was reaching the audience through extensive touring around Finland. It was remarkable that outside Helsinki, the audience consisted of, for example, working class people and young adults, who were not regular theatre-goers. However, in the Helsinki area, their audience was mainly leftist intelligentsia. (Wilmer & Koski, 2006, p. 129.) The touring solution was discovered partly due to financial reasons as well as the reason that the theatre companies did not have a permanent venue for performing.

In the 1960s, the group theatre companies defined themselves as “democratic and professional theatre companies” and the director Raija-Sinikka Rantala described the freedom and equality that these groups relied on:

In the framework set by the Finnish society, these groups are free of outsider's direct authority and are theatres where each member has chosen to work on their own as well as in their co-workers' terms (...) employees collectively decide on the operative plan of the theatre, financial arrangements, division of work tasks, repertoire as well as following the labour law, the working hours, vacation days and ways in which to work. (Seppälä & Tanskanen, 2010, p. 326.)

The initial idea for a democratic theatre company initiated from the student theatre movement and especially from Helsinki-based Ylioppilasteatteri [Student Theatre]. In the 1960s (as it is still today) it was the incubator of young theatre enthusiasts led by professional theatre directors. It was a place of extreme experimentation of everything that was then forbidden in the actual Theatre Academy. The director Jaakko Pakkasvirta introduced the democratic participation to all theatre work and this approach was eventually adopted as such to the first ensemble theatre companies, Ryhmäteatteri and KOM-teatteri. The

importance of Ylioppilasteatteri was decisive as Eriikka Magnusson mentioned: "in the Ylioppilasteatteri we gained the experience that it is possible to work collectively. From there arose the thought; let's start working together and not go to those institutional theatres." (Ollikainen, 2013, pp. 17-18.)

However, in practice the democratic system where everybody participated in executing all tasks in the theatre company had to be abandoned soon, since it drove the companies towards collective laziness rather than discipline and exemplary working morale. Tytti Oittinen comments on the KOM-teatteri's early years: "little by little our democracy resembled the one in Orwell's *Animal Farm*: "All animals are equal, but some are more equal than the others." (Ollikainen, 2013, p. 21).

1.7.3 Artistic background of group theatre companies

Even though democratic thinking was an essential feature in group theatre companies, they were first created around strong directors and other artistic key people with a distinctive artistic style.

In the Teatterikeskus' yearly seminar in 1977, the directorship was under discussion. The common opinion was that in a democratic theatre group, the director is a person that collects all perceptions and ideas and leads the group according to these principles. However, theatre company cannot be led without artistic vision, hence the director must be an artist.

Paavolainen (2002) remarks that strong directors like Kalle Holmberg were the 1970s authority figures and it was natural, for example, for the press to uphold this kind of visionary theatre makers as the ideal and something that all theatre makers should aim to become. (pp. 144-149.) The same preference for visionary geniuses continued still in the 1990s when Q-teatteri was seen in the press as Antti Raivio's theatre company. (Kemppi & Säkö, 2016, p. 113).

The model for this visionary ideal came partially from the ideal of auteur artistry inspired by the French new wave films as well as the established system in Finland where freelance directors with strong artistic styles brought their working methods into each theatre company they visited. (Seppälä & Tanskanen, 2010, p. 334).

However, for example in KOM-teatteri the development of *collective auteur identity* has been the essence of all artistic work as well as the practical organising. (Helavuori, 2016, p. 178). This can be seen as a distinctive feature in the Finnish ensemble theatre companies. The artistic programme reflected strongly the collaboration of actors. The current members in the ensemble shaped both the theatre company as an organisation and the theatre art that was created. The styles and nuances changed according to the mixture of individuals in each ensemble. The theatre company mirrored the members' world view. (Yleisradio, KOM-teatteri, Q-teatteri, Teater Viirus, Ryhmäteatteri, episode 1: Kenen silmille teatteria teemme?, 2020).

Following the principle of the European group theatres, collaboration between the writers and the dramatists was close. When in the 1960s the Brechtian socio-political theatre that concentrated on the social problems and global inequality swept over Finland, the theatre was seen as a tool to change society and correct social injustice. This movement also emphasised the importance and skills of an actor as a primary reflector of their time. (Seppälä & Tanskanen, 2010, p. 301.) The writers often wrote current texts that commented on the actual events. The satirical political cabaret inspired from the German theatre was a familiar genre for example to KOM-teatteri where the close collaboration between the actors, the director and the writer shaped the performances.

In the end of 1970s, the ensemble theatre companies' theatrical style started to change into a profound portrayal of humans mirroring realism, history, and the current time. The repertoire in ensemble theatre companies started changing partly due to the fact that they attained permanent venues and they had an increasing number of actors of different ages. (Seppälä & Tanskanen, 2010, p. 333.) The first generation that had established Ryhmäteatteri and KOM-teatteri started to step aside. Most of them were tired of the unstable work conditions, constantly working overtime and frustrated by artistic disputes. When they started to start families, the larger municipal theatres with better facilities and steady salary became more appealing. (Paavolainen, 2002, p. 150.) In 1984, the old and new generation were mixed, for example, in KOM-teatteri and Ryhmäteatteri also experienced a generation change.

1.7.4 The second wave of group theatre companies in the 1980s and 1990s

In the 1980s, the focus changed from the collective-political theatre into individuality. Texts depicted the individual crisis and despair, and the artistic style was inspired from other art forms such as fine arts and dance. (Seppälä & Tanskanen, 2010, p. 301). The redefinition of theatre language and theatre's position in the society began. Contrary to the 1960s and 1970s, the audience was not anymore “the citizens” or the working class or bourgeoisie but a fragmented group of individuals with different aspirations and interests. The disappearance of the 70s collective spirit and joint cause created a void to the society that was soon filled with the urge to collect money, fame, commodities, and influence. Freedom and individuality were not political but cultural missions.

In the 1980s, the Finnish theatre was preoccupied with physicality, individuality and artistry. These ideas were embraced especially by Ryhmäteatteri, which earned it a place as the leading theatre company of the decade. In addition to stage productions, Ryhmäteatteri's actors and directors did television shows and this grew the theatre company's popularity especially among the younger generations all around Finland. (Helavuori, 2013, pp. 298-301; Seppälä & Tanskanen, 2010, pp. 370-373.)

Already in the 1970s, the ensemble theatre companies were mostly constructed out of theatre makers freshly graduated from Theatre Academy, whilst in the 1980s this became almost customary. (Wilmer & Koski, 2006, p. 48). Kallinen (2002) emphasises the meaning of the Theatre Academy Helsinki being paramount to creation of ensemble theatre companies. The Theatre Academy had the reformist attitude for theatrical expression and ensemble theatre companies shared the aim to constantly renew theatre art. Ryhmäteatteri had especially close connection to graduating actors of the Theatre Academy. Furthermore, in the end of the 1980s, for example Raila Leppäkoski and Kari Heiskanen from Ryhmäteatteri started working at the Theatre Academy Helsinki and the ensemble theatre ideology and influence were transferred to the students. (pp. 120-124.) This tradition continued in the 2010s when Elina Knihtilä from Q-teatteri became Professor in Acting in Finnish at the Theatre Academy of the University of the Arts Helsinki. (Taideyliopiston teatterikorkeakoulu, 2013).

In the 1980s, theatre did not have any shared moral standards, instead the stories were about individuals that were alone in the world with their often hedonistic and narcissistic

worldviews. Theatre applied the imagery of popular culture and violence and even the classics were interpreted through the ironic and caricatured concepts. The actors' expressive language became rich and the visual dramaturgy became important. Sound and imagery rose to an equal position with the character on stage. (Helavuori, 2013, p. 301.) The first group theatre company wave in Finland was created partly with the urge to change the society. However, in the 1990s there was a need for the theatre to mirror an individual's own persona and be freed from the larger theatre's restrictions such as heavy production structures. The other initiative was triggered by the consequences of the economic recession phase that caused financial difficulties to the larger theatres. When larger theatres were not hiring staff, newly graduated young theatre makers had to create their own workplaces. (Kemppi & Säkö, 2016, p. 25.)

As a first representative of the second ensemble theatre company wave, Swedish speaking Theatre Viirus was established in 1987. In its legendary theatre premises, a derelict industrial building in Rajasaari, it created contemporary theatre art that took inspiration from the European theatre. Viirus' style then was “dangerous, powerful, grotesque, anarchistic, political, and oozing with testosterone” - a counter force to the Swedish speaking institutional field such as the conservative Svenska Teatern.

Q-teatteri was established in 1990 with its iconic performance *Skavabölen pojat*. Theatre company was described being an “organic event” that created performances that needed to be done. (Seppälä & Tanskanen, 2010 pp. 403-404.)

At the time of its foundation, Q-teatteri was a generation manifest led by the director Antti Raivio. However, the 2012 change to the fixed ensemble structure has been described as a mental change, instead of a generational one. What united the ensemble was not age, but the distinct way of working and the similar view of the world. (Kemppi & Säkö, 2016, p. 270). With the new ensemble structure, the actors' active role in dramaturgy was being emphasised. This can be seen as a continuation to the collective dramaturgy that KOM-teatteri has been developing through its ensembles. (Ollikainen & Tanskanen, 2013). In Q-teatteri, this method means actors transferring a part of themselves to the stage and to each role they are playing. Especially in the theatre company's praised production *Kaspar Hauser* (2014), the actors produced material, such as childhood memories, from their own life

acquiring painstaking truthfulness. Subjectivity has also been a tendency among Q-teatteri's young directors, such as Milja Sarkola and Saara Turunen. (Kemppi & Säkö, 2016.)

Alongside KOM-teatteri and Ryhmäteatteri, both Teater Viirus and Q-teatteri were accepted to the system of state-financed theatres in the 1990s. (Kemppi & Säkö, 2016, p. 101). This separated them from the other ensemble and group theatre companies founded later on. Theatre companies such as Rakastajat, Teatteri Vanha Juko, and Takomo were all based on artistic aims and collective working. (Seppälä & Tanskanen, 2010, p. 405). However, the stable state financing, venues and staff enabled KOM-teatteri's, Q-teatteri's, Ryhmäteatteri's and Viirus' development towards the organised and institutionalised position in the Finnish theatre field.

1.8 Subjects of the case study

The next subchapters introduce the four ensemble theatre companies included in the study. The depictions include the following aspects: each theatre company's main historical events; the artistic content; the artistic leadership; and ensemble formations. Furthermore, each theatre company's current structure; venues; financing base; and decision-making structure are described.

1.8.1 Ryhmäteatteri

Ryhmäteatteri was established in 1967 by a group of young theatre makers with Taisto-Bertil Orsmaa as their unofficial leader. The initial founding principle of Ryhmäteatteri was equality, collaboration and everyone's participation. Already from the start, the theatre company chose to emphasise social themes, whereas often seen from ironic or humoristic points of view and depicting the ordinary citizen with ordinary sorrows. The world premiere texts and classical plays with a modern handling have varied in the artistic programme.

In 1982, the Pengerkatu stage in Kallio became the long-time home for the theatre company, where it started to construct stability in their organisational work and artistic aims. Due to a cold relationship with critiques, especially the main theatre critique of Helsingin Sanomat,

Jukka Kajava, Ryhmäteatteri had to create their own audience from scratch. In the 1980s, a group of young actors graduating from the Theatre Academy Helsinki and the directors Arto af Hällström and Raila Leppäkoski took over the theatre company. Before long, Ryhmäteatteri was shaped to be the leading theatre company of the 1980s due to their popular TV shows *Tabu*, *Velipuolikuu* and *Nyhjää tyhjältä* created for the National Broadcasting Corporation Yleisradio.

In 1997, the leadership was handed over to young directors Esa Leskinen and Mika Myllyaho who had recently graduated from the Theatre Academy Helsinki. (Itäkannas, 2018; Rissanen, 2014.) During their era, Ryhmäteatteri was known for the new Finnish drama often criticising inequality, society, and egoism. They also hosted the popular documentary theatre pieces called *Eduskunta 1*, *Eduskunta 2*, and *Eduskunta 3* by Susanna Kuparinen.

Since the year 2018, the theatre company is led by the actor Juha Kukkonen who is also an ensemble member. Other ensemble actors include Robin Svarström, Minna Suuronen, and Santtu Karvonen. In their era, the theatre company has continued presenting the new Finnish drama as world premieres from the writers such as Anna Krogerus, Milja Sarkola, Okko Leo, and Veera Tyhtilä. (Ryhmäteatteri, n.d.) In 2007, Ryhmäteatteri acquired the venue on Helsinginkatu 25 (320 seats). Due to financial reasons it was not possible to obtain two venues in different parts of the Kallio district and in 2014 Ryhmäteatteri gave up the Pengerkatu-stage. Since its foundation, the theatre company has also produced a summer theatre on the Suomenlinna island's Hyvän toivon linnake (519 seats). (Itäkannas, 2018; Ryhmäteatteri, n.d.) In the autumn of 2020, Ryhmäteatteri has 12 employees: four ensemble actors; a sound designer and a lighting and video designer; three people in the production office (producer, assistant producer, and theatre secretary) and three people in the technical department (stage manager, costume master, and venue caretaker).

Ryhmäteatteri has three main productions each year (including one summer theatre production). They also host young people's theatre group Ryhmisnuoret. The main decision-making organ is the weekly staff meetings. The artistic decisions are made by the ensemble actors. The initial decision-making organ consists of a board of the theatre company employees. Ryhmäteatteri is a non-profit association. Its funding base is formed by the statutory state-financing, municipal funding as well as its own income such as ticket revenue. (Ryhmäteatteri, n.d.) The audience number in the year 2019 was 48 088. (Teatterin tiedotuskeskus TINFO, 2020)

1.8.2 KOM-teatteri

KOM-teatteri was established in 1971. The first group included of actors Sulevi Peltola, Tom Wentzel and Eriikka Magnusson as well as the director-actor Pekka Milonoff, the director Tytti Oittinen, the dramaturg Lauri Sipari, the composer Kaj Chydenius, the theatre secretary Virpi Porna, and the scenographer Måns Hedström (who also created theatre's legendary logo and graphic design).

The initial founding principle was to offer a progressive programme for the audiences both in Finland and abroad. (Ollikainen & Tanskanen, 2013, pp. 36-37.) The theatre company was created out of the “passion to influence the society and create high-level, artistically ambitious and diverse theatre”.

In order to ease their financial difficulties accumulated from constant touring and staff costs, the theatre company moved to their first permanent venue, an old movie theatre, in 1977. The permanent venue demanded more staff to take care of the technical department, sales and marketing. The theatre company also hosted several guest performances and additional programme. Later on, the ensemble concentrated only on the main productions. In the end of 1970s, the theatre company's ensemble changed from generation theatre to actors of different ages.

During the 1970s, the different artistic committees or core groups prepared programme proposals to the staff meetings. In 1984, the theatre company found their stable home in an old cinema Joukola in Kapteeninkatu. Since the year 1982 until 2014, Pekka Milonoff was the director and artistic leader of the theatre company. During Milonoff's time, the composition of ensemble became the defining feature of KOM-teatteri as well as part of its distinct brand. The ensemble has steadily changed in the intervals of 10 years mostly with young actors from the Theatre Academy.

In the 1990s, the theatre company started to promote and develop long-term the new Finnish drama through several projects such as *KOM teksti*. The theatre became the home for world premieres and writers such as Reko Lundán, Juha Lehtola, Sirkku Peltola, Laura Ruohonen, and Pirkko Saisio and the new Finnish drama continuously has a strong foothold in its

repertoire. (Ollikainen & Tanskanen, 2013.) During the 2010s, the theatre company has hosted writers and directors such as Veikko Nuutinen, Okko Leo, Juha Hurme, Heini Junkkaala, Lauri Majjala, Hilikka-Liisa Iivanainen, and Riikka Oksanen. (KOM-teatteri, n.d.).

In 2014, Lauri Majjala and Juho Milonoff took over the artistic leadership of the theatre company and from 2018 on, Juho Milonoff continued as the artistic leader of theatre company. In 2021, the theatre company transferred to dual leadership structure with Lauri Majjala as the artistic director and Tiina Kristoffersson as the managing director. (Mattila, 2020; Natri, 2013). In the autumn 2020, the theatre company had four ensemble actors (Eeva Soivio, Niko Saarela, Vilma Melasniemi, and Juho Milonoff), two designers (sound designer and lighting designer), three people working in the production office (managing director, producer, and ticket sales manager), three audience outreach workers and four people in the technical department (technical director, technician, touring coordinator, and venue caretaker). KOM-teatteri is a non-profit association. Its funding base is formed by both the statutory state-financing and municipal funding as well as its own income such as ticket revenue. The initial decision-making organ is the board consisting of people working in the theatre company. (KOM-teatteri, n.d.) Starting from 2021, the board consists of outside members along with the managing director and the artistic director. (Mattila, 2020). The artistic committee consists of the artistic director, ensemble actors and designers with permanent contracts. The theatre company also organises weekly staff meetings and production meetings. In the year 2019, the theatre company had two main productions, two small stage productions and several concerts and discussions. The theatre company has a main stage with 300 seats and a lobby stage. (KOM-teatteri, n.d.) The audience number in the year 2019 was 30 440. (Teatterin tiedotuskeskus TINFO, 2020).

1.8.3 Teater Viirus

Teater Viirus is a Swedish-speaking, ensemble-based theatre company operating in Helsinki, Finland. It was established in 1987 by three actors, namely Robert Enckell, Mats Långbacka and Johan Storgård as well as the director Arn-Henrik Blomqvist. Its first stage was at Ruoholahti region in Lepakko, a legendary place for underground art. After Lepakko, the

theatre has operated e.g. in Rajasaari (Töölö district), Suvilahti (Kalasatama) and with the new team, the Viirus generation 2.0, from the year 2011 until 2017 in Meritullinkatu (Kruununhaka). In 2017 theatre company moved to a new venue in Välimerenkatu 14 (Jätkäsaari).

The theatre company's initial foundation principle was that “they wanted Viirus to be an alternative to the institutional theatres with a focus on a young audience. The repertoire represented something new and different, consisting of plays that Robert, Johan, Mats and Arn-Henrik wanted to do themselves and that they found interesting.” (Teater Viirus, n.d.) Already from the beginning, the theatre company was based on the idea of a mixing of artistic manifest and administration, different projects and styles. The first fixed ensemble consisting of approximately seven people was created in 1991. However, collaboration with technical staff was close and productions were joint efforts.

In 1995, the director Maarit Ruikka took over the leadership of the rather manly theatre company at the time. Ruikka created the idea of a technical ensemble that included light-, sound-, set design-, costume-, and makeup artists. This emphasis lifted remarkably the visual quality of the performances. Ruikka also brought new European drama to the stage. (Nåls, 2007, p. 101.) When the members of the first ensemble started to leave the theatre company and productions began to be more project-like with a variety of people rather than joint ensemble work, the new ensemble was assembled from the actors of the younger generation. After Ruikka, in 2002, the actors Robert Enckell and Tobias Zilliacus took over the artistic leadership. In the year 2007, the artistic leader was the Lithuanian director Cezaris.

During 1987-2010, the theatre company depicted European and Finnish new drama such as texts by Tracy Letts, Joakim Pirinen, Kjell Westö, Martin McDonagh, Patrick Marber, Christer Kihlman and hosted directors such as Esa Kirkkopelto, Reko Lundán, Joakim Groth, Ralf Långbacka, Laura Jäntti, Jouko Turkka, Juha Lehtola, and Kaisa Korhonen. The theatre company was known for its visual finesse and even audacious risk-taking. (Nåls, 2007.)

In the year 2011, the theatre company went through a radical change of generation when five young actors Pelle Heikkilä, Maria Ahlroth, Oskar Pöysti, Viktor Idman, and Jessica Raita graduated from the Theatre Academy Helsinki and took over the theatre company together with the artistic director Maria Lundström and the managing director Matilda von

Weissenberg. The 2nd generation has continued to develop the foundational principles: “Viirus generation 2 intertwine the artistic acrimony and the democratic work methods that have been a trademark for the theatre all these years with new methods and a more open profile.” It has also boldly mixed languages and presented Finnish-speaking directors, actors and new drama. During the 2010's, the theatre company has hosted directors and dramatists such as Lauri Maijala, Milja Sarkola, Kaj Korkea-Aho, Anders Carlsson, Pipsa Lonka, Anni Klein, and Wauhaus-collective. (Teater Viirus, n.d..)

Since 2011, Viirus has a dual leadership structure with the artistic director and the managing director in an equal positions and in addition, the technical manager is part of the directorship. In the autumn 2020, the theatre company had altogether 14 people working mostly on permanent contracts: a technical director; two technicians; a costume master; and five ensemble actors (Martin Bahne, Iida Kuningas, Oskar Pöysti, Jessica Raita, and Maria Ahlroth) that form the artistic committee with the artistic director Jussi Sorjanen, as well as four people working in the office (managing director, marketing and press coordinator, production coordinator, and programme producer). The main decision-making organ entails the weekly staff meetings. The artistic decisions are made by ensemble actors and the artistic director. The initial decision-making organ is the board that consists of four outside members including from two to three staff representatives. The theatre company also organises weekly production meetings and departmental meetings.

The theatre company's funding base is statutory state-financing and municipal funding as well as its own income such as ticket revenue. In the year 2019, the theatre company had two main productions in their repertoire as well as three touring performances and 14 guest performances under the Viirus GUEST programme. The theatre company has the Main Theatre Hall (120 seats), the studio stage (30 seats) and the gallery stage (50 seats). Teater Viirus is a non-profit association. (Teater Viirus, n.d..) The audience number in the year 2019 was 8249. (Teatterin tiedotuskeskus TINFO, 2020).

1.8.4 Q-teatteri

Q-teatteri was established in 1990 by Antti Raivio, Leo Raivio, and Heikki Kujanpää. The initial founding principle was to create a theatre company to explore their relation to this particular art form and tell about the world they were living in from a personal starting point. Antti Raivio emphasised that everyone working in the theatre company would be responsible for the whole and all participating should be committed, energetic and open to new ideas. However, it was also paramount to get along with other people. Raivio's idea was that when the atmosphere is right, talented people would naturally gather together. The theatre company's brand and style would be created through writing their own texts and the plays should mirror the world as the artists see it. The non-existing manifesto of Q-teatteri was to "Make good stuff, and that is the manifesto." Early on, the theatre company created their distinct logo and concentrated on both marketing and the visual image and professionalism. The "Q" was to represent quality, whatever was made under it. Directors had the freedom to choose their own team as long as they employed the theatre company's own members. The theatre company consisted of 70 freelance-based members who were designers, musicians, writers and such. The theatre makers would "grow" their own theatre and grow as people at the same time. The theatre company was gathered around Raivio, and it was seen not as a democratic community, but a family hierarchy where disputes could be dismissed for the sake of greater good. Everyone from the ticket seller to an actor were part of this family. Raivio's clan-like leadership and even manipulative favoritism affected strongly the theatre company's acting style and the creation of a strong ensemble. Raivio led the theatre company until 1996.

After Raivio's era, the directors such as Heikki Kujanpää and Antti Hietala had more confidence and gave more responsibility to the actors and they started to move towards a collective artistry as an ensemble developing the texts on stage and creating a whole. (Kemppi & Säkö, 2016.) However, in 2010, the theatre company's profile was understood as obscure and vague. The theatre had too many members and actors who required employment. The repertoire was uneven and the artistic decision-making process tried to please everybody's opinions. (Volanen, 2016). Q-teatteri changed into the fixed ensemble system in 2012, whilst not without internal disputes. Many long-time members

were offended that they were left out from the ensemble and criticised that the 1990s collective spirit was destroyed.

With the new ensemble, the theatre company concentrated on the young directors and dramatists such as Saara Turunen, Milja Sarkola, and Akse Pettersson and created their popularity through several artistically successful - and sold-out performances. (Kemppi & Säkö, 2016.)

Q-teatteri's ensemble consists of eight actors from two generations (Elina Knihtilä, Tommi Korpela, Jani Volanen, Lotta Kaihua, Jussi Nikkilä, Elena Leeve, Eero Ritala, and Pirjo Lonka) as well as the artistic director Antti Hietala. All actors are on freelance-based contracts whilst responsible for the theatre company's artistic profile. The theatre company has four permanent employees in the production office (financial and administrative director, producer, theatre secretary, and audience worker) and three people in the technical department (technical producer, stage manager, and props master). Q-teatteri has had their own venue from since 1991 located in Tunturikatu, Töölö district. The theatre company has two stages: the main stage with the maximum of 220 seats and the small stage Puoli Q with 40 seats. The theatre company has two main premieres each year and it also hosts the annual international theatre festival *Baltic Circle* and a theatre group for young people.

The initial decision-making organ is a board that consists of the members of the association. The theatre company also organises weekly operating committee meetings, staff meetings and production meetings. Q-teatteri is a non-profit association. Its funding base is statutory state-financing and municipal funding as well as its own income such as ticket revenue. (Q-teatteri, n.d..) The audience number in the year 2019 is 19 276. (Teatterin tiedotuskeskus TINFO, 2020).

2 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This chapter introduces theories related to the work of an arts organisation and especially the ensemble theatre company organisation. First, the main elements associated with the creation of organisational identity are introduced: values and self-reference. The next chapter is concentrated on the structures and practical operations of an organisation, such as decision-making. It also defines the concept of democratic principles. The third chapter describes how groups and collectives are created and how they cooperate. In the last chapter the relationship between individual and organisation is explored as well as how history, habits, routines and memories shape the organisational identity.

The selection of theories is inspired from the notion of Kühn (2011) as cited in Stahl and Tröndle (2019) that the organisations should be described “*as they are* or as the organisation and their members *really behave*, and *not as they should behave* according to textbook descriptions [italics in original]”. (p. 252). The management theory's idea of rational organisation is challenged here by introducing theories from organization theory and social psychology.

2.1 CORE VALUES

This chapter introduces theories related to the creation of an organisational identity. The theories of systems theory, post-heroic management, and values are introduced and examined in the context of arts organisations.

2.1.1 Autopoiesis

Chilean scientists Maturana and Varela (1980) have presented a theory that all living systems are “organizationally closed, autonomous systems of interaction that make reference only to themselves.” The thought that an organisation is open to its environment is a claim made by an external observer who tries to understand the organisation from a personal point of view. According to Maturana and Varela (1980), the living system is autonomous, circular, and self-referential and in consequence: self-renewing and self-creating in a closed loop of

interaction. The theory of autopoiesis means that systems “produce themselves; their own organization and identity is their most important product.” (Morgan, 1997, p. 253.) When an organisation is examined as a DNA cell, it can be detected that it needs oxygen, water and nutrition to survive. However, DNA cannot grow any random cells, whilst is deemed to produce the exact same structure despite circumstances. Hence, it cannot improve itself. (Czarniawska, 2017).

A system is self-referential, because it “cannot enter into interactions that are not specified in the pattern of its relations that define its organization.” This means that the external environment the organisation interacts with is actually reflecting itself, and the environment is part of the organisation. Therefore, the environment is an extension of organisation, hence organised and interpreted according to its own identity and needs. (Morgan, 1997, p. 254). Autopoiesis might seem like a conceptual theory, however, the next subchapter will explain how it is connected to the everyday life of an arts organisation.

2.1.2 Systems theory in arts organisations

Stahl and Tröndle (2019) emphasise organisation theory and its subsection, social science-influenced *social systems theory* as a possible approach to meet the requirements of arts management. In this system organisation is seen as a dynamic entity and emphasis is more in *organising* than in organisation. Niklas Luhmann is considered being the main theorist in social systems theory and his research is based on the question “how organization describes itself from within the system?”

Stahl and Tröndle (2019) describe systems as composed of processes that are closed entities. These entities are internal communicative processes or decisions considering what is meaningful for the organisation and in accordance with its values. In this way organisation can protect itself against environment and secure its autonomy and sustainability. (p. 253.) The key here is the decision-making which is the essence of an organisation. For example, it can be asked how an organisation knows which artist is suitable for its productions and which is not.

According to Stahl and Tröndle (2019) an organisation must understand what its identity is. The artistic decisions are based on this boundary: what makes sense in accordance to organisational identity, what “resonates” with organisation. According to systems theory, everything that does not resonate, is automatically rejected. This means that the system (organisation) uses itself as a *self-reference* for observing the other (external environment). (Stahl & Tröndle, 2019, p. 255.) Luhmann (2012) as cited in Stahl and Tröndle (2019) has noted that only when the environment and system are separated, the organisation can be observed and depicted. The essence of a systems theory is that

rationality does not exist in itself, but instead as system-specific rationality, which is generated by each system autonomously, by its own self-referential communication, oriented in its history, self-conceptualization, and narrative. In the end, this means that all decisions made in organizations are contingent; they are based on their system-specific rationality, and other arts organizations would have decided differently. (Stahl & Tröndle, 2019, p. 255.)

This means that crucial parts of organisation are history, habits and values. These are the main ingredients of *organisational identity*.

2.1.3 Communication in the framework of systems theory

Self-referential process with organisational identity is operated via *communication*.

Based on theory by Weick, Sutcliffe, and Obstfeld (2005) Stahl and Tröndle (2019) remark that organisations come into existence through verbalisation. As change in the environment creates data, this data is then transformed into information via a self-referential process of comparing it to the organisation's own (prior) knowledge. This comparing and evaluating are organisations' inner processes. They constantly construct information that is communicated through discussions and evaluations. The information is compared to identity: “what is important, what is dangerous, who is an enemy, what might be an opportunity”, and in conclusion: is it meaningful to the organisation? Organisations learn through past operations and by comparing new information to past experiences. This means that organisations as systems are not unchanged entities, but in a constant process that

requires them to act and react to maintain their relation with the environment. “The specific environment of each organization brings unforeseeable (contingent) events, which may advantage or threaten the organization’s sustainability.” (pp. 254-256.)

According to systems theory, organisation is a closed entity. This means that the environment can be compared only to the organisation's own processes. Nevertheless, organisations can react to changes in the environment. An event outside the organisation can cause effects inside the organisation and make meaningful communication (to resonate with the organisation). This change does not have a direct effect, whilst it always is filtered through the system of an organisation or an individual member, and, hence, is taken into discussion, as verbalised communication. This means that an organisation can react only to environmental changes that it notices, i.e. that are relevant and meaningful to it. It is blind to all other information. (Stahl & Tröndle, 2019, p. 256.) This process is unconscious and automatic, not planned, and, hence, differs from the management theory's concept of organisation as a planned and controlled entity that systematically reads the environment.

2.1.4 Post-heroic management

The concepts of closed entity or blindness for irrelevant environmental impulses does not mean that an organisation is fatally stagnant. As the individuals are the essence of an organisation, their engagement and exploration are the key tools for organisation. According to Pentland (2015) as cited in Stahl and Tröndle (2019), engagement is social learning within a group that “by adapting behavioral norms, the individuals of the group adjust their behavior and start to work toward the same direction. They participate in the organisational discourse and become part of it. Engagement has much to do with interaction, cooperation, and trust.” However, exploration means an individual's or group's relation with its environment and “the frequency of communication with external contacts.” (p. 261.)

Stahl and Tröndle (2019) emphasise that an individual or a group leads the process of detecting suitable environmental impulses and transferring them into internal discussion and evaluation. As a consequence, this means that internal complexity must be increased to “keep up” with the environmental impulses. In concrete, strengthening the internal complexity

means involving different perspectives to the discussion. Open communication culture brings the voices of all members and departments of organisation into consideration. This increases the self-referential effectivity and, hence, the success of an organisation. Internal complexity can be increased also by including temporary members to the organisation. In the context of performing arts, the temporary members could be visiting directors or actors in a theatre production.

Nevertheless, every organisation must evaluate how much self-referential discourse, differing voices or external irritation can be included without endangering the organisational identity. It must be remembered that internal complexity must be reduced to be able to process the information. Should there be too many and diverse flows of communication, processing is not possible. In practice, this means that if an arts organisation is, for example, handling too many artistic processes at the same time and different departments of the organisation do not have the possibility to engage with each due to the increased amount of work, the internal complexity is too high. (pp. 257-258.)

Stahl and Tröndle (2019) highlight the meaning of *post-heroic management* as a way to enable and provide a variety of voices and members in the organisation with space and authority. This is realised through communicating alternative knowledge and observing rather than leading the decision-making process. Post-heroic manager is an enabler that “helps the organization to question its current order and to include new perspectives if necessary.” Manager's position is to regulate when to increase and when to reduce the influence of hierarchies.

Nevertheless, related to the context of arts organisations, Stahl and Tröndle (2019) note that it is also essential to integrate “non-rational and non-economic perspectives in order to find guidelines to deal with the contending demands of arts organisations such as beauty, unforeseen, mindfulness, or engagement.” (pp. 260-262.)

Values are the fundamental ingredients for creating an organisation and maintaining its unity. These are examined in the next subchapter.

2.1.5 Individual values

Both humans and organisations are constructed of values: concept of what is right, important and desirable, the “true meaning of things”. (Gabriel, 2008, p. 312). A variety of individual values construct the organisation whereas the organisation mirrors and creates values for the society that is also constructed and created by individuals with different values. One can suppose that especially in arts organisations people with similar values are gathered together. However, conflict in values can also divide the organisation and cause discussion and re-evaluation of operating models. Gabriel (2008) defines values as

products of socialization and the influences of parents, teachers, religious and other sources of authority. They are stable and stay with people over time. They are also seen as points of no compromise; they are issues on which people are prepared to make a stand, even if this involves pain and sacrifice. (p. 312)

Poisson-de Haro and Menot (2013) add that each individual creates a mental *value system* where each value has a place in hierarchical order. Individual values are constantly unconsciously and consciously compared with the other people's values as well as organisational values. (p. 115.)

In the organisational context values operate on two levels. First the individual's hierarchical value systems define how this person interprets the organisation and its attitudes and behaviors, and what kind of relation they create with the organisation. On another level, an individual's value system affects this person's work attitude, behavior, social relationships and on all the decisions this person makes. (Poisson-de Haro & Menot, 2013, p. 116).

According to Meglino and Ravlin (1998), people sharing the same internalised values share also the same “external stimuli”. They decode the environment in similar ways and start to behave in equal ways in certain situations. Reaffirming and strengthening of internalised values help in reading different situations and people and increases adaptability. As a conclusion “Because predictability in interpersonal interactions reduces role ambiguity and conflict, individuals with similar values should also experience greater satisfaction in their interpersonal relationships.” (pp. 354-357.)

2.1.6 Values and organisational identity

Values are usually defined in the process of thinking and creating the *organisational identity*: “It is important to underline what the organisation is and what it is not; to understand and demonstrate its values, uniqueness, originality, individuality and overall organisational culture and behaviour.” (Varbanova, 2013, p. 59).

Values are in connection with an organisation's mission and usually define the ways how the mission is accomplished. According to Varbanova (2013), the values are “acceptable common beliefs, standards and norms on how people within an organisation should conduct themselves collectively and individually.” (p. 63).

Poisson-de Haro and Menot (2013) specify that *behaviors* are mirroring the values in an organisation's daily actions. Similarly *beliefs* reflect values that are internalised and represent the opinions and expectations of all members of the organisation. (pp. 121-122.)

Usually the official values are expressed formally through strategic plans and in mission statements and objectives. However, one must take into account in which purpose these are written and by whom. Mission statement and strategic plan aimed mainly for external stakeholders such as financiers, can include “micro-compromises” that tend to protect financial viability, whilst give space for artistic freedom. These strategies are usually written by managers and approved by the board and tend to have a vague relation to the organisation's employees and day-to-day life. (Daigle & Rouleau, 2010, pp. 25-26.) Poisson-de Haro and Menot (2013) emphasise that organisational values should be genuinely meaningful and honest and therefore they must be authentic and approved by the whole organisation. (p. 120). According to Collins and Porras as cited in Lencioni (2002) the core values are the primary principles that guide the organisation and its every action. They are “inherent and sacrosanct; they can never be compromised, either for convenience or short-term economic gain.” Lencioni (2002) continues that core values must be integrated to the everyday life of an organisation. The members of the organisation must be reminded that the core values guide all decisions and actions made.

In the next subchapter the values typical to the arts organisation are being examined as well as how they are related to the artistic inimitability.

2.1.7 Artistic values in organisations

The fundamental mission of an arts organisation is to “make acts of artistic creation accessible to society and contribute to the aesthetic and human development of the artist and society.” To fulfill this mission, an organisation must first enable artistic work and present artistic products to the audience in a manner that respects the artist and freedom of art. Secondly, an organisation needs to create its own *artistic mission* that is unique and inimitable and similar to its core values. This mission does not try to respond to public demand, instead, it is so unique and distinctive that it creates interest, emotions and reactions in the audience members. (Poisson-de Haro & Menot, 2013, pp. 124-125.) McDaniel and Thorn (1990) as cited in Foster (2018) defines the concept of *aesthetic core* with similar kinds of principles: “the artistic point of view, the vehicle by which an organization realizes its philosophy. The aesthetic core is not the choice of plays, dance, or music to be performed. It is the context in which these choices are made.” (p. 74.)

Artistic leadership usually shapes the organisation's artistic mission. Here the individual values and behavior rooted from them are in a crucial role. For example, the artistic director transfers their artistic and aesthetic values to the use of an organisation, and they become its artistic core values. This demands from the organisation trust and courage to take risks that sometimes “artist's work does not resonate with the public.” However, the artist and organisation complement each other's values and in the ideal case the arts organisation is shaped into a rich culture that respects artistic process. Usually this kind of healthy organisation raises interest in freelancers or renowned artists and raises artistic quality. (Poisson-de Haro & Menot, 2013, p. 125.)

However, artistic mission should also be reflected with other members in the organisation to keep them engaged and committed to implementing it. Also in this case the trust for shared values within the organisation is high. In general, artistic mission should be reflected on and discussed in such way that it is in tune with the overall context and reality, in which it is implemented. (Foster, 2018, p. 75).

Arts organisations usually consist of various members who either are artists or obtain artistic integrity in their work. Artistic integrity is closely tied with values and, therefore, should be

respected. Foster (2018) grounds their theories on their own background as a leader of an arts organisation. They stress the importance of individual values as a guiding feature:

“(...) I needed to ensure that there was coherence between my personal Vision and the organizational Vision. If there wasn't, I would not be able to succeed there. (...) it was important for my employers, my organization, my staff, and my community to know what those core values were, because they would invariably guide my judgments and decision-making. (...) adherence to my values and the organizational values had to underlie every decision I made.” (Foster, 2018, p. 103.)

Poisson-de Haro and Menot (2013) emphasise that the artistic vision or artistic integrity is driven by a personal need to “achieve artistic excellence through the act of creation (...) The organizations and artists that enjoy the greatest renown both from peers and discerning audiences are those that are able to exercise artistic leadership over people who are willing to let themselves be transported by the works they create.” This strive for artistic excellence and leadership over peers and audience is usually the main force driving artists to seek for unique creation, new solutions, unexpected and surprising. This quest is guided by integrity, honesty and individual core values that also reflect to the audience. (p. 119.)

In the next chapter, it will be surveyed how structure and work practices enhance the implementation of artistic values and organisational goals.

2.2 STRUCTURE AND WORK PRACTICES

In the following subchapters, few theories related to the planning and decision-making are presented. In the context of ensemble theatre companies this concerns also artistic planning. Furthermore, organisation structures applied in the ensemble theatre companies are introduced and the relationship between the democratic principles and the organisational structure is examined.

2.2.1 Plans, decisions, strategies

The organisational work in an arts organisation is based on the resonating relationship between planning and decision-making (Sayles, 1964, as cited in Mintzberg, 1994). There are two contradicting approaches to planning. The first one is based on the organic relation between everyday decision-making and plans. Already in 1949 Goetz defined that “planning is fundamentally choosing” (as cited in Mintzberg, 1994). Ackoff (1970, as cited in Mintzberg, 1994) has indicated that planning consists of a set of interdependent decisions and these decisions are interrelated making the process of planning complex. (pp. 9-11.)

The second approach emphasises more the controlled planning process. Varbanova (2013) defines a plan being “set of logically arranged managerial decisions” that need to be monitored and developed while implementing. (p. 47). Planning in its widest definition is strategy-making: plans for the future reflected through the organisation's mission and vision. Management theories emphasise the strategy making process as being the manager-led, well planned and logical process. The goal of this well-organised process is to finally reach a fully realised strategy that Mintzberg, Ahlstrand and Lampel (2005) defines as “deliberate strategy”. (p. 11).

There is a confrontation between the “organic” and manager-led planning process and strategy making. Varbanova (2013) criticises smaller organisations for not investing in strategic process, but rather for informal improvisation and intuition on “how to do things”. The reason for preferring ad hoc project-based planning is the need to “act quickly and achieve fast results”. (p. 39).

Regardless of Varbanova's preference for a well-managed process of strategy making, there are quite many implemented and realised strategies in the arts organisations that are not created through this long lasting process and can be “ad hoc” or described even being of “unknown origin”. These could happen through improvisation, whilst, as mentioned earlier, also through the organisation's self-referential process that is far less accidental.

The close relationship between decisions and strategies is a fascinating theme for researchers. Social scientist Herbert Simon (1972, as cited in Mintzberg, 2007) has described

strategy as “series of (...) decisions which determine behavior over some stretch of time may be called a strategy”. (p.1). This idea has inspired Mintzberg in their research concerning the process of strategy-making. According to Mintzberg (2007), much was written about what strategy is and how it is formulated and implemented, whilst less concerning the actual process and the behaviour behind it. In practice, this indicates decision-making in the very process. Simon (1972, as cited in Mintzberg, 2007) noted that strategies can be studied as “evolved, a posteriori results of decision-making behavior”. (p. 1).

Mintzberg's (2007) idea of strategy as a pattern originates from Simon's theories. Pattern is described as a “consistency in behavior over time” and is considered as a key element in studying the strategies and the processes that are being created while making the strategies. The original idea in Mintzberg's and his colleagues' research was to reveal the patterns in organisations that led to strategies. This pattern could be found in the series of decisions. Soon they realised that they were not examining decisions themselves, but the actions that were taken as a result of the decisions. Mintzberg had defined the decision to be “commitment to action”, but in practise this commitment could range from clear statement of intent to something that could not be detected. (Mintzberg, 2007, p. 2.) This means that the traces of decisions are extremely difficult to study.

According to Simon and the prevailing organization theory literature, decision precedes action. However, the challenge is, whether one is able to trace the original decision behind the action.

2.2.2 Decision-making

In traditional management thinking, a decision is a result of rational consideration and commitment and the action follows the decision. However, as was mentioned in the previous chapter, the process is seldom so straightforward. Mintzberg et al. (2005) remark that “action can occur without commitment to act” and decision can “happen” due to complex organisational communication or miscommunication chains without the knowledge of who made the initial decision. (p. 158). Simon (1947) (as cited in Olmstead, 2002) emphasises that decisions are made by individuals, not by organisations and, therefore, are a combination of facts and values. Furthermore, decisions are also influenced by “organizational

environment, internal relationships and operational processes” and hence cannot be rational. (pp. 41-42.)

In *behavioral decision theory* decisions are presumed to be made within a given context and with limited information. The made decision is the most comfortable solution though always imperfect. (Byrnes, 2009, p. 148.)

Cyert and March (1964) as cited in Olmstead (2002) see decision-making as a continuous process reflecting the changes in environment and modified on the basis of a constant flow of new data. According to Olmstead (2002), both the circumstances around the decision-making act and prior events leading to the decision should be taken into consideration. What happens after the decision is made is crucial. Quite often the decision is made, but not executed. This means that “decision making cannot be separated from other organizational processes”. (p. 43.)

The set of decisions made by managers is called the *organisational model of decision-making*. This is the most common way how decision-making is defined. However, the work teams or sub-units inside the organisation can create their own ways of working, defined by distinctive procedures and behaviours. In a similar way, they can start solving both routine and complicated problems reducing them to easy-to-understand situations that take examples from the past situations. This can lead to an outcome where the made decisions are not in line with the overall strategy of an organisation and create a symptom called *strategic drift*. These “easy” solutions can also tempt to apply standard procedures without exploring possible better alternatives and the overall process stops as soon as a satisfactory solution has been found -whether it is the best one or not. Making day-to-day decisions requires also the ability to understand whether the decision is a routine one with short-term effect or a strategic one with long-term cumulative consequences. (Poisson-de Haro & Menot, 2013, pp. 194-195.)

The information about who, from which hierarchic position, how, and in which context the decisions were made, helps to evaluate and develop the process of decision-making. In the next subchapter, a few aspects related to hierarchic positions and power are examined.

2.2.3 Decision-making and power positions

In organization theory decision-making is also considered as a form of power.

First, by influencing the *decision premises* one can control the circumstances in which the decisions are made. This means fostering desired decisions and preventing unpleasant ones. The control is built into “vocabularies, structures of communication, attitudes, beliefs, rules and procedures”. Secondly, one can control *decision-making processes*. This means controlling who, how and when the decisions are made and is there discussion prior to making a decision. Third, the *issues and objectives* can be controlled. In practice, this means that one can subjectively prepare the circumstances for decision-making and emphasise certain features, values and outcomes at the expense of others. (Morgan, 1997, pp. 178-179.) Much of the decision power is tied to the *position power*. To be able to obtain this power, one must be backed up either legally or by having support from members of an organisation. Position power includes invisible assets that form the power. One of these assets is accessing data that comes from different sources. Secondly, it includes access to different formal and informal networks. These networks can be professional, based on expertise or on personal aspects.

The right to organise is closely related to the decision-making power as one can design the process of operations as well as communication channels. (Handy, 1999, pp. 128-130.)

The control over knowledge and information can induce an individual to create information dependency. This means that one can control the stream of data and amount of information given to each person. This can lead also to a gatekeeper position where personal aims and profit occupy space instead of working for the good of the organisation. People with *expert knowledge* can guard and block access to a certain knowledge or skills. The experts often obtain a personal aura of authority that cannot be copied. (Morgan, 1997, pp. 178-181.) Individuals with personal charisma can control and create social networks both internally and externally.

Networks as source of power are efficient, since through them one can obtain unofficial information as well as propose and promote own initiations. Networks and friendships are almost unseen and therefore difficult to control by outsiders. (Morgan, 1997, p. 186.) Inside

an organisation there are inevitably different kinds of unofficial friendships and networks that are similarly difficult to control or detect.

According to Battilana and Casciaro (2013), despite of what is the formal hierarchy of an organisation, the informal network of an organisation is constructed of members that are either *endorsers*, i.e. positive to change and new initiatives, *resisters* that take negative position to new, as well as *fence-sitters* who evaluate positive and negative effects before deciding. However, the *influencers*, individuals with personal power through their own personal features, are the key players that can influence the opinion of other colleagues. The influencer's formal position in the organisation is not relevant, since influence is based on trust and credibility and personal aspects. Hence, formal power in organisation is not necessarily the most crucial or effective one. (p. 67.)

The next subchapter examines the different organisational structures and distribution of power.

2.2.4 Organisation structures in arts organisations

Arts organisations differ significantly from business organisations. As the main purpose of a business organisation is usually the creation of value, financial profit, the same concept in the arts is more versatile and intangible. Regardless of the size of the arts organisation, the concept of value includes also “creation of artistic, cultural, community and educational value for all of the stakeholders.” (Poisson-de Haro & Menot, 2013, p. 2). In addition, many arts organisations have experimental aspects that explore new projects, approaches and ideas. This increases the level of risk and uncertainty typical to this specific field. (Varbanova, 2013, p. 36).

In a *functional structure* tasks are divided based on their operational departments such as artistic, production or marketing. (Poisson-de Haro & Menot, 2013, p. 87). Furthermore, roles and responsibilities of each unit and individuals are defined. In arts organisations it is quite typical to divide artistic and administrative functions between two directors usually equal in rank: artistic and administrative director. As de Voogt and Hommes (2007) specify, in dual leadership division of power (formal hierarchy defining the decision rights of an individual) and a clear division of tasks and responsibilities are the two dimensions taken

into consideration. (p. 1). Miles and Watkins (2007, as cited in Houni & Ansio & Järvinen, 2013) emphasise that shared mission and goals, communication and mutual trust are essential features for a dual leadership.

According to Houni, Ansio, and Järvinen (2013), in the newer studies of leadership, the tendency in dual leadership is moved towards a more collective and democratic style of leadership including the whole organisation. (pp. 214, 224). In the systems theory this is called post-heroic management.

In the *adhocracy organisation* teams are collected around the project with an overseeing project manager. Knowledge sharing and flexibility is in these groups high and team spirit is strong due to a clearly defined objective and the length of the project. (Poisson-de Haro & Menot, 2013, p. 93). However, workload can be unbalanced, and the tight schedule can cause stress and conflicts inside the group. Adhocracy defines quite accurately the production process of an individual production in the performing arts company. The disadvantage of the adhocracy is the disappearance of individual knowledge when the project is ended. (Poisson-de Haro & Menot, 2013, p. 93). Therefore, it is essential for a permanent organisation to collect the accumulated knowledge to be able to reproduce it if necessary. The positive team-working experiences between individuals of the group can also generate new projects and the knowledge starts to cumulate again.

There is organisation structure that can emerge and develop organically over time and might be invisible to the management or other members of the organisation. Byrnes (2009) defines *informal organisation* structure that reaches the levels that formal structure cannot. This involves interaction between people and manoeuvring to get things done through informal channels and bypassing formal power. This “shadow organisation” is usually more interested in personal benefits instead of the organisation's mutual goals. This causes resistance to change and new ways of working are smothered with the “good old way”. Informal organisations also have an informal communication channel, a “rumour mill” that managers are recommended to acquaint with to know what employees really think about their workplace and tasks. (pp. 169-170.)

The more traditional organisation structures were based on the principles of bureaucratic and authoritarian systems such as chain of command and span of control. Likewise, the functional structure is based on similar premises such as creation of decision-making

structures or communication channels. (Morgan, 1997, p. 35.) However, the concept of informal structure, seen in the management literature as a major threat, is the key to entirely another perspective:

In identifying that an “informal organization” based on friendship groups and unplanned interactions can exist alongside the formal organisation documented in the “blueprints” designed by management, the studies dealt an important blow to classical management theory. They showed quite clearly that work activities are influenced as much by the nature of human beings as by formal design. (Morgan, 1997, p. 35)

In the next subchapters the perspective is changed from the management studies to organization theory, from the controlled organisation to a “learning” organisation. First, the organisations' relation to the democratic principles are examined.

2.2.5 Essential concepts of democracy

It is difficult to separate organisational structures and operations from their political patrimony, namely from political systems stemming as far back as the ancient history.

The word democracy is constructed from the Greek words *kratia*, meaning power and rule and *demos*, the populace. The word *kratia* implicates that the organisations are based on power, on who can rule, make decisions and have their say. Morgan (1997) claims that all organisations are political as based on history, but the difference lies in the way they use the power and how they have legitimated their choices. Furthermore, Aristotle stated that politics stems from the conflict of interests. In organisations, this leads to negotiations on the organisational model and operations and are formed around the themes of interests, conflict and power. The different personalities and roles affect the negotiations and can include underlying conflicts and hidden agendas that can stem even from events in the organisational past. As mentioned in the previous subchapter, informal organisation can be as powerful as the formal one.

The traditional approach to management suggests that an organisation is constructed by the owners and employees and the organisation structures are based on how the power is shared, or not shared, between these two groups. After the Second World War West Germany and other European countries started to apply the system where both the owners and workers codetermined the share of power and decision-making. This basic principle has many variations whereas, nevertheless, it created the democratic foundation on which European patrimony is based. This foundation is tied to the state legislations and can be manifested for example in labour unions. (pp. 156-170.) Therefore, no organisation is an island as the current society, the institutional environment, defines the working environment, prevalent financial system and legislation and, hence, has an impact on how organisations are operated. (Battilana, Fuerstein & Lee, 2018, p. 282).

Furthermore, the definition of democracy is not only seen as being related to the political institutions. Dewey (1939, as cited in Vail & Hollands, 2013) comprehended *creative democracy* being “a way of life, a moral idea”, that concerns all individuals as every individual is capable of making sensible decisions concerning their own life. Therefore, the society's different structures should support the flourishing of individual creativity. (pp. 352-353.)

Furthermore, set in the context of corporate culture, the concept of democratic culture includes the idea of unrestricted communication regardless of one's position and status. This concept additionally includes the principle that *citizenship* includes also responsibilities: “No formal system of participation works without shared values of democracy, trust, responsibility and respect, so that what is needed is a civic culture with commonly held values”. (Forcadell, 2005, as cited in Lee & Edmondson, 2017, p. 44).

2.2.6 Democracy in organisations

The traditional organisation structure is based on the rational hierarchy and authority to “direct, manage, reward, and punish” based on one's position. (Battilana et. al, 2018, p. 257). In contrast to the traditional structure, de Jong and van Witteloostuijn (2008) describe the *corporate democracy* to be an organisational system where the employees actively take part in organisational governing. This is realised through shared responsibility that covers many

areas in the organisation. The incentive and appraisal systems support the responsibility and participation.

According to de Jong and van Witteloostuijn (2008), corporate democracy in its ideal form can be constructed of three different parts. Firstly, *shared residual claims* are central as the organisation's profit is shared within the organisation and shareholders and the human capital and the financial capital are seen as equal assets. Secondly, *democratic decision-making rules* means that workers are truly involved in the strategic and operational decision-making. Thirdly, *supportive organisational structure* requires that democracy is applied in all formal procedures, rules and structures. The latter does not mean that everyone in the organisation decides on all matters, instead, the organisation is a combination of centralisation and decentralisation. In practice, this means that departments have independent decision-making rights and the decision-making structure on all levels, which is planned and documented.

According to de Jong and van Witteloostuijn (2008), the bureaucratic and authoritarian systems' defects are the weak engagement, absenteeism and low productivity. In the organisational democracy, employees are trusted and given more space and freedom to work independently. This creates the feeling of shared and meaningful goals and hence, enhances loyalty, creativity and using one's full potential. Furthermore, operating on a trust-basis requires far less monitoring and control systems. (pp. 1039-1040.) As learned earlier on (see subchapter 2.1.4), post-heroic management (collective and democratic leadership) is an approach that enables organisational democracy and engagement through supporting open communication, interaction, and collaboration.

De Jong and van Witteloostuijn (2007) admit that the possible benefits of organisational democracy are difficult to measure. (p. 1040). According to Battilana et al. (2018), the democratised system has not been particularly popular in the organisations for several reasons. One of them is that the hierarchical structure is rooted in societal habits.

However, the democratic structure is gaining more support as, firstly, it is seen as a suitable structure to adjust to a dynamic, tumultuous, and competitive environment. Secondly, the knowledge-based economy requires employees to be innovative, flexible, and active to be able to solve complex non-routine problems. Thirdly, in the networking world, traditional

hierarchies are seen as an obstacle as the organisation's boundaries are challenged and blurred. (pp. 258-264.)

There are two approaches for the implementation of democracy that must be acknowledged. In the organisational democracy, employees are given more rights to control their work tasks and environment through participation. It also includes the identification with the community that one is working in creating a social collective and equality.

However, self-management and empowerment emphasise individual values and autonomy, as well as personal feelings of meaningfulness and success. Lee and Edmondson (2017) describe the radical approach for a less-hierarchical organisation to be the *self-managing organisation* that has removed the manager-subordinate relationship completely. (pp. 45-46.)

As a conclusion, democracy in the context of organisations is understood as norms and values that support its implementation as well as an organisational environment enabling the democratic processes through discourse and negotiation. The commitment to the organisation is created through valuing the employee and the individual potential is gained through proactive participation in the collective community. (Battilana et al., 2018, pp. 260-265.)

2.2.7 Democracy from the perspective of arts organisations

The traditional managerial systems based on hierarchy are applied in the arts organisations partly for the same reasons as they are applied in the corporate world. Professional arts organisations exist in the society that demands systematic operations, planning and reporting as well as financial stability to be taken as a noteworthy operator. Therefore, they must adapt to expectations. It is apparent that the authoritative command and control system originating from the profit-creating and competitive corporate world, cannot be applied as such in arts organisations focusing on the complex processes of creating intangible art. However, in order to operate, each organisation requires a certain number of structures. The imperative factors are, how the democratic principles and operations are applied and in which situations.

A contingency approach in the organisational design suggests that each organisation evaluates the number of structures they need. Artistic processes might not profit from strict monitoring and bureaucratic means but accounting and paying salaries require these as they are bound to the legislation. (Byrnes, 2009, pp. 24, 159.) Each arts organisation, regardless of their size and ideology, applies the distinct amount of democracy they see ideal for them. Furthermore, democratic principles of the society and institutions require to follow common regulations such as work legislation and union contracts.

The *hybrid organising* defined by Battilana et al. (2018) integrates financial and social values and, therefore, operates in a dynamic and changing environment hence, requiring more democratic means. (p. 275). This definition applies to the arts organisations as they produce value-based aesthetic products whilst also need to be financially sustainable while balancing between these two different aspirations.

However, there are past and present examples of arts organisation models that have been experimenting more with democratic means. Vail and Hollands (2013) examine how democratic norms and principles can be related to the artistic process in the case of British Amber Film and Photography Collective. Their collective structure was based on, for example, the following aspects: egalitarian pay structure, equal distribution of tasks, and participatory decision-making. The concrete benefits of this approach are clear: “joint participation in these democratic processes heightened the legitimacy of their creative outputs and solidified their collective identity; and extending participation helped improve group trust and solidarity”. The defects of this system include the notable time spent on designing the democratical processes as well as group-homogeneity, disputes, and limits that the friendship-based participatory organisation caused. (pp. 353-354.)

A similar kind of democratic system was in use at the time when ensemble theatre companies were founded, also based on equal pay and distribution of tasks. In a similar way, the setbacks of the system entailed that in practice tasks were not distributed equally and inside the equal community, there were unseen power structures based on friendships, charisma, and conglomerates (see subchapters 1.7.2 and 1.7.3). The same phenomenon is typical for the participatory democratic groups that either ceased to exist or were forced to change their organisational structure and operations. However, Vail and Hollands (2013) emphasise that concerning the complex artistic processes, collaborative governance has its benefits that cannot be reached through bureaucratic or hierarchical means as it can offer “strong

attachment to a common artistic mission, cohesive collective identity and solidarity”. (pp. 354-355).

2.2.8 Learning organisation

In the mechanical and organic schools of organisation, the focus is in designing structures and processes. However, in organisational culture, the focus is in shaping organisational activity: “influencing the ideologies, values, beliefs (...) ceremonies and other social practices that ultimately shape and guide organized action.” (Morgan, 1997, p. 147.)

The concept of *learning organisation* explores the possibilities of human knowledge and how to usefully activate it. This concept combines both the organisation structure and the human behaviour.

Garvin (1993) as cited in Poisson-de Haro and Menot (2013) define learning organisation as “an organization skilled at creating, acquiring, and transferring knowledge, and at modifying its behavior to reflect new knowledge and insights”. Poisson-de Haro and Menot (2013) adds that the learning organisation must “take collective rather than individual approach to problem solving (...) learn from past experience by reviewing and analyzing successes and failures.” (p. 63.) Past experience in this case includes both failures and success and embraces rather than hides the failures. Varbanova (2013) adds to the features that learning organisation “uses people's mental and creative capacity”, but also “cares about people, not only about results.” (p. 214). This is an important notion. Since the management and organization theories have moved towards a more humanistic approach, exploring capabilities of the human mind, the misuse and overuse of employees' knowledge has increased. Related to this, two concepts should not be mixed with each other: “organisational learning” is a phenomenon born organically without force or power, and “learning organisation” is a constructed structure. (Gabriel, 2008, p. 162).

However, the prerequisite for organic and planned learning is that democratic organisation structure and its communication channels support the creation and sharing of knowledge through all units.

This is especially relevant in arts organisations enhancing creative work. Both the collective leadership and post-heroic management support the openness and collective participation.

In conclusion, the learning organisation is “decentralized, encourages open communication and encourages individuals to work in teams... predominant values are those of risk-taking, honesty and trust.” Peter Senge who presented this concept to the wider public in 1990 was able to prove that learning organisations that were learning from their past experiences, were far more successful than the organisations that merely adapted to the environment. In addition, the strategies created by these companies were open-ended which added their readiness to react to rapid, unexpected changes. (Mintzberg et al., 2005, p. 215.) It is notable that the definition of features in learning organisation and in democratic organisation are almost similar.

2.2.9 Strategic learning

When organisations were understood as learning systems, new concepts started to arise. *Intelligent learning systems* are apt to use the experience from the current events and create it into knowledge. However, it is crucial to also read trends and signs to forecast the possible future and then act in the present time to make the future goal possible. This demands constant openness to the environment.

The concept of *double loop learning* means that organisation members comprehend how their organisation functions and what kind of principles, metaphors, concepts, and mind-set it has. In *single loop learning* the errors are detected and then fixed, whilst the system stays the same and the error might be repeated later. Single loop learning is usually associated with a top-down management style with strict control and clearly specified goals. However, also double loop learning demands vision, norms, and limits as a reference. These must be created in such a way that there is space for alternating actions and thoughts, including the possibility to question the set limits. The company's defined *core values* are one of these ways to create space, as well as provide coherence. (Morgan 1997, pp. 93-95.)

In learning organisations, the democratic collective decision-making process enables the testing of different ideas and examining work from multiple perspectives. This requires sharing of information and “shared understanding, trust, and commitment”. In *self-*

organisation the core idea is that each member acquires multiple, overlapping skills and if needed, can substitute or support other members. Members are encouraged to take challenges and not stick to narrow job descriptions. (Morgan, 1997, pp. 106-111.) The idea of self-organisation is predominantly the same as in the systems theory and post-heroic management, where the collective has a shared responsibility and trust.

In 1995 Nonaka and Takeuchi (as cited in Mintzberg et al., 2005) launched the idea that instead of manuals and guidelines, managers should pay more attention to the “less formal and systematic side of the knowledge and start focusing on highly subjective insights, intuitions and hunches that are gained through the use of metaphors, pictures, or experiences.”. *Tacit knowledge* is based on unexpressed and hidden and *explicit knowledge* on formal and known. (p. 210.)

In the next chapter, it will be considered how knowledge can be distributed and shared in a tight community.

2.3 GROUPS AND COMMUNITIES

This chapter concentrates on how the social behaviour is manifested in groups. An extensive amount of research has been conducted into this topic, whilst the focus here is especially on features that are suited to arts organisations and creative work.

2.3.1 Occupational and professional communities

Strati (2000) highlights in his view on groups the concept of *communities of practice*.

This term indicates long-lasting relations between individuals, activities and the world. The relations are composed of informal clusters that have commonly agreed on how tasks should be executed, and different events interpreted. Further on, Strati (2000) describes the concept of occupational and professional communities that are based on skill and knowledge. They consist of groups of people who are in the same work field and

who identify themselves with it; who create, negotiate and share a set of projects, perspectives, moral codes, organizational ethics, modes of thought, legislation, and social regulation of their work in organizations and society; who refer to this set of values outside work as well; and whose everyday social relations mix membership of this world of work with elements that do not necessarily pertain to it. (pp. 87-88.)

In this concept Strati (2000) points out that individuals mix their private and professional life and that in professional and occupational communities these can be difficult to separate. The common feelings of unity in these communities are created through sharing of practical knowledge, problem-solving, social networking, tradition, and history. The shared knowledge is predominantly tacit, it is not based on theoretical understanding or reasoning. It is kind of a *community memory* that indicates commonly known things amongst members of the group. (p. 87.)

It is important to understand that the individual members of the community create the group and shape it constantly. It is practically based on actions and can be “drawn, erased and reconstructed by those who feel that they belong to the community”. Occupation is an essential fact that shapes an individual's identity. Specified codes and perceptions typical to a certain group lead interpretation of people and artefacts. This increases engagement to the group. “Within the community, social relations operate which extend beyond those that arise from performance of the same work or occupation, and which involve the sharing of friendship, entertainment and passions not strictly correlated with it.” (Strati, 2000, pp. 89-90.)

The process where individuals cross the boundaries of formal occupational role is explained with the means of the relational identity theory which is introduced in the next subchapter.

2.3.2 Relational identity and friendship

Sluss and Ashforth (2007) suggest in their role-based *relational identity theory* that on the first encountering individuals make notions of each other based on formal group prototypes (such as the technical department in theatre) and roles (such as a technician). However, over time the formal relationship might turn into a friendship. Sluss and Ashforth (2007) relate to

the literature on trust in organisations. When mutual expectations are met, familiarity and empathy start to develop leading to a trusted relationship. (p. 12.) As noted previously, for example a similar value system endorses empathy and friendship between members.

Also the role-relationships have an important influence: an individual in a given role mirrors a coworker in a similar kind of role. This positive mirroring combines an individual's personal traits (for example humour and kindness) and role as a coworker in a community. (Sluss & Ashforth, 2007, p. 15). Consequently, the relationship can change into a friendship and the impact of coworker role diminishes. Sluss and Ashforth (2007) call this phenomenon *interpersonal attraction* and emphasise that this relationship is *multiplex*: it is based on the many roles that individuals possess simultaneously. (p. 17). According to Hogg (1992) as cited in Sluss and Ashforth (2007), the interpersonal attraction is a combination of an individual's qualities and the qualities of the collective that the individual belongs to. (p. 17). This strengthens the notion that individual identity and organisational identity are closely related even as seen from an external point of view.

In the next subchapter it is examined how close connections between organisation members develop into a tight community, a clan.

2.3.3 Networks and clans

Networks are considered to be one of the crucial elements in arts organisations. It is related to the concepts of artistic quality, trust and artistic process that, especially in the performing arts, is collective and collaborative work. Consequently, arts organisations and artistic collectives are often understood as closed circles.

Poisson-de Haro and Menot (2013) name artists' *clan culture* as one explaining feature of this closedness. As artistic discipline requires specific competency and skills and these skills vary regarding the profession (actor, lighting designer, dramaturg, etc.), these groups are highly compartmentalised. The clans are “driven by individuals who know each other either directly or indirectly, weaving a tight web of relationships”. Taking part in the artistic project is enabled through a closed system of recruitment based on networks. Consequently, it can

be difficult for an artist to move from one artistic discipline to another due to this closed clan system.

According to Poisson-de Haro and Menot (2013), inside an arts organisation, the clan system can be a sensitive issue. Artistic creation divides members into artistic and non-artistic personnel and can create subcultures inside the organisation. The reason for sensitivity is the creative process that is a result of collective work between artists and operational staff such as technicians or producers. (p. 128.)

Clan type of organisation, a concept developed by Ouchi, is based on Emile Durkheim's idea of "organic solidarity". (Strati, 2000, p. 24). This type of organisation seems to fit especially well to the core idea of an arts organisation as a group of trusted people.

Chan (1997) defines the clan organisation's fundamental principles being trust, loyalty, respect for others and honesty. A clan organisation consists of people who are "positive, stable and suited to the culture" and there is no competition between the members. The members are considered being trustworthy and intelligent individuals and communication between them is based on openness. The structure is based on sharing both risks and rewards as well as allowance to make mistakes and improve from them. Everyone in the organisation oversees quality.

Clan is based on a democratic culture of commitment, consensus and communication and breaking these "rules" is understood as dishonesty. The aim of clan organisation is to create internal cohesion and stability. To attain this, the organisation has created a defensive wall against instability, and it regulates entry of new individuals. The trust for other clan members is strong and if somebody attacks the clan values, symbols, rituals, heroes/heroines, it is considered as an insult for the whole organisation. (Chan, 1997.) These features of clan organisation can even appear cult-like. But as considering the "sacredness" of art and its creation, they tend to describe the circumstances quite aptly.

The next subchapter examines cohesive communities based on personal relationships.

2.3.4 Small world networks

According to Moody and White (2003), a structurally cohesive group is kept together by its members' social relations. The group is cohesively strong when all people in the group are

directly connected with each other. A cohesively weak group has only few connections or they are all through one leading character, for example a charismatic leader. (p. 112). The main ingredient of any group can be said to be the social connections with a variety of people. However, related to artistic work, the quality and nature of the connection must have a significant role.

Uzzi and Spiro (2005) base their research on successful Broadway musicals and their production teams to the Milgram's (1967) concept of a *small world network*. In this theory Milgram suggests that “most people’s friends are friends with each other”. This leads to clustered networks of people where an individual can be part of different clusters at the same time. This enables cohesion of even large communities that are structured of separate clusters. A person belonging to two clusters can easily make shortcuts between people and hop from cluster to cluster. Further on, Uzzi and Spiro (2005) introduce the theory by Becker (1982) concerning “pool of variations”. This means that artists create work inspired from the conventions and styles created by other related artists. New work is always a combination of convention and innovative, new material. Becker notes that “Without the first it (work of art) becomes unintelligible; without the second, it becomes boring and featureless.” (pp. 451-461.) In their theory Uzzi and Spiro (2005) suggest that the more there are features of a small world, the more people are connected to each other and to people who “know each other well through past collaborations or through having had past collaborations with common third parties.” This theory captures the essence of how art is created by revealing the almost unseen strings of connection between people:

These conditions enable the creative material in separate clusters to circulate to other clusters as well as to gain the kind of credibility that unfamiliar material needs to be regarded as valuable in new contexts, thereby increasing the prospect that the novel material from one cluster can be productively used by other members of other clusters. (p. 449.)

The main idea in this theory is that creative material is spread by known and trusted sources. They transfer and introduce unfamiliar and novel ideas from their previous project to the new team members. However, the amount of small world features is crucial. According to Uzzi and Spiro (2005), when the network is too cohesive, there are too many close connections and common third parties, i.e. members know each other too well, the creativity

and the introduction of new material turns into conventional ideas that “worked in the past”. Furthermore, when the team is “friends and friends of friends” the obligation for friends to “make them space” can prevent recruiting new fresh members with new artistic material to the group. As a conclusion, Uzzi and Spiro (2005) emphasise the need for combining both familiar, trusted people and new acquaintances as well as conventional ideas and bold new outtakes to make an ideal team and material for successful production. (p. 464.)

In the next subchapter, the focus changes from groups to individuals that form an organisation and its identity.

2.4 INDIVIDUAL AND ORGANISATIONAL IDENTITY

The individual self relates to society and is formed through daily social contacts. Furthermore, an individual's relationship to the organisation can be tight and interdependent. This chapter presents how organisational identity is formed through the individuals related to the organisation. History as well as collective and individual memory have an impact on the identity processes.

2.4.1 Individual self

One's identity, self, is not a fixed element, but something that is subject to constant self-evaluation. Identity is constructed of conscious and unconscious “cultural raw material” such as language, symbols, and values stemming from all personal connections, childhood, education, and society. Alvesson and Willmott (2002) describe an individual's continuous self-defining process as improvised identity work: forming, repairing, maintaining, strengthening. Experiences and situations, surprising events or changes force the individual to pay more attention to self and hence strengthen the identity work. This work always includes a certain amount of uncertainty and doubt that induces worry and stress. Uncertainty is usually created from discrepancy of situations or people. Furthermore, the tensions are

decreased when work tasks and position provide identity-securing routines and strengthen the feeling of *being self*. (pp. 626-627.) Self-evaluation is not an objective process, whilst is motivated by “various needs, including needs for control, consistency, pleasure, and achievement”. (Ashforth & Mael, 1996, p. 24).

The question how this “self” is created forms the foundation of social psychological theories that emerged in the 1990s. It was understood that instead of one distinct self, there actually was a unique (different from other people) personal self as well as *social self*, a self-concept that assimilates to other people as well as collectives or groups. (Brewer & Gardner, 2004, p. 67). Baumeister and Leary (1995, as cited in Brewer and Gardner, 2004) define that the basic feature of humans is a *need to belong* to some combination of people. Furthermore, social self consists of interpersonal relations with specific people and is called *interpersonal identity* or *relational identity*. These connections can be between two people or a small group of people. (p. 67.)

In the next subchapter, the need to belong to a group, i.e., how the self is connected to the organisation is examined further.

2.4.2 Embedding oneself into the organisation

Several identity theories emphasise that self is constructed of the perceptions of other people. Social connecting and adopting collective values and perceptions define self in relation to others. As identity gets stronger over the years of interaction and experience, individuals tend to strengthen their self by searching for connections that are in alignment with individual identity claims, i.e. the self that is constantly being built through negotiating with the environment. The valued and trusted members of an individual's network, for example, friends, family or coworkers, validate and support the position and shaping of self, hence making it sustainable. (Ashforth & Mael, 1996, pp. 39-40.)

Consequently, the organisation also operates with the same logic. Albert and Whetten (1985) as cited in Ashforth and Mael (1996) claim that organisational self, organisational identity, is similarly formed through “reflected appraisal process”. (p. 40).

Organisations and individuals need each other to exist. An organisation cannot exist without its members and an individual is seeking connections and activities that strengthen the self and purpose of self. Attractiveness of an organisation is based on how it resonates with the self needs of an individual. In the same way as one chooses friends, they also tend to choose their organisations. The organisation answers to the individual needs for continuity, uniqueness and even immortality. (Ashforth & Mael, 1996, p. 42).

According to Wiley and Alexander (1987) as cited in Ashforth and Mael (1996) pleasing organisations help to define one's personal identity by answering the needs and even providing a persona or a role that is only needed to adopt. This leads to *situated identity* where identity is embedded with the organisational identity and the organisation becomes “valid expression of self”. (p. 43).

Attractive organisational identity is communicated through expressions that mirror an organisation's culture. Hatch and Schultz (2004) define these attractions as being emotional, aesthetic and fostering intuition: “We argue that when stakeholders are in sympathy with expressions of organizational identity, their sympathy connects them with the organizational culture that is carried in the traces of identity claims.” (p. 388.) With this attractive organisation, a person adopts its mission, ideology and values, strategies and consequently ways of working, traditions and habits. This means that each individual in the organisation “becomes a microcosm of the organization”. (Ashforth & Mael, 1996, p. 44). To enact the organisation's identity requires only being true to the individual self, i.e., following one's own values that are at the same time also the organisation's values. According to Ashforth and Mael (1996), this means

extending the concept of self to include the organization, the concept of self-interest also comes to include the organization. The distinction between one's own welfare and the organization's welfare is reduced so that helping the organization becomes tantamount to helping oneself. The individual perceives that she and the organization share a common destiny and that the organization's successes and failures are her successes and failures. (p. 44.)

2.4.3 Organisational identity

Development of both individual self and organisational identity include the same concepts and principles. It is also logical to be so: organisations are created by humans.

Both organisations and individuals are determined by history, the cognitive process, local society and the global setting, social connections, personal networks, possibilities and barriers constructed of values, beliefs, and knowledge. (Ashforth & Mael, 1996, p. 20).

Albert and Whetten (1985, as cited in Ashforth & Mael, 1996), define organisational identity being the “soul” of organisation as “central, distinctive, and enduring”. Identity is constructed of “mission, values, ideology and beliefs, norms, competencies, and customary ways of doing things”. The human structure is emphasised in the notion that the stronger the members’ consensus, trust and belief in the organisation, the stronger the organisation is believed to be. (p. 23.)

Furthermore, as the members of the organisation shape the way it is constructed, they make *identity claims* towards it. In a similar way as the individual identity is claimed, organisational identity is also a combination of what one is and what one would like to be: actual self and ideal self. To increase the complexity of the case: there are as many claims, *possible selves*, as there are members in the organisation. (Ashforth & Mael, 1996, p. 28.) The structure, hierarchy and social relations define which self is prevalent in each time frame and which are dialogical or challenging identities that can change into dominant ones.

Dialogue is *generating knowledge* in the organisation and in communication with others, the organisation members are *making sense* by talking, listening, and constructing. This dialogue is not merely a communication process, but a wider social process where “different understandings and knowledges struggle in an arena of power relationships.” Power is comprehended in this context as “how people include or exclude the views of others in terms of how organisational learning is understood.” (Rhodes, 2000, pp. 217-222.)

Hatch and Schultz (2004) describe the tight connection between individual and organisational culture being transferred to the material artefacts. Organisation culture provides a context to mirror its members' individual identity. This process creates *tacit*

cultural understanding, in other words, principal assumptions and values. According to Dewey's classical theory from 1934, these values in turn are absorbed in cultural artifacts: “the artifacts then carry that meaning from the deep recesses of cultural understanding to the cultural surface. The meaning-laden artifacts of a culture thereby become available to self-defining, identity forming processes.”

Hatch and Schultz (2004) conclude that every identity claim an organisation member makes carries cultural meanings. This extends to both identity claims and identity artifacts (such as logo or name) that can be used as symbols to describe the organisation's essence and being. In this way the process is looping: “it is that cultural understandings are carried, along with reflections on identity, into the process of expressing identity.” Even if symbols are interpreted and reworked, they still carry their original meaning in them. Therefore, even if every artefact is layered with interpretations it still includes part of its original history in the core. These artefacts can credibly communicate the organisational identity through practices such as rituals, architecture, and marketing. (p. 388.)

The organisational identity can be constructed unintentionally through an organisation's daily patterns of behavior, operations, habits, and approaches. All organisation members express the organisation's identity and, therefore, are advocates of the organisation. (Hatch & Schultz, 2004, p. 390).

History is the foundation on which organisational identity is constructed. This is examined in the next subchapter.

2.4.4 History and organisations

History cannot be avoided, as an organisation is constructed of social and cultural background. Khurana (2007) as cited in Suddaby, Foster and Mills (2014) emphasise that

it is essential to examine an institution's birth-it's emergence out of an interaction with the larger society and culture, the evolution of its internal dynamic and the interface between the two (...) The key here is to show organizations responding to particular problems posed by history. (p. 107)

As noted earlier, both organisational identity and individual identity are constructed of past experiences taken to the present time both consciously and unconsciously. An organisation's history can be seen in the present day in all its habits, routines and decisions: "Present forms have their particular nature by virtue of their past." (Manicas 1987, as cited in Kieser, 1994, p. 610).

Historical institutionalism is grounded on phenomenology, where individuals construct social structures in interaction with each other based on shared assumptions about the current environment. According to Berger and Luckmann (1967) as cited in Suddaby et al. (2014), these interactions become habituated and reproduced over time and this process has historical nature. Distinctive ways of operating are created whilst creating shared history and, therefore, their evolution takes time. "Institutions always have a history, of which they are the products. It is impossible to understand an institution adequately without an understanding of the historical process in which it has been produced."

From this notion Suddaby et al. (2014) conclude three main features that construct historical institutionalism, "the socio-historical process by which habituated actions and meanings become reified as objective social structures".

Firstly, institutions are constructed of historical processes. Second, these processes are created in human interaction. Third, these actions and the understanding of them changes over time and the context and their meanings change according to environment and time.

Historical institutionalism can also explain the adoption of new processes and operations in organisation. These new processes are not adopted by a mere decision, instead, with a long process of learning and incremental change and a new model is sedimented on top of the old models and patterns. (pp. 111-113.)

Therefore, an organisation is a layered structure which includes the "old" as the solid foundation for the present organisation. Consequently, this must mean that also each individual leaves a "sediment" to the organisation. As Suddaby et al. (2014) remark, the organisational studies about occupational roles seldom take into consideration the effect that each individual has to the creation of an occupation or a position.

Instead of studying the end results of a historical process from the point of view of present time, the attention should be aimed more for the collective interpretation of history: how people experience a certain time period as a collective and what kinds of matters influenced

the events and actions. For example, power relations in organisations at a certain time period can explain both decisions and their effects. The reinterpretation and reification of events creates the organisation, not the present moment.

In conclusion, the concept of *institutional work* refers to this process as being “purposive action of individuals and organizations aimed at creating, maintaining and disrupting institutions.” (pp. 114-115.) The organisation survives not because of legitimation and excellency, instead, because of “a result of a series of decisions and past choice opportunities, whether intentional or implicit“. (Kieser, 1994, p. 611).

History is intrinsically related to the memory. In the next subchapter, it will be examined how the collective memory builds the organisational identity.

2.4.5 Collective memory

Collective memory is a glue that keeps humans together. This “connective structure of societies” is a combination of practical structures (for example buildings or commemorate days) and human-created rituals and features (such as tradition, myth or identity). The term "collective memory" was first applied by Hugo von Hoffmannstahl in 1902 describing “the dammed up force of our mysterious ancestors within us”. (Olick & Robbins, 1998, p. 106.) The collective memory builds the community identity and is usually shared through narratives, as well as through patterns of thought and lived history. The memories are based on shared experience, whilst might not be articulated precisely or consciously. (Manier & Hirst, 2008, p. 253).

Memory is the most efficiently reactivated via a social connection where it also develops and alters becoming collective, shared property. Halwachs (1992) as cited in Olick and Robbins (1998) notes that

there is [thus] no point in seeking where... [memories] are preserved in my brain or in some nook of my mind to which I alone have access: for they are recalled by me externally, and the groups of which I am a part at any time give me the means to reconstruct them.” [brackets in original] (p. 109)

Zerubavel (1996) as cited in Olick and Robbins (1998) develops the idea of collectivity further to *mnemonic communities*. This concept means that most of the things that an individual remembers are not actually events that one has experienced. By belonging to a group, an individual creates the ability to experience events that occurred in the group before joining it and feel them as if they had been there and it had been a part of one's individual past. This phenomenon is called *sociobiographical memory* and it can produce feelings such as pride, shame, or pain connected to the event that happened to the group one currently belongs to. (p. 123.)

2.4.6 Rituals, traditions and practices as a form of memory

According to Manier and Hirst (2008), rituals and traditions are mnemonic tools that create and reify collective identity and remind of the experienced declarative memories. *Collective procedural memory* includes these traditions, rituals, and practices a collective or a group has.

However, it is significant that most often people follow, repeat, and use traditions and rituals, unaware that they are such things. They might even apprehend them as instinctive or natural actions that are not related to past experiences. In this way traditions become embodied and can have notable meaning partly because they are not recognised as learned actions but are taken for granted. In the context of an organisation, collective procedural memory is most likely to be transferred intact to the future employees. Procedural memory, for example skills to use instruments or ways of work, create a solid base for a community's cultural memory and, therefore, significantly build collective identity. It is a long-lasting memory that stretches to the future. (pp. 258-261.)

However, in the process of *socially-shared retrieval-induced forgetting* the remembering of a group is selective, forgetting some experiences and lifting others. In this way the collective creates meanings and, further on, required narrative that strengthen the collective and creates the illusion of logical continuity.

When memories are created for a certain purpose, they are intentional. However, most remembering processes are spontaneous and are created through conversation and

experiences. A shared memory is usually created with unintentional remembering combined with natural interaction between the collective's members. Furthermore, an essential question is which experiences end up in the long-term memory through collective consolidation and which are left out. Michaelian and Sutton (2018) note that this is a conflictual and competitive process between different groups and opinion leaders and can result in collision between individual and collective consolidation. (pp. 144-148.) Consequently, this can negatively affect the creation of a collective identity.

As a conclusion, the collective memory is a combination of different individual pasts that are, according to Zerubavel, “combined into a single common past that all members (...) come to remember collectively.” (1996, as cited in Brown & Humphreys, 2002, p. 150).

3 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Methodological approach of the study

In this chapter, the background, methodology and the interpretive framework of this research are presented. Firstly, few theories related to the chosen research method and approach are examined. Secondly, the research data are presented. In the last two subchapters, the analysis method is described and the research process is reviewed from the critical point of view.

3.1.1 Background for the study

Intentionally or unintentionally, each researcher brings to their work their own views, values and background. This affects the process of data collection, the choice of perspective and interpretation of research data and findings. The key question is, whether one is aware of these factors and if they are used in the qualitative study, or attempted to set aside for the sake of objectivity.

As mentioned in the introduction section, my *epistemological approach* to this study was intentionally personal and I had a dual role as a researcher and member of one of the organisations researched. My individual understanding of the themes has guided the selection of theories and interviewees as aspiring to understand a certain phenomenon repeated in my own work situations. The truthfulness and the relevancy of the acquired interview material was evaluated through my own experiences.

Ontologically, this research is a combination of my own concept and understanding of the ensemble theatre company reality in the form of research questions and interview questions. It is also an attempt to include and describe the different realities that the interviewees have. Therefore, I mirror and evaluate my own concepts with the acquired interview data. In the qualitative study, the *axiological* base is that the researcher informs about values and biases that can affect the study. At the same time, a researcher must be aware of and respect the different values the interviewees obtain. (Creswell, 2013, pp. 15-22.) Being a member of one

of the researched organisations, I naturally share the common values this organisation has, hence, being partial at some quantity.

The *methodological* approach in this study is somewhat *heuristic*, i.e., phenomena and concepts are aimed to be comprehended through my personal experience of the world. The interviews of the ensemble theatre company members were reflected to personal experiences to *inductively* find congruences and differences. Furthermore, this study aims to understand how and when these phenomena are created and why they are repeated in different organisations. To understand the organisations and phenomena, the research themes are through *abductive* deduction reflected on theories regarding the organizational theory and management theory. (Tuomi & Sarajärvi, 2006, pp. 82-97.)

As this study is based on the interviewees' view of the world, the interpretive framework can be said to consist of *social constructivism* (also known as interpretivism). To reach the complex nature that these organisations have, the themes are approached from the subjective point of view. The aim is to find complexities rather than straightforward explanations. (Creswell, 2013, pp. 24-25.) As will be seen later, this has led, for example, to modifying the interview questions according to the previous interviews, as well as themes that emerged from them. The *interpretive* approach aims to describe the world from the research subjects', the interviewees' perspective, how they create, interact, and interpret the current reality. As a researcher, one must also understand the changing environment and human interactions that affect the research. Therefore, the researcher's approach must be flexible, yet also critical. (Rosenthal, 2018, pp. 14-16.)

The research process is of interpretative nature due to my own background and aim to “make sense” of the world in which I am operating. I use my own position as a starting point, and it has also given me access to researched organisations. Therefore, this study can also be seen as self-ethnographic. (Alvesson, 2003). However, as will be seen later, it is not entirely self-ethnographic due to the partly outsider position I possess.

3.1.2 Formulating the research questions

This study is aimed to contribute new information for the theatre field. Firstly, it aims to discover whether phenomena encountered as an individual could be relevant also for the other members working in the ensemble theatre companies. Secondly, the study explores open-mindedly what kinds of themes and points of views seem to be important for the members of ensemble theatre companies. Therefore, as a researcher, it is crucial to take an objective approach, to have space for new and emerging themes.

This study is a combination of questions arising from the researcher's own experiences and themes that the interviewees highlighted. Furthermore, it combines research findings from both the organizational theory and management theory that appear to describe phenomena or place them into a wider perspective. The research approach applied here is described as *theory-related analysis* where existing theories can help and guide the new research, whereas research is not meant to prove or test any theories, but rather open up for new possibilities. (Tuomi & Sarajärvi, 2006, p. 98).

The initial research questions were the following:

- 1) *How are the three primary founding principles (collectivity, democratic principles, and the concept of aiming for high-quality art) of ensemble theatre companies implemented in practice?*
- 2) *What are the artistic values and core values of an ensemble theatre company and how are they reproduced in the daily theatre work?*
- 3) *What kinds of individuals join ensemble theatre companies? How does this process happen?*

3.2 Qualitative methods

This research was executed through *qualitative methods* that are useful when approaching humans and human constructions such as organisations. The reason for choosing this approach is based on the flexible and comparative nature of qualitative methods. When the aim is to understand complex structures, the combination of interviewees' understanding, researcher's own position and theoretical material can be easily combined and compared. This notion is verified in Creswell's (2013) description of the four distinct features of qualitative methods. Firstly, the process was primarily based on the participants' meanings and concepts on the issue: not solely on the researcher's concepts or literature. Multiple points of view deepen the topic and provide new perspectives. Secondly, the research process was emergent, i.e., when the research is conducted, the research plan is reflective and flexible to changes. The obtained knowledge altered the process and the researcher “learned” while researching. Thirdly, while learning during the research process, the researcher works “back and forth between the themes and database until they establish a comprehensive set of themes”. The data is obtained “bottom up” and themes are compared with data by deductive thinking. The fourth distinctive feature is reflexivity where the researcher describes their background (for example work or cultural background) and how it affects the study.

As a conclusion, qualitative research is applied when the themes require exploring. This means that there are complex structures, as in organisations, to be understood or voices that are not usually heard. (pp. 42-47.) This matches the aim of this research that was to comprehend and describe the relatively unexplored world of ensemble theatre companies, their staff, values, and organisational operations.

3.2.1 Organisational ethnography and self-ethnography

Ethnography is a research method used originally by anthropologists and adopted later on by sociology, the management theory, as well as cultural and organisational studies. It describes through observation and participation different kinds of groupings and strives to understand how groups work. (Neyland, 2008, pp. 1-5.) Van Maanen (1979) as cited in

Neyland (2008) define organisational ethnography's purpose being “to uncover and explicate the ways in which people in particular work settings come to understand, account for, take action, and otherwise manage their day-to-day situation.” (p. 7).

This research inevitably has features of ethnography as an environment familiar to the researcher is observed through their own work position. Alvesson (2003) defines the difference between ethnography and *self-ethnography* to be the relation to the group observed and researched. In ethnography, a researcher “breaks into” the group as an outsider whilst in self-ethnography, an insider or an “occasionally observing participant breaks out” of the group in order to make observations of one's fellow organisation members. It is important to comprehend that the point of view in observing is “we” instead of “they”. (Alvesson, 2003, pp. 176-177.) Hammersley (1990, as cited in Alvesson, 2003) criticises traditional ethnography of writing narrative stories of how matters “seem to be” instead of descriptions of how “they are”. (p. 173).

However, even though the researcher's own experiences defined the frames and setting of this study, the collected research material and written out report does not include their own experiences. This distances the study from the ethnographic research method. Similarly, the self-ethnography approach requires making field notes and recordings of events as they happen. However, primary research data in this study were the interviews and the insider position is mainly used as a way to access fellow organisations.

Alvesson (2003) emphasises the importance of distance to the researched “home” organisation. (p. 176). This enables a researcher to understand aspects that they take for granted. In this research, the required distance to the research objects was created from the fact that even though being a member of one ensemble theatre company organisation researched, the remaining three were more distant for the researcher and the knowledge of their everyday life, operations and personal relations is scarce. Further on, the research is not written in the ethnographical or autoethnographical style that either describes the observations from the field, from the observed organisation, or positions the researcher as one of the characters in the story.

Generally, the self-ethnographic approach whether as a starting point or as a method, sets

challenges for the research. Alvesson (2003) notes that since the researcher does not depart from the research setting after the work is done, it might entice avoiding difficult themes and write about colleagues in a more flattering way. This is a serious threat and is also applicable to this study as will be seen in one of the following subchapters. As a consequence, treating the interviewees and organisations anonymously was a practical solution so that also uncomfortable themes could be addressed. However, as Alvesson (2003) remarks, all qualitative research includes some part of diplomacy. (pp. 183-188.)

3.2.2 Case study

The research objects in this study are the four ensemble theatre companies in Helsinki with a similar structure, purpose, and history. The aim is to comprehend the repeated phenomena of these theatre companies. This approach can be seen as a methodology or a choice of the *case study* that frames the research.

Creswell (2013) defines the case study to be a research on a case or cases that are found from real-life, contemporary setting and are bounded by time and place. Further on, the research strives to present an in-depth understanding of the case by collecting data in many forms. The research includes description of the cases as well as specific themes studied. Furthermore, one possible way to analyse the collected data is to “identify issues within each case and then look for common themes that transcend the cases”. (pp. 97-99.)

Hammersley and Gomm (2000) introduce the idea that the research should capture the cases as being unique in time and place and not apply generalisation as a concluding method. The case is represented by its own terms striving for authenticity. (p. 3). Stake (2000) as cited in Hammersley and Gomm (2000) emphasises the fact that the case exists independently regardless of the research and researchers must respect the boundaries of the case and how members operating in it understand their world. (p. 8).

In this study of the Helsinki-based ensemble theatre companies, this uniqueness was found through their history, aim and structure that differs from the other theatre companies operating in the field. Even though it is possible to generalise some features of ensemble

theatre companies, it is more interesting to study why these theatre companies are different from non-ensemble theatre companies, what are their similarities and what kind of effect the ensemble structure has had on their artistic end products.

The necessity of protecting the anonymity of the interviewees as well as preventing the identification of individual theatre companies led this study to examine the common themes that occur in these theatres regardless of their history or identity.

To understand the complex nature of ensemble theatre company organisations, the interviewer should strive to acquire also the interviewees' tacit, unconsciously acquired knowledge. Stake (2000) emphasises the tacit knowledge being the essential feature in the case study. Instead of trying to explain phenomena, it strives to understand them. Furthermore, Stake introduces the idea of *naturalistic generalisation* that an individual creates through experience: “they derive from the tacit knowledge of how things are, why they are, how people feel about them, and how these things are likely to be later or in other places with which this person is familiar.” In practice, the aim is to find similarities between the cases and sense the covariations of happenings in an intuitive and empirical way. (p. 22.) The difference of generalisation and naturalistic generalisation is to comprehend that the knowledge is tacit and related to context and time. Generalisations are quickly outdated since the context is constantly changing.

The subchapter 1.8 introduces shortly the cases, namely the four ensemble theatre companies studied in this research.

3.3 Data collection

For this particular qualitative research, conducting interviews was chosen to be the primary data collection method. The research is based on the aim for comprehending certain phenomena repeated in my daily work and, therefore, it was important to discover how people working in a similar context understand the same situation. Preliminary discussions with different professionals working in the field brought both confirmation for personal experiences and notions as well as alternative perspectives and new topics that could be explored.

Already in the beginning of the process, it was clear that primary data would consist of the interviews conducted with the members of the four ensemble theatre companies. I comprehended that my part-insider position as a theatre professional would give me access to interview the organisation members as well as create certain credibility as a researcher. Furthermore, it can be presumed that an insider position would generate trust and a certain level of openness in the interview situation hence, creating relevant and reliable research data.

Even though the self-ethnographic starting point could have guided me to choose an ethnographic method of collecting data through observation, it would not have been the most efficient solution. Firstly, the time frame for the research did not enable the observation process in four different theatre companies and would have forced me to concentrate only one case organisation. Secondly, I felt that my, however amicable, presence in a “rivalry” organisation would not have been experienced as natural as I would have been seen more as a theatre professional representing my own organisation than as an objective researcher. Thirdly, the pandemic situation and the lockdown of theatres would have made both observation and participation impossible.

The secondary data consisted of literature on Finnish theatre history, anniversary books written about the KOM-teatteri, Q-teatteri, and Teater Viirus as well as a recent podcast series produced by the Finnish Broadcasting Corporation (Yleisradio) and the four ensemble theatre companies. While preparing and writing the theoretical framework for the study, various theories both from management studies and organizational theory were explored. This had a significant impact on the depth of the study and shaped also the interview process.

The data in this study consist of *naturally occurring data*, i.e. data that exist regardless of this research, as well as data that was produced for this particular research. The produced data, the interviews, were used as indicators for the phenomena. In this case, the interviews are expected to be objective, truthful *proof* of phenomena. (Alasuutari, 1994, p. 74.) The validity of the data is increased with repetitiveness. Creswell (2013) defines this as *triangulation* or confirming the data from several sources. (p. 53). In this research, the triangulation and reviewing is executed through my own experiences and knowledge, the interview data and through background material and the secondary data.

3.3.1 Background for interviews

Hirsjärvi and Hurme (2008) note that in a qualitative study, the object and the researcher are in interaction and, therefore, the researcher is also creating the object to be studied. The interview is a result of collaboration between the interviewer and interviewee. (p. 23.) In general, rapport, access and insider perspectives are seen as optimal features for the qualitative research. (Creswell, 2013, p. 49). When an interview is seen from this point of view, a researcher's position partly as an insider might have helped to obtain access to both reliable and relevant material. On the other hand, the pressure of being professional can affect both parts to act in a socially acceptable way in an interview situation hence, smooth incoherencies. It must be taken into consideration that the communication act in the interview situation and the roles and positions that the interviewer and interviewee obtain, have an impact for the interview results. Even though the discussion occurs between two people, their backgrounds and communities they belong to are present at the same time. Both parts are representing both themselves as well as group of people; an organisation such as ensemble theatre. (Hirsjärvi & Hurme, 2008, pp. 35, 48-49.)

3.3.2 Interview questions and a semi-structured interview

The interview questions were formed through preliminary discussions with different theatre professionals, as well as on the basis of my own professional experience. Furthermore, a few themes were chosen from the theoretical framework, namely values, decision-making, traditions, and habits. The interview questions were divided into the following five categories: 1) Structure of a theatre; 2) Production process; 3) History and traditions; 4) Art; 5) The future. Altogether there were approximately 30 questions. The categorisations were practical in the interview situation, since they tuned the interviewee to ponder matters related to each theme section and pay attention to specific operations, habits, or processes in a theatre company. However, this categorisation was not followed when analysing interview material, since new themes arose from the research process and encouraged to develop categorisations further.

This research consists of the data collected from the semi-structured interviews that Neyland (2008) defines as “researcher having a set of questions, but these are not slavishly followed”. (p. 113). In each interview the set of questions was changed according to the profession and position of the interviewee and the organisation in question. Furthermore, questions that in the previous interviews did not induce relevant answers or were misunderstood were modified or removed. Few questions were also added according to the themes that were arising from the theories explored at the same time with the interview period. However, there was a basic set of questions that remained the same regardless of the interviewee or the organisation. Here the aim was to find out how people in different positions see, for example, their impact on the artistic product. An equal starting point was given for everyone without an expectation that, for example, an actor has more to say about art than the administrator.

Approximately two days before the interview, the interview questions were sent to the interviewee via email. For the group discussion, colleagues were invited through WhatsApp-application and emphasised that it was voluntary to participate. Interview questions were not sent beforehand, but instead the themes were shortly described in the organisation's weekly meeting. For this interview, a few key questions from the set of questions used in one-to-one-interviews were chosen.

3.3.3 Conducting the interviews

I chose to interview a total of six individuals from three ensemble theatre companies. In addition, one group discussion was executed with the staff of my own workplace, an ensemble theatre company, and one interview with a freelance director who had been working in a few of these four ensemble theatre companies.

As it happened, the research process coincided with the global COVID-19 crisis that started in Finland in mid-March 2020. This forced me to wait for several weeks until the situation in Finland had calmed down. Since there were some interviewees I did not know personally or were only acquainted with, I felt that the interview situation would be more fruitful when conducting the interview face-to-face. All but one interview were conducted in May and beginning of June 2020 when the first wave of the COVID-19 situation in Finland had

calmed down and the interviewees had already started to work partly in their workplaces. The first pilot interview was conducted earlier in the year when the pandemic had not yet started. Due to timetable issues, one interview was conducted via the Zoom video conferencing platform.

The language of the interviews was Finnish, although the thesis would eventually be written in English. The native language of a few of the interviewees was Swedish. However, as I knew from my own experience, these individuals spoke fluently both Finnish and Swedish in their daily work situations. Therefore, for the sake of clarity, I chose to execute all interviews in Finnish. The interviewees were chosen according to their position in the theatre to obtain perspectives from different professions and departments. Another criterion was the perspective an individual could give to the topic through their experiences of different tasks, productions, and turning points in the history of the theatre company.

Interviews were conducted in daytime and usually in each theatre company's coffee room. This seemed to be the place where the organisation's meetings were usually held, hence, the atmosphere was familiar for the interviewee. The interviews were recorded with the Apple Voice Memos application.

Even though all interview situations felt quite comfortable, the opening question was a question on how the interviewee had ended up working in the particular theatre company. According to Hirsjärvi and Hurme (2008), this is a practical way to give confidence to the interviewee and provide the possibility to talk about their own perspective and experience of the world and, hence, to get a dynamic start for the interview situation. (p. 107). All interviews were advancing well and there were no awkwardly silent moments. However, instead of 90 minutes, the optimal length could have been one hour as both parts started usually to feel tired towards the end of the interview. After ending the interview, chatting on the same themes usually followed. However, the recording device was turned off and due to ethical reasons unofficial material in any form was not included in the research.

3.3.4 Conducting the group discussion

Instead of one-to-one interviews, I decided to make a group discussion with my own colleagues, since it would have been difficult to reposition ourselves as a researcher and interviewees and the truthfulness of the situation would have been compromised. This choice proved to be beneficial: almost all colleagues were present and there were representatives from all departments.

The material gained from group discussion is of completely different nature. Alasuutari (1994) notes that when the interviewed group is a naturally existing group, such as staff of an ensemble theatre company, the members of the group use the same discussion logic and hierarchy as they would use in other similar situations. This means that the discussion concentrates on what is common to the members of the group and how each person as part of the group experiences matters.

The distinctive difference between the one-to-one interviews and the group discussion is that in the individual interviews, the interviewee can describe the group and its culture, but in the group discussion, the culture is present in how the group communicates. The requirement is that the researcher can “read” the power structures and hierarchies of the group and how it affects the obtained material. (pp. 131-132.)

In this particular case, I belong to the group I was interviewing and knew well from my previous experience the formal roles and the informal positions each would choose in the discussion. Therefore, it helped me to interpret the discussion later.

In the beginning, it was challenging to prompt my colleagues to describe routine situations that they knew that I already knew about. However, as the discussion progressed, the atmosphere started to relax and also new perspectives and themes started to rise. As a consequence, all needed theme areas were covered and the acquired material was useful.

3.4 Data analysis

The study of theoretical material coincided with the forming of the first interview questions, which had a notable effect on the whole research process. In the theory-related analysis categories originated from the theory are taken as a guiding method. Researcher's thinking

process is a combination of new material and existing concepts and these are combined creatively. The main themes arise from the theory, but the content and meanings from the collected material. (Tuomi & Sarajärvi, 2006, p. 99.) Furthermore, as mentioned earlier, in this study the researcher's personal background and work experience have had an inevitable impact on deciding which themes are particularly relevant.

In the beginning of the analysis, the acquired research data (transcribed interviews), were divided into three categories, namely "individual", "groups" and "organisational". The aim was to comprehend the causal connection between these three elements and form a general view of the organisations. Interviewees' comments were labelled based on whether they were comments related to individual identity and experience, group identity or a collectively shared idea about the organisation.

The next phase involved identifying the theme areas that were relevant to all ensemble theatre companies. These were, for example, different groups in the theatre organisation and the concept of "we", everyday habits and practical work procedures, the relation to and meaning of freelancers, work morale, trust, general work atmosphere and attitude. These theme areas emerged partly from the original interview questions, whereas a few aberrations that seemed to indicate emerging themes were also included. The aim was to understand and describe the organisations and their specific nature.

After this the themes areas were further on condensed to the most frequent phenomena that applied to all ensemble theatre companies and were mentioned by all interviewees. The eventual categories were, for example, "decision-making power, "decisions and discussions", "art and production process", "individual/embedding" (this particular category included all comments related to the individual experience), "unofficial groups and communication". Subsequently, the three founding principles described in the first research question were mirrored to the categorised material: in which situations the themes of aiming for high-quality art, collectivity, and democratic principles occur most often? Similarly, the keywords and themes from the two subsequent research questions were included in the categorisations: artistic values, core values, and how individuals become part of an ensemble theatre company (this included themes of recruiting and freelancers).

In this phase, the research process ran into problems. The categorisations were vast, and a

causal relationship could be seen between everything. It was difficult to identify the central theme. This correlates precisely with Paavolainen's (2002, see chapter 1.5) description of studying the operational culture of an organisation: so many aspects belong to it and, therefore, it is difficult to structure. It was necessary to return to the secondary data and acquaint myself with the currently released podcasts that four ensemble theatre companies had produced together with their staff and artists. This gave a fresh view to the research topic as it verified the idea that art is set first in ensemble theatre company organisations and democratic structure, collectivity, size and the financial model create the frame for art. From the concept of “art comes first” the research findings started to unravel.

The situation was resolved through a theory-led approach. The eventual theme areas mentioned earlier were classified under headlines taken from the main theoretical areas: values, decision-making, organisational structures, clan and group theories, identity theories, history-related theories, and the organisational identity. Subsequently, the relation between different comments in each thematic unit was examined, interpreted, deducted, and compressed to attain the eventual research findings. In this phase, it was crucial to become aware of the difference between theory and practice. The excerpts chosen from the interviews should primarily reflect the organisation, not a theory that describes a phenomenon. In van Manen's (1990) concept of *phenomenological reflection* the researcher asks a question “What is this example an example of?” (Creswell, 2013, p. 195). This sentence proved to be a practical way to “test” one's own deductions and to keep the focus in the actual life of a case organisation. Throughout the analysis process, the experience-based naturalistic generalisation of “how things are” was pursued. (Stake, 2000, see subchapter 3.2.2).

After finalising the analysis, the research findings were divided under each research question to demonstrate and explicate the causal relations related to art, organisational culture, individuals, and groups. Each theme was highlighted related to different ensemble theatre company features such as "democracy as a founding principle: decision-making structures" and "high artistic standard as a founding principle: motivation". Moreover, the key theories, such as systems theory and creation of organisational identity, were also mirrored in the final conclusions as they applied well to the ensemble theatre company organisations.

Since the main objective of the research was to understand how ensemble theatre companies operate, the primary aim of the Conclusions chapter is to depict the ensemble theatre

companies' distinct features and organisational life.

When the research process was completed, the transcribed material was translated from Finnish into English regarding and preserving the original voices and tones as intact as possible.

3.5 Critical reflection on the research process

In the qualitative research approach, the researcher describes their relation to the subject and analyses their subjectivity in a research process. This sets the research into an honest context and guides the researcher to observe their own conduct and conclusions.

In this research, the researcher's insider position was both an advantage and obstacle. As I knew my research topic well and had access to the material, it helped to define the research problem and its relevance to the field. The significant obstacles occurred in the interview situations and while analysing the interview material.

The inside knowledge led the process of forming the interview questions and as I had found theories that corresponded to my personal experiences, I sensed that I knew too well what I was searching for. Therefore, it was necessary to comprehend that the interview questions were at times too leading and this left little space for the themes that could have risen from the interviewees' own observations.

The general nature of a few interview answers indicated that my position as a representative of a “rival” theatre company prevented describing in detail possible negative features in organisations. Similarly, the knowledge of working together with interviewees and organisations also after the research process prevented me from obtaining material that would affect my future relations or perceptions with these theatre companies. To protect the organisations and individuals working there, the research was kept on the generalised level of the ensemble theatre company phenomenon. This demanded removing all identifiable features of the theatre companies from the text and leaving the interviewees anonymous. This choice does not enhance depicting a variety of individual features each theatre company has and, therefore, the research remains on a neutral ground. Concentrating only on one case theatre organisation might have brought out more relevant details of the daily life of a

particular theatre company but would not have explained the ensemble theatre company phenomenon.

Creswell (2013) emphasises that the interviewer must understand the power imbalance of the hierarchical relationship with the interviewee. When the interviewee is representing both themselves and the organisation, the process of providing data must be respectful and the processing of the received data must not harm either the organisation or the individual, either presently or in the future. Furthermore, one must avoid the “Pollyanna” effect where being too close with the researched organisation can induce reporting only the positive issues and avoid difficult themes. (p. 60.) I surely had my Pollyanna moments during the data analysis, whilst setting each comment into a wider perspective, it was possible to analyse whether the negative-toned comment could be a sign of a wider phenomenon or just a singular incident.

In the beginning of the research process, the aim was to gather tacit knowledge that would describe the organisations' everyday work. However, to attain tacit information or understand deeply the work routines in each organisation would have required an ethnographic approach of the participation and observation instead of one-to-one interviews. (Neyland, 2008, p. 1).

The second defect in the study was that it would have been productive to conduct more group discussions to explore how the internal communication and social relations between organisation members reflects the organisational identity in practice. The sole group discussion conducted brought out several differing opinions and viewpoints inside the group. Undoubtedly, increasing the number of group discussions would have created a more realistic image of the organisations. However, the organising group discussion during the COVID-19 would have been extremely difficult.

Generally, the pandemic situation had its effects on the research process. Researching collective and close-knit organisations where people spend time together and perform to live audiences felt during the lockdown slightly a foreign theme. On the other hand, the crisis situation must have led the interviewees to analyse their profession and working environment in a new light producing clarity of their position and necessity in the society.

4 ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

This chapter analyses the interview material and is divided into four general theme areas following the same division found within the theoretical framework.

Core values introduce the fundamental principles on which the ensemble theatre company organisations operate. *Structure and work practices* describe the ensemble theatre company organisations and a few of their practical work principles. *Groups and communities* highlight the collective work and how temporary members influence the organisation. *Organisational identity* examines the meaning of history, habits and traditions to the organisational identity. The analysis section concentrates on remarks that apply to most ensemble theatre companies and can be perceived as frequent phenomena, though some aberrations naturally appear. A few of the themes originate from the interview questions whilst some pivotal themes arose organically from the interview material.

4.1 CORE VALUES

The main theme found in the interviews includes the ensemble theatres companies' relation to art. The three founding principles (aiming for high-quality art, collectivity, and democratic principles) are the basis on which ensemble theatre companies have been built. However, the aim for creating high-quality art is the essence, the starting point.

4.1.1 What kinds of value principles lead the artistic process?

The founding principle of all four theatre companies has been the need to create free and uncompromised art without external restrictions. The traces of this principle can be still detected as the quote from Technical Director 1 below verifies. They emphasise that the artistic idea always comes first, followed by discussions concerning budget and resources.

We are making theatre here. When the production is chosen it is definitely fine for me that we make an 8-hour performance and build a replica model of the Silja Line

ship on stage, that is, if we have resources and money. But those are in the second place. (Technical Director 1, 2020)

Since the beginning, the ensemble theatre companies' core is perceived as a distinct combination of actors on stage creating art based on their own views, values and style (see subchapter 1.7.1). Nowadays, all four theatre companies have the structure where artistic decisions (which directors, artists, texts, and ideas are chosen) are made by the ensemble actors in collaboration with the artistic director and possible other artistic personnel. Actor 1 emphasises that the artistic decisions are based on personal interest, not on the financial reasons. This is in line with the Technical Director 1's previous comment.

Artistic integrity. We take enormous risks and there is no guarantee that the pieces [performances] sell. They are made according to your own interest...there hasn't been any commercial compromises, not even once. At times, it has been pure horror how we have lost money. But at its best, it has been terrific. New and exquisite openings have been created. The grounds on which the decisions are made is still the same. It has to generate artistic interest. (...) The decisions are based on something other than the cash flow. (Actor 1, 2020)

The key to the initial decision is that it has to create interest in the members of the ensemble. The interviews generally indicate that in the case of an ensemble theatre company, each individual's hierarchy of values is somewhat similar and this is reflected to the core of an ensemble theatre company: art and artistic decisions. This is verified in Actor 1's answer on what kind of value principles their organisation has.

When we are creating a piece that we have chosen together, the story is something worth telling. Then the work situation automatically fulfils our value criteria. The best part in this is that nobody dictates from above that you should now do this or that. When you have taken part in choosing the piece, then the way to implement it is automatically a passion. (Actor 1, 2020)

4.1.2 Administrative and technical staff's' relation to art

When art is set in the first place in the organisation, the ensemble theatre company members seem to be ready to be flexible to enable the artistic process. According to the interviewees, the aim to create high-quality art is a common interest as a successful artistic product generates professional pride and motivation.

This work is enabling the making of art. Really seldom one wants to be the one who says “it's not possible, no can do” because then you feel that you have failed in your work assignment. Even if it means that you must work 90-hour working weeks, you would rather do that and enable the art than say “I'm not doing this, I'll go home now”. This is quite a typical attitude in ensemble theatre companies. (Technical Director 1, 2020)

Furthermore, all individuals in an arts organisation regardless of their job description can maintain artistic integrity in their work, as evidenced in Technical Director 3's perception on enabling the artistic process:

You have to do this job with your heart in it. (...) I always go with a feeling into operations. It sounds a bit naive, but if there is no ardor, willingness to do... (...) There are only a few things I would not approach with an attitude: “I will make it happen.” You first work ten hours and then suddenly 50 hours have gone. Still you cannot give up...not at least very easily. (Technical Director 3, 2020)

Being flexible and enabling the artistic process also has its reverse side. Even if one's motivation is high, the limited production and staff resources in ensemble theatre companies generate tiredness. Technical Director 1 notes that sometimes the scarcity of human and monetary resources is not understood or respected by the working group or in the pre planning phase. Producer 1 also mentions the scarce resources.

It would be great to have the sufficient resources, so that you don't need to operate two theatres on the financial backing of one. (...) You wouldn't be all the time scared

of having a burnout or then one of your colleagues on their turn. So that you don't have to be constantly flexible. (Producer 1, 2020)

The overly tight timetables or straying from the agreed production schedule creates pressure for different departments. Respecting individuals, different departments' work and jointly agreed timetables seem to be pivotal elements worth aiming for. They are seen as the key features enabling the motivation and flexibility and hence, high-quality art.

If you want the work to be implemented well, you also have to respect the individual. The person must feel that they have their place in this system and they are part of the whole. (Technical Director 1, 2020)

4.1.3 How is high-quality theatre art created?

There is no definite answer or a method that one could follow and achieve “good theatre art”. The concept is among others based on personal preferences, a personal taste, as well as on how the piece is received in the press, among professionals, and by the audience. As the Freelance Director pinpoints, the successful production can be a financial success, audience-based success or artistic success and usually a combination of all three. However, from their personal point of view, the concept of a successful piece is a combination of personal and audience satisfaction.

Both the concept of ensemble theatre company and the interview data related to the creation of art strongly indicate that the people who share the same artistic preferences gather together to create their kind of art. This is practically how ensemble theatre companies were first formed. The interviewees also mentioned certain circumstances where the “good art” is most likely to be created and the most common concept is precisely the combination of suitable individuals and inspiring atmosphere:

All the pieces are in their place: there is a good text and theme. The artistic group, director, actors and designers, are knitted together. The production process has been

fun and we all challenge each other and together surpass ourselves. (Producer 1, 2020)

The Technical Director 1 emphasises unity and making everybody feel themselves valuable. This comment indicates also to the production staff, such as technicians.

(...) there is one person with a clear vision who directs the vision, but also collects the visions from other people. This means that the director truly includes everyone in the project and makes them feel important. Important for real. (Technical Director 1, 2020)

Actor 1 mentions that instead of working with the existing play, the process-based work has been the most likely a road to the successful piece. Artistic freedom in the carefully set frames is a requirement. Also, here the combination of specific people is seen as a key to interesting art.

(...) the process (...) is led by a person who is precise with the idea and can develop it forward without side tracking. (...) From the actor's point of view, there are borders and inside them freedom. The borders are all the time reframed, narrowed or defined clearer, but inside them you have the freedom to work completely freely. The productions made in the process, if there have been a stellar working group and a good idea, have been more interesting (...) (Actor 1, 2020)

Also the Freelance Director mentions freedom, independent work, and taking each person's creativity into use and, furthermore, adds the following of the jointly agreed schedules and the production planning being realistic in relation to available time.

4.1.4 Artistic commonalities of ensemble theatre companies

There are six artistic commonalities that arose from the interviews. These elements were mentioned most often by the interviewees and from their point of view seem to be crucial in relation to creating distinctive theatre art. It is relevant to observe that few of these artistic

commonalities are unconscious choices generated from the theatre company's structure or the combination of individuals. It is noteworthy that for the interviewees, defining the organisation's distinctive artistic values was difficult. However, the artistic commonalities explain the circumstances, the principles or starting points where art is created. The Freelance Director notes that the ensemble theatre companies' values can be perceived in artistic choices or in the collective of people producing values through years of collaboration.

The first distinctive artistic commonality in the ensemble theatre company is the actor-based starting point. It is a core decision that ensemble actors should have meaningful roles that, according to Producer 1, challenge and motivate and are also fun to create.

Ensemble actors (in collaboration with other artistic staff) have chosen the freelance director to direct the main production. According to the Theatre Director, despite this fact, it is baffling that some directors do not understand that their theatre company is ensemble actors' theatre and that is the artistic core decision made first. This decision affects all the following decisions. Therefore, at least more than one of the ensemble actors must be on stage in each production.

It is sometimes a bit unclear to the directors that we want to stick to the principle that this is an ensemble's stage. Directors pretend that they don't understand it. They suggest a combination of actors and there is not a single ensemble actor in it. Or only one. (Theatre Director, 2020)

This comment could imply that the ensemble theatre company format is not familiar, or respected, among all freelance directors, even though this structure is in use in all four vos-financed theatre companies and forms the backbone of making art.

At least from the audience's point of view, the knowledge of who is on the stage can be a matter of theatre company's identity, a brand:

I think that ensemble theatre companies have their own distinct audience and people really know which theatre they are attending. The audience perceives the theatre through its actors. It is the factor they are identified with. (Freelance Director, 2020)

The second artistic commonality is a continuation to the ensemble-based thinking. According to the Freelance Director, the actors in ensemble theatre companies are committed

to the artistic whole. In larger municipal theatres, directors come with their vision and the actors adapt to that. In ensemble theatre companies, the freelance director is invited to co-work with the ensemble actors.

The good thing with the ensemble theatre companies is the willingness and ability to participate in the questions in the text (...). Not just on one's own role work. I occasionally feel that it can be a challenge that the actors can have...especially if they are a tight-knit group who have been working with each other for years and there always comes a director from outside, and, therefore, they have stronger perceptions on how theatre should be made. It is far more difficult to question and disentangle those perceptions than in the municipal theatres where the actors are constantly working in different group combinations. (Freelance Director, 2020)

The third common feature is that each production's visual world is enabled through experimenting and redefinition. "Making big moves", i.e., creating massive visual constructions was mentioned by three members of different theatre companies. This commonality has a direct effect on the production structure each theatre company has. The technical department is not just serving the artistic work but co-creating ambitious projects through creating the flexible frames for artistic work. As mentioned earlier in the subchapter 4.1.2, they also support the artistic ideas through their professional and personal attitude. Artistic Director suggests that often outsiders understand demanding visual solutions to be springing solely from the director's visionary mind instead of collaborating designers, director, and technical staff.

We do not try to stick to one definite choice and then go with it but make big experimentations all the time and try to redefine the stage yet again. This happens through technical department and designers (...) technical solutions, designers and actors' work is intertwined. One could err to think that this is a director's theatre, but it is not. Those different elements are quite equal with the whole. (Artistic Director, 2020)

The investments to the visual world and overall artistic experience are created through designers, who mostly in all ensemble theatre companies are freelancers. Both in the

structure and general attitude of the ensemble theatre company organisations the designers are given free hands to create their work and their vision is trusted.

Not just the actor's art, which has always been our strength, but also respecting and enabling other designers'...artists' work. Those investments that are made so that the work would be as successful as possible. (Actor 2, 2020)

The fourth artistic commonality is artistic risk-taking in its different forms. As Actor 3 defines it, the production is never ready, one can never be satisfied with it, but strive for more. There is no artistic form or solution that could be repeated.

The artistic mold is not in the thought that "this is [theatre's name]"...but what is the next new thing. And never be satisfied with that either. (Actor 3, 2020)

The fifth artistic commonality is a relation to the surrounding world and time. The productions mirror the world as the artists see it. This is usually defined with the word societal, conscious reacting to the themes that are important in the society one is living in. Managing Director raises humanity as the defining element in artistic decisions.

For me this theatre's most important value is humanity (...) where we as a community strive particularly to understand each individual as part of a society. [theatre's name] is very societal. Even if we depict something through individual psychology, the strong societal level is still present. (...) We keep the focus in human and society and the focus is not allowed to slip into something else. (Managing Director, 2020)

The sixth artistic commonality can also be extended to the organisation's daily operations. The aspiration to constantly revise through introducing new artistic ideas and people and new ways of working. The revising is seen as a crucial feature that keeps the theatre company alive and interesting:

If [theatre's name] is able to renew its theatre makers and let new generations in, it has a chance to maintain its position. The courage to revive. (Actor 1, 2020)

4.2 STRUCTURE AND WORK PRACTICES

The interviews indicate that ensemble theatre companies' founding principles of democratic work principles and collective working are still present in the everyday operations. The theatre companies' internal structure, size, and financial models have their effect as they support and enable the implementation of work principles and collectivity.

4.2.1 Organisational structure and its effect on the artistic process

When asked about working in the ensemble theatre companies, the interviewees found several aspects in the ensemble theatre company structure that affect the artistic process. Many compared the ensemble theatre company structure with the larger municipal theatres' structure to highlight the specific features ensemble theatre company organisations have.

The Freelance Director has noticed that it is much more pleasing to direct productions for smaller venues of big municipal theatres, since their audience is nonspecific or marginal, the number of performances lower and in the repertoire, an unsuccessful piece can be easily changed to a more successful one. Therefore, the sales pressure is also lower. Even though ensemble theatre companies are pleasing places to work, the pressure for succeeding, i.e., not causing financial loss for the theatre is imminent and present in all rehearsal situations and is thus shared by the working group. In ensemble theatre companies, there are usually two main productions each year that define the theatre company's identity and existence in the field. Therefore, they are significant financial and artistic investments and the theatre staff works predominantly for the good of these productions.

One production is equivalent to the ticket income of the whole season. (...) It is contradictory that in smaller venues of bigger municipal theatres one can be more uncompromising in the artistic choices...it is easier to make something heavier, difficult, serious. There is the humour that I feel often comes to those ensemble theatre company pieces. People want to ensure that the piece is at least approachable enough that it can be trusted that folk will come. (Freelance Director, 2020)

The Freelance Director indicates that when there is a hint of humour in the piece, it might sell better. They, however, underline that this tendency to make something slightly more humoristic is not overtly articulated by the theatre company but comes rather naturally and intuitively.

The audience's perceptions of the theatre's image and their expectations of experience that they hope to attain from the performance, seem to be stressful for the director. They also create the pressure to succeed. The more precise the theatre's brand and the audience base is, the harder it is. However, according to the Freelance Director, the artistic work process can be more rewarding in ensemble theatre companies:

The bigger the theatre, the less special the piece you are preparing can feel. There are so many productions in the house and this is just one of them. In municipal theatres you cannot get so strong...personal, something like "this particular family made together this piece during this time span". This feeling is influenced by the fact that people are acting in the evenings in other productions and next door they are rehearsing something else. (Freelance Director, 2020)

Producer 1 feels that compared to the municipal theatres, technically they are much more flexible to change stage plans at the last minute or change the premiere date at a short notice without losing the audience support. The Technical Director 1 does not agree in this matter as impulsive changes create stress and exhaustion especially for the technical department with only a few members. According to the Technical Director 1, stable circumstances enable aiming for high-quality art, whilst the structure is not agile enough to enable radical solutions that endanger the organisation and staff's salaries. There is a certain responsibility for the employees that follows the ensemble theatre company structure.

We can't just go and start improvising. The smaller the ensemble theatre company is, the harder it is to improvise, because you have the responsibility to pay the salaries. It is a really romantic vision [being agile]. Show me the ensemble theatre company employee who would say they do not need their salary next month. I don't think we can find any. (Technical Director 1, 2020)

The ensemble theatre companies' financing structure being a state-financed organisation is based on equivalent full-time personnel years. This means that the salary must be paid to a fixed number of employees each year, or otherwise the organisation will lose part of its financing next year. Therefore, there is the obligation to maintain the organisational operations stable. However, Managing Director feels that in their theatre company, the balance with the artistic, financial and audience expectations is achieved without making major compromises:

It would be marvelous to take even bigger artistic risks without the fear of breaking the financial structure. On the other hand, I know that for the artists and for all it is meaningful that the audience finds their way here. It is empowering when there is a full house. It is great that we have found the balance with the artistic risk-taking. The audience finds their way here and feels that we are making theatre just for them.
(Managing Director, 2020)

4.2.2 How do ensemble theatre companies relate to collectivity?

According to the interviews, the ensemble theatre companies seem to be close-knit units that have their own humour, ways of working, and social roles. Actor 1 describes the situation when a freelance actor joins the theatre company to rehearse a new piece.

There are many exciting features that are not related to the profession, for example learning the social language. For me, it is such a home-like place that you don't even realise that someone is nervous. The feelings of exteriority can emerge without us understanding from where they originate. If one comes as a new actor into the group, you are immediately observed. Even if it would be tender observing (...). If the newcomer detects faults in the ways we are accustomed to work, it is a tricky moment to admit that it's true... why, everything has gone so well so what does this mean now. It requires self-reflection to believe when you hear it. (Actor 1, 2020)

Producer 1's definition on how collectivity is pursued in their organisation indicates that the ensemble theatre companies are collectives of trusted people and their communication is

based on democratic principles of openness and giving space for everyone. The right to express ideas was mentioned also by the members of three other theatre companies.

That certain kind of a low hierarchy. Maybe the hierarchy is completely removed from there. To create the feeling that it is not just an illusion that everyone can truly speak and we work together as a group where everyone's opinion and vision is important. (Producer 1, 2020)

Producer 1's comment endorses the idea that regardless of the job title in the theatre company, everyone belongs to the united community and, therefore, are equally important for the whole. Technical Director 2's comment verifies this notion as trust, loyalty, and self-respect are emphasised.

We have a constant desire to develop things (...). But we are such a small unit, that we have to have trust. The knowledge that this person will handle it, will invent the solution and can develop and learn. That is the key. (Technical Director 2, 2020)

In some ensemble theatre companies, the concept of collectivity seems to also include the supporting work environment where mistakes are accepted.

We have an approving atmosphere in here. You can never succeed in everything you do and you always make mistakes. But here I have a feeling that I can do my best and also make mistakes like everyone else. But without somebody condemning it right away. (Technician, 2020)

As an outsider, the Freelance Director has noticed in the artistic personnel a certain positive collectivity, self-made feeling, and commitment. The concept of commitment extends also to the other staff in the ensemble theatre company.

Because of the ensemble spirit, it is more fun to work in ensemble theatres companies. (...) People are there for the love of just that specific community and that specific theatre company's history. The connection with the theatre is more personal. It affects the atmosphere and everything. (...) there is rarely, or at least I have not encountered that, the weariness in the artistic staff. And very little in the technical

staff. There have been some, but far more less. (...) The kind of attitude that “I am just working here”, I have not encountered. A certain attitude to life and pride that is connected to the specific theatre company. (Freelance Director, 2020)

4.2.3 Implementation of democratic principles: organisational structure

According to the interviews, the concept of democracy is seen as practically organising work tasks and sharing decision-making power. As the democratic principles have a long history in all four ensemble theatre companies, the attitude to it is somewhat realistic and is based on past experiences. First of all, it is admitted that the idea regarding non-hierarchical organisation does not work in the ensemble theatre company.

Of course we have hierarchies in here. (...) And we want to have them. We want that leaders can lead, and, therefore, they have more responsibility and they can have a little bit more money. If one would like to think that everything is totally democratic, it is not. And that's a good thing. Things work because of that. That is why one can also take a stance of not taking responsibility on all possible things, because there are people whose job it is. (Actor 4, 2020)

However, it seems that only a certain amount of hierarchy is optimal in a small organisation. Sometimes, even the naming of an operational group can generate the feeling of inequality.

I have never liked the word executive committee. I think it is unequal. We have always been a lot, but maybe things are changing. (Technical Director 3, 2020)

All ensemble theatre organisations in this research are based on a functional structure where tasks are divided departmentally into artistic, technical, and administrative. The division is not dictated by force. The Technical Director 1 emphasises that their department sometimes voluntarily separates their work from others to be effective, to allow people work more “organically”. The Technical Director 3 remarks that even if everyone has different work tasks, there are no separate groups and everyone can easily gather together to be “a one big family”.

The core principle of the ensemble theatre companies is to place the art first. This creates a certain unbalance regarding democratic principles. How to be democratic, if one department in the theatre is structurally and mentally strongly attached to the core idea? The art-comes-first attitude and its problematic effects have been acknowledged in the ensemble theatre company organisations.

When the functions develop, operational years accumulate, and the supporting functions around the art become professional, it is important that the staff will not have the feeling that all other work except artistic would be somehow inferior. (...) Even if we know and acknowledge the meaning of art in the core of our operations, at the same time we also acknowledge each other's professional skills and that we are all needed and everybody's work is important. To create this kind of atmosphere and working culture is important. (Managing Director, 2020)

4.2.4 Implementation of democratic principles: collective leadership

Almost all ensemble theatre companies have the dual leadership structure where there are two directors equal in rank: the artistic and administrative director. However, the interviews highlighted the shared responsibility and freedom to make decisions when they are related to one's own work position. This indicates that the leader's position is not seen as directive and the collective leadership takes place. The shared responsibility has even been written to the work contract of one theatre:

We have this clause in our work contracts that you partake in shared responsibility. This does not exist in other theatre companies. It means that one can influence...and must! (Producer 2, 2020)

The freedom in creating one's own work seems to be an important motivator in the ensemble theatre companies. Technical Director 1 notes that hierarchies are quite loose, work tasks varied, and people are ready to be flexible in all possible directions. Also, the Technical Director 3 supports this idea.

The freedom in its own boundaries. (...) This place is not in any way hierarchically led. There are no time restrictions that someone would have dictated...or some we have had to create...but there are no rosters. Quite complete freedom. (Technical Director 3, 2020)

However, freedom is actualised in the frames of each work position that are part of a larger organisation structure based on democratic principles. From the interviewees' answers can be detected that the collective leadership in practice means that hierarchical power positions are implemented only in certain tasks, departments or situations and is context based. In one organisation, the artistic director has the final responsibility for the artistic content, so they have decision power. However, regarding non-artistic issues the same decision power might not be applicable. In certain situations, the organisation is fully equal, even non-hierarchical, and the responsibility is shared.

In our formal hierarchy there are three bosses. It's written down that they have the responsibility. Furthermore, we have a joint responsibility of the theatre company. Even if [artistic director] is my boss, in the hierarchical system they are not above me. They have an area of responsibility where they have more authorisation than I have. As employees we are in non-hierarchy. If we vote for something, we all have one vote. If we discuss something, basically [artistic director] has as much power as I have, if it does not concern repertoire decisions. (Actor 3, 2020)

The weekly meetings and different digital applications are important collective communication tools enhancing democratic principles. In two of the theatre companies, even the board meeting is accessible to all members. In the collective leadership that ensemble theatre companies seem to favour, shared responsibility and open communication is realised through documenting meeting discussions, themes and decisions. The interviews indicated that the most common tools are the digital file storages, emails and messaging applications. The shared responsibility requires an initiative from all members. As in one of the theatre companies, the ensemble does not take part in daily operations, the engagement to decision-making is based on personal interest and capability. At times, it seems to be challenging to create commitment.

When none of the actors are on a permanent contract (...) democracy can slow down. People are not as focused on the current issues of theatre company and there are too few stands taken (...) Everyone gets the weekly meetings' memos to their email (...). You have a fair chance to be aware of what's happening, but if you have not bothered to do the job of reading those mails and there are tensions and big questions being discussed for example in the board. As an actor one can be quite happily clueless about these things. (Actor 1, 2020)

4.2.5 Implementation of democratic principles: decision-making

The experiences of the past organisational models seem to steer the development of decision-making structures in the ensemble theatre companies. It has been learned that the organisational identity becomes blurred if decisions are made without a clear structure, mutual trust, and shared responsibility for the organisation's good. The Theatre Director mentions the past's authoritative “command and control” system being inoperative in the context of the ensemble theatre company organisation.

Earlier we had an authoritarian model (...) a theatre director who compiled the repertoire, or it was made with the help of the board. To be honest, it was not properly decided how the repertoire should be compiled. It was very disorganised and included several unhealthy features such as that people tried to affect the decisions purely based on their personal benefit. “I want this piece to be implemented since I myself am in it.” It did not matter whether some project was worth doing or not, since personal benefit was more important. (Theatre Director, 2020)

In this example from the theatre company's past one person can control the decision-making premises by using both official and unofficial channels and relationships to affect important decisions. The restructuring of decision-making structures (see Theatre Director's comment on page 94) has obstructed the use of manipulation in its most apparent form.

Decisions are always made in relation to other organisational processes, as verified in Technical Director 1's comment on decisions in production processes. It is common in each

theatre company that the smaller, departmental decisions are made independently and mostly without consulting leaders. It is trusted that an individual can evaluate when the decision may affect another departments' work and must be consulted first:

If it is a decision that affects both the artistic and technical side, it is not made right away, but the consensus is sought also from the artistic side. In order to reach the decision, mainly the corridor discussions work. They also create a kind of a snowball effect. If you ask one person who is in the other department, they don't dare to take a stance but instead seek support from others and then the decision-making can linger for quite a long time. (Technical Director 1, 2020)

However, the Theatre Director emphasises that decisions cannot be made in corridors:

Even if corridor discussions speeded up (...) work, nowadays I think that (...) any discussions that lead to actual decisions can't be held unofficially. Even if this is a small community, they cause odd situations since it is totally coincidental who takes part into this discussion. (...) The strive for democratic decision-making has changed fundamentally. The current system is truly democratic. Our important decisions happen always in some valid group. If they are important financial and operational decisions, they happen in the board. If they are artistic ones, in the ensemble. (Theatre Director, 2020)

The decision process, i.e., how, who, when and on what premises the decision was made, is not usually documented in the ensemble theatre companies and this means that the made decisions can always be questioned by the organisation members. Technical Director 1 emphasises the importance of trust and respect for the collectively made decisions. If decisions are often overturned, re-evaluated and even criticised, the organisational process slows down when certain operations must be cancelled and then reworked. It seems that this is quite typical in the ensemble theatre companies as creating a clear decision-making structure and mutual trust are seen as desirable goals and were often mentioned.

Some decisions in the ensemble theatre companies are based on the formal role and expertise. It was verified in the interviews that artistic decisions are voluntarily left to the artists, since they have the required professional knowledge and networks. This indicates

also that the art is seen as such a crucial expert field that it is not dared to be interfered without the artist status. In this case the democratic principles of collectivity and equality are not applied.

It was also felt that to ease the decision-making process, it is better that each person stays in their own “patch” and does not meddle in all decisions. However, this does not apply to all work areas. The open and democratic discussion culture, which is a distinct feature of ensemble theatre companies, seems to often lead to people having too many opinions on everything. The decision-making slows down when everyone's opinion must be respected and heard instead of trusting the person who has the professional knowledge:

When I work with marketing or communication or with strategic plans related to those, the marketing is traditionally a patch where anyone at all can come and comment and everybody's opinion is some sort of an expert statement. I would really like to see mutual respect in individual decision-making. I have studied these things on a university level (...) in my opinion respecting one's professional skills is important. (Managing Director, 2020)

If someone has a position power i.e., in alignment with their professional task is taking care of presenting ideas to the others, it is inevitable that some filtering happens in between, either consciously or unconsciously. Also, in this case the mutual trust is emphasised as for example Theatre Director admits that they work partly through intuition.

When we make programme decisions together with the ensemble, I am the person who has in some situations more voice than others in the ensemble. Because I have discussed with the person who is offering the project. (...) Therefore, I know more and lead the project forward with my knowledge and my intuition. (Theatre Director, 2020)

It seems to create confusion and distrust in a small and like-minded ensemble theatre company based on democratic principles and collectivity if some departments “pawn” the information even though it could be easily shared to others. At least in two theatre companies, artistic propositions and decisions are always discussed in the weekly staff meetings.

Feedback has come from inside the house that there is not enough information about the ensemble's work practices. There was some odd mysticism related, that we did not tell about the programme decisions we had already made. I didn't understand why we couldn't tell about them as far ahead as we knew what they were. The communication and such have been a bit of a stumbling block. (Actor 1, 2020)

4.2.6 The informal decision-making structure

In the ensemble theatre companies, maintaining equality in decision-making seems to be difficult due to the fact that individuals have several formal and informal statuses in organisation. It is virtually impossible to detect mutual appreciation or inconspicuous friendship connections between the individuals. This means that a certain individual's view of the world, values and interests can more easily have an impact on final decisions. Actor 1 has detected that in artistic decisions, there are certain power positions affecting:

There are certain invisible [structures] for sure. If someone actively has a strong opinion, one can be a bigger influencer than someone else. All can of course have their own influencers there inside the group. (Actor 1, 2020)

Two of the interviewees mentioned that people who are talkative and persistent, usually have more power in the group and can push through their ideas. Actor 3 mentions invisible hierarchies where charisma and wittiness rule:

The person who can express themselves, or is more intelligent, that is a means of power. (...) The principle is that the weekly staff meeting and the best argument decides. Not who has uttered the argument. (...) whether this is actualised in the practice... it has different tones regarding who brings in the idea and with what kind of energy and arguments, and that has an effect on the matters. (Actor 3, 2020)

Sometimes, also the overt efficiency and eagerness can cause problems. It seems that at least in one ensemble theatre company its members are eager to protect the good working

environment and atmosphere in their organisation, hence, nobody wants to be a resister, i.e., person who opposes good ideas.

It's best to be vigilant in some matters, so that [in decisive decisions] one does not proceed too far. A neat and cool thing that is quickly advanced, and then you suddenly notice that oops, we might have forgotten a few things that have an effect. Precisely those comments from different departments, from different points of view. (Technical Director 2, 2020)

As Actor 3 remarks, one must also take responsibility for one's own ideas and decisions, as all activity reflects to the organisation's operations:

Fascism of initiatives. It is a shitty thing to be the one who always says no. No, we don't have enough time or the resources. It is far more fun to always say yes. You have to take responsibility for your own initiatives and shoot down your own great ideas. To listen and evaluate back and forth. Sometimes the good ideas start to accumulate and then any mental, physical, time-based or monetary resources are not sufficient for implementing. And because nobody said no, we are in a sad situation where everyone has burned out. (Actor 3, 2020)

4.2.7 How to maintain a good working environment?

The theme of a good working environment was often mentioned in the interviews. It is seen as a crucial part of the attraction that ensemble theatre companies have. As can be detected from the Actor 3's comment, the good working environment is easily lost when there is competition and groupings inside the organisation.

I was a visiting actor in one bigger municipal theatre (...) where badmouthing and micro-level bitterness, passive-aggression was the prevalent atmosphere. Specifically, staying in one's own "bunker" or clique. Then slowly you notice that you are also sitting there in the sauna and talking: "yeah, those guys are like that". It is easy to just join in that kind of internal culture. How much of it comes from it

being a bigger institution and how much from there being so much of that particular culture in those walls and in the internal culture of the place? (Actor 3, 2020)

The critical factor in preventing the internal discussion from becoming negative seems to be the careful choice of individuals to the organisation. This is emphasised in the Artistic Director's comment.

I haven't heard anyone here badmouth this theatre or other people. In all other theatres (...) I have heard this discourse of internal criticism which is not open to people. (...) Even if there have been so many people going in and out all the time, this is one thing that has not been dragged in...or maybe we have managed to get it out from here. (Artistic Director, 2020)

The motivation to work is created through having shared responsibility of the organisation. The theatre company is felt to be “ours” and, therefore, it is in everybody's interest to protect its good working environment. When speaking about motivation, Actor 1 refers to the experience of working in a larger municipal theatre. The feeling of “our theatre” is strongly related to the amount of decision power.

[in ensemble theatre companies] you are involved in the process so much earlier because of your own decision-making power. Then every project is somehow significant. (...) There in the municipal theatres it is more superficial, dictated from above, more boring and too safe for my taste. It impacts the actors' motivation to engage and through that there is negligent actor's work on stage. When you are in four or five productions, it is normal that you take care of the job with your left hand. The group theatres...theatre is kept going with those things [main productions]. In my opinion...I do not know which word to use so as not to offend anyone, but let's be honest here, it is a completely different thing. (Actor 1, 2020)

Producer 1 verifies the idea that in ensemble theatre companies the commitment and values related to the work and theatre art drive the motivation. The comment also indicates that the willingness to be flexible in working times and the number of tasks is both a mental and practical choice.

It's the work morale. In these kinds of theatres [ensemble theatres] you cannot just be some random worker punching in and out and bye-bye. The relationship with the theatre company you are working in must be deeper and closer. You have to be genuinely interested in theatre. It is a choice, when you come to work in this kind of group theatre, that sometimes the days are long. Sometimes you work all the time. And the work follows you home even when you close the theatre's door behind you. (Producer 1, 2020)

Even though generally in the ensemble theatre companies the commitment seems to be high and relation to the organisation tight, it is not by any means perfect. Therefore, when encountering harder times, the good working environment must be protected and improved.

That [the atmosphere] is what we have now started to think about. Now this corona messed up [our plans], when we would have had these big development discussions with an outside facilitator. That would have been incredibly welcome and I was bursting with curiosity to see how it goes. We definitely don't have a culture where one would dare to speak and open up about that kind of private matters and things related to personal chemistry. (Actor 1, 2020)

At least three of the theatre companies have made plans for a similar kind of workshop for the guidance of internal work relationships and the procedures are followed and documented closely. It seems that the good working environment is not coincidental, whilst an important element to be maintained and developed.

4.2.8 How do ensemble theatre companies develop their work processes?

We have constituted that many old problems have originated from that we have not had these conversations and people have been left feeling bitter about “nobody asked me anything, and this is how things are now done”. We have been practising speaking more openly. It's not necessary to agree on everything, but the disagreement can be dealt with and one can speak in a more decent tone. (Producer 1, 2020)

As the Producer 1's comment demonstrates, the essential feature in an organisation is aiming to learn collectively from the past experiences. The mistakes are strived to be fixed and also analysed. The interviews indicated that in one of the ensemble theatres, the feedback system is developed especially meticulously. When a freelance team member starts to work in the theatre, the previously acquired information is used to develop the practices for this. The same inquiry system monitors also possible misuse of power or sexual harassment.

We have previously briefed visitors [freelancers] poorly. (...) Now for over a year we have had this policy that after the premiere I will send an enquiry to all visiting freelancers, so that they can reply anonymously and I (...) make a compilation out of them in such a way that nobody is recognisable. (...) nowadays [when receiving a freelance employee], we can straight away strengthen the feeling that “you are part of us now and we are all one big family”. (Producer 1, 2020)

According to the interviews, ensemble theatres companies pay a considerable amount of attention to the wellbeing of both the permanent and freelance staff. Also, the formal positions in ensemble theatre companies often include the responsibility of monitoring possible problems in the production processes or in other organisational operations. This was mentioned by three interviewees. The Freelance Director has noticed that in ensemble theatre companies the practices for securing the wellbeing of staff are more advanced than in the larger municipal theatres, even though the situation has generally improved during past years.

In some theatres there are practices to go through the theatre's policies in the first meeting, on how to operate and who to contact if one experiences bullying or sexual harassment. (...) In group theatres, these are mentioned more often than in municipal theatres. It is explicated that I am the superior in the rehearsal situation, so it is my responsibility to stop the rehearsals if I detect that there is something dangerous happening there. (...) (Freelance Director, 2020)

The interviews indicated that the internal planning processes have been developed to be more equal and take into account all professional groups. The discussion concerning the length of holidays is a typical theme causing feelings of inequality. The production processes in a

theatre company dictate the rhythm and implementation of operational tasks and everyone should have the possibility to recover from the stressful and intense work period.

I have introduced the the principle that working hours must be reasonable for all in our theatre. Not just that actors pick the best times from the calendar and the technical department adjusts to that. If we can't work at the theatre, we will acquire another place where we can operate. (...) People are equal when it comes to vacation time. If actors are taking a Christmas holiday, technicians must also have it. (Technical Director 1, 2020)

4.3 GROUPS AND COMMUNITIES

Ensemble theatre companies are based on the ideas of collective group work and unity. Nevertheless, there are many conglomerations and subgroups found in these organisations. These groups have an effect on how and what kind of art is created and what kinds of people are recruited.

4.3.1 Collegial relations in ensemble theatre companies

The theme of collegial friendship initiated organically from the interviews as many mentioned it as an influential factor regarding the practical work operations. The Producer 1 verifies that being friends is a requirement for the collective to achieve common goals and is, therefore, an important feature in the ensemble theatre company organisation.

Reliability, work morale and humanity. (...) in this kind of work it is not enough that you are only colleagues, you must also be friends. Of course, in some bigger theatre one can...I understand that in National Opera there can't be 800 bosom friends, but in our theatre company it must be so. (Producer 1, 2020)

Also, the Technical Director 3 emphasises trust and friendship when collaborating. Choosing the people into their team is based on camaraderie and understanding the specific tasks to be

performed in limited time. Even though the Technical Director 3 is also a superior for the freelancers, the relation is not hierarchical, but rather equal. The Technical Director 3 is the one that carries the initial responsibility, whilst they accentuate the fact that nobody has ever left them in trouble.

The Freelance Director has noticed that people are much closer to each other in the ensemble theatre companies. There can also be professional groups that spend time together outside work situations. However, this does not create any specific detached groups, but rather sub-groups in the collective. Especially in the fixed artistic ensemble, collegial friendship can be profound. Since the group is small and everyone needs to get along with each other in all productions, it seems that the ones not fitting into the group organically depart from it. The collegial friendship is a way to maintain and regulate the group spirit:

In the theatres that have their own ensemble, there isn't usually any bickering. Could it be that those who don't get along with that group, leave. In bigger municipal theatres people are prone to act on stage with people that do not get along with so well. (Freelance Director, 2020)

However, the close friendships can also cause difficulties in the ensemble theatre companies if there are many unofficial discussions concerning work, but outside the work situation. If, for example, the artistic discussions and even decisions take place outside the rehearsal situation and in smaller informal networks or friendship groups, the artistic process is not shared and equal anymore and thus can cause feelings of mistrust. This can be frustrating especially to the freelance directors, who in a short two to three months period, should lead and maintain group unity. Balancing between tight friendship groups, different professional groups and creating an equal working environment for both freelancers and permanent employees seem to be a typical challenge in the ensemble theatre companies.

It is because the people in bigger municipal theatres do not spend time with each other, that their relationship to me can be as close as to a fellow actor. Then in the ensemble, when it is tight, inevitably they start to talk and that talk is seldom a good thing, when people are talking about the piece in a smaller group outside the rehearsal situation. I can sense it and it isn't any big problem, but still... (Freelance Director, 2020)

In the ensemble theatre companies, friendships also seem to slow down decision-making and changes. It can even endanger democratic principles such as openness. The solidarity and trust can cause stagnant situations.

Because this is a small theatre company where colleagues are friends and acquaintances with each other, it is harder to start renewing the system. The friendships are blended into it and it is difficult to discuss which part here would really need development without offending someone. (...) The development process is slow and, therefore, fatigue can be detected especially in the production side and the personal chemistry is starting to disintegrate. (Actor 1, 2020)

4.3.2 How can the working group affect the working environment?

Recruiting permanent employees seems to be almost a sacred process in the ensemble theatre companies as the good working environment and collectivity must be protected. The chosen person must be suitable for the organisation.

All the people we are recruiting here should be accepted by the whole work community. When, a couple of years ago, we were recruiting a cleaner and costume caretaker, the whole community partook in choosing. We are a small and tight work community, so it is important that the person who comes here...is well-received by everyone. (Managing Director, 2020)

There are two kinds of recruiting decisions made in the ensemble theatre companies. Firstly, the recruiting of permanent employees, or employees with longer contracts. Secondly, the recruiting of freelance staff for each production.

According to the interviewees' answers, choosing the right person to direct the main production is a paramount decision in an ensemble theatre company and is mirrored to all organisation members' work. Theatre Director remarks that this one decision covers 75% of the work, the whole future work of the organisation.

If one thinks about the production process starting from the moment when the director and scriptwriter are chosen, that is the most crucial one. That particular moment already includes the information on how the project will succeed or fail. (...) ¾ of the production happens in that moment. Then, who else is taking part and how the project is developed, all that is much smaller. (Theatre Director, 2020)

Usually, a freelance director brings along other freelancers (either actors or designers) to the working group, and, therefore, has a significant impact on what kind of personal values and ways to work are brought into the working process as well as in a ready performance. The level of intervention regarding the director's proposals differs in all four theatre companies, but in all of them it is important to know what kinds of artists and people are taking part. The staff seems to have at least an ethical veto-right to all recruitment decisions.

We want that all [members in the production team] are accepted through us before hiring. So that we would not end up in a situation that only in the first reading rehearsal we see what kind of group it is. (Producer 1, 2020)

It seems that in the context of ensemble theatre companies, directors bring their own chosen team to a close-knit clan type of organisation that is barred and protective towards their own members. Therefore, choosing a working group is a contradictory process. The freelance director can suggest quite freely who they want to work with, whilst the responsibility is heavy. One person can change the mood of the whole working group and, consequently, have an effect on the artistic result.

Negatively one can affect the process in a way that you only concentrate on your own work and don't see the work happening around you. Putting yourself ahead of others, the fact that one does not understand theatre being a social art form and that it can only be created through group work. With ignoring these facts, one can destroy any production. It'll only take maximum one or two people, even if the working group would consist of 20 people and the group spirit and the joy of coworking has disappeared there and then. (Technical Director 1, 2020)

Producer 1 feels that each current main production in the house affects the whole organisation. At its best, it creates in all people working in the house an increased feeling of motivation and willingness to be flexible.

It all starts from the group. When you sit in the audience, you can see if those people have had fun making it. (...) Do they enjoy performing it and are they trusting it. If the working process has been fruitful and people are inspired by each other (...) then one is ready to be flexible. We can do longer days. Artistic goals are hoisted. The feeling that “we are now exceeding ourselves”. If it remains a mere feeling that everything is a bit difficult and there are people in the working group who do not get along with each other. (...) they do their work, but if they don't talk with each other about anything else than work-related things, one can see it there. (Producer 1, 2020)

The policy concerning rehearsals serves as an example of how the choice of individuals in a working group can affect the atmosphere. Usually in the ensemble theatre companies, all organisation members working in the theatre have the formal right to enter the rehearsal space to see the process, even though this might be seldom implemented. Closing the rehearsals from the organisation's own members can be interpreted as a statement of mistrust. The production becomes the private property of the working group and prevents the organisation members from partaking in the shared responsibility, which is one of the core features of ensemble theatre companies.

Mostly people understand that maybe one should (...) open one's work to others. Because in the end you are opening the piece to a far larger group than just the people working in this theatre. In the best-case scenario, it should open up to 12 000 people. If one keeps the process closed because of some working environment reasons, it is mostly a wrong path. One should be able to create a trustful relationship and peace to work without closing the process from others except from those who are taking part in it. (Theatre Director, 2020)

4.3.3 What kinds of people work in ensemble theatre companies?

I know one thing that always comes up at some point (...) when we are recruiting permanent staff: is it a good guy? Yeah, basically everything is well, but I don't know if I would be able to keep seeing this person in our weekly meetings. When we, for example, were recruiting the marketing person, the one particular person I just could not have been able to stand, even if that person gave the right answers and all. This is a really vague criterion. (Actor 3, 2020)

As the Actor 3's remark indicates, recruiting decisions seem to be based on personal feelings and intuition: what feels “right” by intuition, what kind of person feels familiar and suitable. Is the person a “good guy”? This filtering principle seems to be in use in all recruitments in the ensemble theatre companies, as it was mentioned by at least two other interviewees. It is especially logical when choosing actors for an artistic production. It has to be the “good guy”, since the time spent in locker rooms and on stage is substantial and has its effects on the artistic end result.

We have applied this criterion to choosing actors, especially with longer contracts. The time spent onstage, especially with the audience, is really small compared to all the other hours spent working together. It is not enough that one is a hell of a good actor, if one is a total asshole. The kind that you know that this person is a fucking good actor, but...ahhh, it's going to be hard, but we will push through it. In recruiting actors, are there other criteria, common aspects? Maybe accepting attitude: this time this kind of actor. They don't speak [the language], but who cares, come in anyway. (Actor 4, 2020)

According to the interviewees, the chosen actor must also have certain kind of a secret charisma, the “it” factor.

The certain kind of edge one must have. We can't stand any mediocrity either... Someone must be excited about the choice, let's say it this way. If none of us are excited, if it is skimmed milk, cold porridge, it won't do. Accidents happen sometimes, but this is how it is. One must have the certain “it” factor. (Actor 3, 2020)

It is also a known fact that the word gets around in the professional circles. Recruiting a person to the small ensemble theatre company is both a financial and mental investment. Everyone wants to prevent mistakes.

If you are a person who gets along with others, you get work. Whereas difficult people, little by little the amount of work offered starts to decrease, because nobody wants to work with them. (...) Some people are difficult but have a permanent contract [with some theatre company] and can continue being difficult. (Technical Director 1, 2020)

The Theatre Director emphasises that one must get along with others. If it is known that some people do not work well together, they are not chosen to the same production. It is a matter of group dynamics, not merely the fact that someone is known as a “difficult person”. According to the interviews, the work morale and motivation are essential features. One must also act accordingly towards all the members of the organisation. The disrespectful behavior is quickly registered in a tight community and soon enough the person is on the “black list”.

Strong people with a strong work morale. The relation to work is something else than lines in the cv and getting salary. One must be motivated. (...) Down-to-earth types. We have had some divas here, but as it happens, they have not been hired here again. We monitor all the time how the people treat our caretaker for example and then we mark it in the books. (Producer 1, 2020)

4.3.4 How do ensemble theatre companies form their artistic style?

The artistic style is formed in the practical discussions within ensemble members and where we talk about theatre makers and productions they have made, the ones that are there available (...) the ensemble has to express their opinions on what they have seen, read and experienced. This forms the [artistic] style and is a continuous process. What happens [outside the theatre], affects how the ensemble experiences it and understands what is

currently the thing that is expected to be made [by them]. (...) You cannot define that there are some guidelines or something, but it is a process that is going on all the time. (Theatre Director, 2020)

As the Theatre Director's description implies the artistic choices made in the ensemble theatre companies are strongly based on the ensemble's awareness, taste, and opinions. The decisions are discussed, negotiated and made in a tight group where the internal group chemistry and informal hierarchies dominate (see Actor 1's comment on page 96). The process seems to be half-intuitive as Theatre Director mentions the absence of guidelines for the choices. Inevitably, what is seen on the theatre's stage is always affected by what is created elsewhere. Artistic ideas circulate from theatre to theatre through personal taste and filtering.

In the same way, also the known directors and designers seem to circulate. Directors have their own trusted people who follow them to each production as their collaboration is felt to be working well. Actor 1 talks about the frustration this circulating sometimes causes. They fear that the ideas and people start to loop and new names are not introduced into the field. Actor 1 mentions being the only person in the ensemble who seems to be worried about this artistic looping.

It is wonderful to find theatre makers from the new generation. Because really easily it just starts to loop, and in all theatres in Helsinki the same directors are circling around. (...) Maybe directors just offer different things depending on which theatre they are going to go to direct. In the first years of our ensemble, it was fun that the directors got a little bit of a boost from us. They made a piece in our theatre and it became a little bit of a hit and they got more backing. (...) But now everybody directs for all the places. (...) from time to time I think that damn, it would be great to find something that nobody else has not found yet. (Actor 1, 2020)

4.3.5 The impact of freelancers in ensemble theatre companies

In ensemble theatre companies, there are only 12-15 permanent work positions. Therefore, the number of short-term workers and freelancers is noteworthy both in the productional work and in the artistic department. Ensemble theatres companies' structure supports the recruitment of freelancers as the state financing is based on the number of full-time personnel years. However, according to the interviews, the short-term staff is also seen as an important artistic element in the aim for creating quality art.

I perceive them [the freelancers] as quite important in the way that in the house [ensemble theatre company] the artistic ambition and quality of work remain on a high level also because quite uncompromising visitors [the freelancers] come in and shuffle the deck and bring their own thinking in. The atmosphere does not get cemented. (Actor 1, 2020)

The artistic impact is verified also by other interviewees. Freelance Director always come as an outsider to the creative process. They have noticed that even if there are freelance designers, they cannot challenge the ensemble in the same way as a freelance actor can. Even though the working situation is quite equal, unspoken hierarchies seem to exist regarding who can suggest new ideas or ways to work. Therefore, it is essential that there would be at least one freelance actor in each production, at least in the case when the director comes from outside.

If the group of actors has worked together for ages, the group of designers is not able to challenge the manner they perform their acting in. (...) Somebody who comes from the outside makes the situation more creative. (...) the director can more easily stir or challenge the ways of working when they [the suggestions] come from a co-actor. If the director suggests it, it can feel like it's dictated from above. The co-actor is an equal and can help inspire [them to do it]. It is preferable that it's the co-actor who brings in a different method of working, instead of the director trying to suggest [changes to] a working method that essentially works. (Freelance Director, 2020)

It was revealed from the interviews that even if in theory hiring completely “new” people is something taken for granted, often the number of new ones in the production is scarce. It seems that in the ensemble theatre companies, the recommended artistic names and trusted people are the ones to be often recruited to the productions and other short-term positions.

Of course, we have quite many regular people here...we use the same set designer, since we are somehow accustomed to work with [set designer's name]. (Producer 1, 2020)

Actor 1 notes that the freelance designers must have some proof, e.g. previous work, of their capabilities in order to be chosen to work in their theatre company. Technical Director 1 admits that the communication is smoother when one already knows the ways how a certain designer works and one can, therefore, foresee the possible friction points. Theatre Director mentions that also in their theatre company there must always be at least one person in the working group who has worked there before. Nevertheless, whatever their level of “freshness” is, freelancers are important motivators and are seen as crucial in all departments in the ensemble theatre companies.

It is usually more rewarding, because working with new people brings more new thoughts and motivates more easily. It challenges your own work and can take it to some area where you have not been yet. The kind of work that I have not done earlier or working methods I have not used before. (Technical Director 1, 2020)

The wellbeing of designers is seen also as an important investment to the artistic achievement:

We do not only take care of ourselves, but also the designers who come here. So that they would have a good atmosphere to work and the confidence. (Technical Director 2, 2020)

4.4 ORGANISATIONAL IDENTITY

A theatre company's history seems to have its impact on the daily operations of an organisation. However, the relationship with history is contradictory. It both strengthens the organisational identity, whilst also has left negative tones. The organisational identity is strongly related to the theatre companies' everyday work.

4.4.1 The attraction of ensemble theatre companies

As learned earlier, the ensemble theatre company employees, regardless of their position, seem to be committed to the specific theatre company and share the responsibility of the theatre company's existence. The interviews indicated that the first step of commitment can even commence before the person has started working in the organisation. Especially, the artistic personnel have a desire to work in a particular organisation, whilst the same kind of urge was mentioned also by the Producer 1.

In the beginning, years ago, I was really enthusiastic to get to work with people I was admiring. Even if the pieces were not the best ones. (...) Now that I have had the chance to affect the theatre's image and content, it has already infiltrated my identity, too. Now the lived life there [in the ensemble theatre company] is strongly a part of my professional life and otherwise also. The attachment and happiness that we have achieved is something so rewarding that it would be an alien thought to start again somewhere else. (Actor 1, 2020)

Actor 1's answer includes features regarding how the individual identity and the organisational identity merge. The individual values and organisational values are alike. In the ensemble theatre companies, getting along with each other is emphasised, as the collective is close-knit. Therefore, the organisational values must be shared by the group. If not, it would be difficult to work in the collective. The Actor 4's comment supports this idea.

It does not feel possible, though it could happen, that someone would become bitter and would not like to be here. Then we would definitely find out why somebody hates to be here and why this person is here. (Actor 4, 2020)

However, it seems that the embedding into the organisation requires the possibility to influence and develop the organisation's habits and procedures and this generates motivation. As seen from Actor 1's earlier comment, this need was fulfilled in this specific ensemble theatre company organisation.

The commitment and motivation seem to grow stronger when one has the possibility to suggest and negotiate new values to the organisation and they are accepted by the community. This is actualised in Producer 1's organisation.

We do learn quite a bit from each other when we discuss. Things like diversity. When we talk long enough about it, it starts to be important also for others. Or ecological thinking. We were not all passionate recyclers, but it was enough that some were and now we all recycle here. (Producer 1, 2020)

In relation to the artistic work, at least in one case theatre the group of actors or current artistic team seems to be a stronger community than the whole theatre. Actor 1 mentions that most strongly they feel belonging to the current production team and the ensemble. Therefore, when Actor 1 speaks about embedding, it is not necessarily the whole theatre company.

I have grown there [in the ensemble theatre company] to be an actor. It is a more meaningful school than the Theatre Academy. There [in the ensemble theatre company] I feel that I have learned everything I know. It is difficult to say what is mine and what is of the community. (...) That's where it always comes from, from the theatre piece you are currently in. (Actor 1, 2020)

On the other hand, Producer 1 is embedded into the theatre company as a whole but at the same time maintains their professional pride. They seem to be part of a distinct professional community that also extends outside the particular theatre company to the theatre field. Professional identity, theatre's identity and personal identity are merged.

This theatre company is part of me and I am part of this theatre company. My professional identity and civil identity have been merged. I see myself quite strongly through my work in good and in bad. This is the second home and the second family. That also demands some understanding from my family and civilian friends. I carry this theatre in my mind and in my heart all the time. (Producer 1, 2020)

4.4.2 How does the history of the company affect the present organisation?

The features of the ensemble theatre companies' original founding principles (see subchapter 1.7.1) can be detected from the interviews. These ideas seem to form the solid historical base on which the organisational identity has been built. This is demonstrated in the Managing Director's comment.

It is of course the group theatres' history, template and ideology. [theatre company's name] was founded in the way that the artists themselves started to create their own workplace. Then the artists are the starting point and the core why this work is made. (Managing Director, 2020)

Producer 1 detects that the history is often present in their organisation. Firstly, the media and the audience remind regularly of the certain heroic actors and directors that became iconic already in their own time. The former members of the theatre company seem to have left a mark in the theatre company's present identity. Secondly, the methods and the basic principle of how work is implemented have stayed the same since the founding of the theatre company. Non-hierarchical structure, equality, actor-based working, and collective spirit that Producer 1 mentions are all supporting the common founding principles of the ensemble theatre companies. The founding principles are reproduced and reified in the present operations.

Also, the unsuccessful operations seem to leave their mark to the organisational identity. Some ensemble theatres companies' founding principles, such as principles of democracy as shared and equal work tasks never came true as such. The principles of democracy as they are seen and implemented today required going through “test versions” of them.

That democracy where everybody had to clean, did not come true. Not everybody cleaned. (...) everything was based on voluntary work, and there were people who worked considerably more than others for the sake of the community. (...) That style of leadership (...) was that some person's word was far more important, and then all others had kind of an anarchistic freedom to do whatever they want. And the basic assumption was that this community would take care of the obligations that were compulsory to fulfil. (Theatre Director, 2020)

Certain negative historical processes seem to have their effect still today and even unconsciously guide the behaviour of a collective. Actor 1 describes that the theatre company's history can even cast a shadow on the celebrations and the way how people express themselves.

There had been those chaps who held the power (...) and approached the theatre through power, but not warmth. The discussion culture has stayed undeveloped. We are quite bad at giving speeches, celebrating our own successes or thanking each other. It has been a kind of a silent-staying theatre company. When I have been in the parties of [names of two other ensemble theatre companies] where they sing and give hour-long thank-you-speeches, we never have had that. (...) In the celebrations and gatherings we don't really know how to feel joy for each other. Here one can maybe see the history, that it is somehow suppressed, this relating to people. When I had started here, I noticed that they were talking in a funny way. There was quite a lot of sarcasm and irony instead of sincerity. Presently it has diminished a little. (Actor 1, 2020)

In one of the theatre companies, the history is felt more like an obligation. This prevents discarding old furniture from the storage, as they all seem to carry a legendary story with them. The individuals, who do not have first-hand experience on historical events, still feel the urge to support a certain heritage.

It's not that traditions obligate, since any of the people working there now (...) have not been there during those times that are referred to. We have to respect, we have to store shit in every corner, because it has always been so. Says who? Why can't we

make this theatre our own? We work here, those ghosts from the past are not here anymore. (Technical Director 1, 2020)

In most ensemble theatre companies, the relation to history seems to be quite far from nostalgia, “what we once were”. It has been acknowledged that since theatre is a disappearing art form, there is no other direction than to go forward, to renew.

That was a great time (...) the first productions. It started off like a train when after a long while a tight group of familiar people were engaged in it. (...) When we focused the thing on ourselves and started to think what could be there, it was seen right away that [theatre company's name] got back to life. But this kind of hype lasts only two to four years, the golden era of an ensemble. At times, I think that we should probably pass this forward to the next ones. (Actor 1, 2020)

4.4.3 How do traditions affect to the present day?

According to the interviews, the ensemble theatres companies' founding history and its principles are also present in the way art is created. Even though artistic staff and ensemble actors have changed from the founding times, the certain distinct style is passed on to the new members.

It is related somehow to actors being really sensitive. In the old [theatre company's name] actors were crying their eyes out. Even if we don't have similar kinds of plays anymore, the way the emotion is moving onstage still remains. (...) The strong actor's work, responsibility, ability for emotions and certain fierceness has transferred also to us newer members. A distinct uncompromising way has been born in there. Everything throughout the line has had some kind of darkness. (...) [theatre company's name] represents a kind of after-dark mood. It has a certain brand that is difficult to explain when we are doing programming. Like which things have that flavor and which ones don't. It is still coming from this distinct artistic inheritance from [time period in theatre company's history]. What sticks to me from [names of the older actors in the ensemble] is the strict motivation and a certain sharpness of work. (Actor 1, 2020)

Actor 1 has not experienced the historical events (the past performances) of the theatre company first-hand. The notion of what is distinctly the theatre company's artistic style, “this is us”, seems to be based on intuition and history has its influence on it. The theatre company's own brand seems to include also the historical levels such as the founding values and has its influence on the present artistic choices.

The same observation has been made in another theatre company where a new ensemble came to the house and started to outline the artistic programme from zero without any obligations to create continuity to the previous group's work. Yet, they were inspired by the past's vibrant energy and risk-taking.

Our ambitions were too high and the eagerness was enormous, there was most certainly something similar as in those who established this theatre company back then. We did things that we ourselves wanted to see. We understood that we are making this broad marginal. That is our aesthetic. (...) And the boldness and risk-taking is still very present in [theatre company's name] spirit, that we go towards the uncomfortable and difficult. (Actor 4, 2020)

As mentioned in the subchapter 4.4.1, also the theatre company's attractivity (history, style, value base, brand and working atmosphere) attracts certain kinds of individuals to join the theatre company.

4.4.4 Distinct identity of an ensemble theatre company

(...) action defines the nature. The productions tell what this theatre company is like. Not visions or missions. (Theatre Director, 2020)

The Theatre Director's comment indicates that each ensemble theatre company's organisational identity seems to be the distinctive theatre art it produces. This does not mean the individual plays, instead, everything that is related to the artistic productions, the whole that is maintained by a collective constructed out of people with different job titles. This

close and causal relationship is demonstrated in the Technical Director 1's comment on the importance of deciding the seasonal main production.

Immediately, when there is any delay [in making decisions about the main production], overwork starts to accumulate and vacations are off. If we do not make [in time] the decision about which production we are going to do, we cannot know if we need extra staff for building sets, or what kind of set design we are going to have. And these things we can't know before we know what the production is and who directs it. Making timetables is essential, so that we can create a fluid working environment and work community, and make demanding performances and artistically high-quality stuff. (Technical Director 1, 2020)

Technical Director 2 emphasises that the empathy and respect towards other departments and individuals is a vital element of artistic process and hence, strengthening organisational identity.

Everything is tied together with the notion that people care for everyone who are working here, we are genuinely interested in what each department works with, who are the individuals there, what are they doing, are they coping there and is everything ok. Supporting that. This enables us to make pieces that are as good as possible, with minimal resources. (Technical Director 2, 2020)

From the actor's side, the whole is the responsibility of executing a work task and through that contributing to the collective good. The individual benefit is set aside for the sake of unity.

The biggest mark is what people remember from the stage. If you have succeeded in your work, in your role, it is an asset for the theatre company and the production. It maintains the quality. (...) It is a really big responsibility of the whole that the actor takes through their own work. Making big decisions, big proposals. It all happens through this work, what kind of character or aesthetics you bring on stage. (...) Everything goes by the terms of the piece, it is not just your own role, but we try to make it work as a whole. What I have learnt from there is that it is not me. The piece is not me. On stage, I try to make myself as invisible as possible. (Actor 1, 2020)

At least in one ensemble theatre company organisation, the organisational identity is felt lost as the organisation has grown and the collective unity is interrupted due to constant changes in the staff. Too many new operations and people seem to create distress and feelings of incoherency.

For me, this identity has blurred along with the [major change in the organisation]. Individuals form the theatre company and for years we have had so many moving pieces in the staff structure, people come and go, and this has led to the feeling that one is chasing the core all the time. (...) (Actor 4, 2020)

The interviews indicate that each ensemble theatre company's organisational identity seems to be mostly formed out of everyday work, the general work environment, how the freelancers are received and attitude to the coworkers. As Actor 1 remarks, the unity in the whole organisation is created through successful collective work, through implementing the core artistic value:

If there are successful productions, they weld the theatre company together. We made it! -atmosphere. It is not maintaining the atmosphere per se, but comes as a kind of a bonus. (Actor 1, 2020)

5 CONCLUSIONS

This research project explored how four ensemble-structured theatre companies (KOM-teatteri, Q-teatteri, Teater Viirus, and Ryhmäteatteri) operate on a daily basis and how the history, values, and democratic work principles reflect both on art and the organisational work. Moreover, this study has aimed to describe how organisational identity is collectively created and how and what kinds of individuals and artistic ideas enter the ensemble theatre company.

In this section, the research findings are summarised according to the three research questions:

1) How are the three primary founding principles (collectivity, democratic principles, and the concept of aiming for high-quality art) of ensemble theatre companies implemented in practice?

2) What are the artistic values and core values of an ensemble theatre company and how are they reproduced in the daily work?

3) What kinds of individuals join ensemble theatre companies? How does this process happen?

5.1 Research question 1 - founding principles

1) How are the three primary founding principles (collectivity, democratic principles, and the concept of aiming for high-quality art) of ensemble theatre companies implemented in practice?

The interview data indicated that the three founding principles (see subchapter 1.7.1), of ensemble theatre companies can still be applied in the organisations' daily work. In the next subchapters, a few findings are highlighted to justify this argument.

5.1.1 Traces of history in the organisations

As the historical institutionalism approach suggests (see subchapter 2.4.4), history has its traces in an organisation's present operations, structures and individuals. This can be detected both in the ensemble theatre companies' artistic style and how they have organised their work practices. These two are constantly influencing each other and in the context of an ensemble theatre company, cannot be separated.

Firstly, each theatre company's artistic style has been adopted from the past through a mnemonic community, an ensemble, that passes on the artistic style through collective procedural memory (traditions, rituals, practices) to new members (Manier & Hirst, 2008; Zerubavel, 1996, see subchapters 2.4.5 and 2.4.6). These ensemble members continue to reify and redefine the style through collective self-referential process (see subchapter 4.4.3).

Secondly, people who have previously worked in the theatre company, such as iconic actors or other members, have left their mark, a sediment, on the theatre company's image as well as work methods (Suddaby et al., 2014, see subchapters 2.4.4 and 4.4.2). Thirdly, members of the theatre companies feel the urge to protect certain heritage through sociobiographical memory (see subchapter 2.4.5) even though they may not have first-hand experience on historical events (see subchapter 4.4.2). Fourthly, past organisational models and habits are reflected to the present ensemble theatre company members even as a suppressed way to communicate with each other or as an inability to celebrate success (see subchapter 4.4.2).

5.1.2 Hierarchic relationship between the three founding principles

From the three founding principles, aiming for high-quality art is the most crucial. The primary reason to establish an ensemble theatre company has been the need to create distinctive art. This aim covers the organisational structure and the operations of the ensemble theatre company: art comes always first.

Art is the starting point of all operations and the two other founding principles, democratic work principles and collectivity, the means through which the art is enabled. Placing art first also challenges the ensemble theatre company organisations as all departments (artistic,

technical, and administrative) involved in the artistic process should be equally appreciated. This means nurturing the feelings of unity, professional pride and being a valuable part of the process (see subchapter 4.2.3) through respecting all individuals and departments as well timetables and plans.

5.2 Democracy as a founding principle

Democratic decision-making rules, supportive organisational structure, identification with the community, trust and motivation, open discourse and negotiation are seen as typical features of democratic organisation (see subchapter 2.2.6). In the ensemble theatre companies they are applied through the contingency principle (see subchapter 2.2.7), by shaping them according to the organisational needs (see subchapters 4.2.3 and 4.2.4).

Democratic work principles in the ensemble theatre companies are based on the idea of collectivity. As art was created in the collective ensemble work, the same idea of unity is extended also to the technical and administrative staff as they were seen as crucial coworkers implementing the artistic goal (see for example subchapter 1.8.2). According to the interview data, developing democratic principles is an ongoing project in ensemble theatre companies. Therefore, in the next subchapters, few implementations of democratic principles are presented.

5.2.1 Development

In the founding times of each ensemble theatre company, the artistic collective was the starting point (see subchapters 1.7.2 and 1.7.3). The organisational operations were based on the same collectivity, a kind of a collaborative governance (see chapter 2.2.7), as egalitarian sharing of tasks, participatory decision-making, and equal salaries (see subchapter 1.7.2). However, the many faults of this system were later on comprehended. In spite of equal sharing of tasks, some people still worked more than others and, therefore, the principle on salaries seemed unfair. Participatory and equal decision-making meant that there still were people who had more power, charisma, networks and personal agendas to push through their

ideas. These defects forced the ensemble theatre companies to develop their organisational structure (see subchapters 1.8.3 and 1.8.4). Similarly, entering the state financing system and acquiring stable venues and staff lead the process of redevelopment.

Currently, all four ensemble theatre companies are based on democratic principles adjusted to their needs. Each theatre company has created structures and monitoring systems to sustain these principles. Ensemble theatre companies apply well to the definition of hybrid organising (Battilana et al., 2018, see subchapter 2.2.7) where financial and artistic needs are balanced through the democratic principles (see subchapters 4.2.1 and 4.2.8). Therefore, these organisations are also able to adjust to a dynamic and unstable environment as the field of arts distinctively is.

Furthermore, ensemble theatre company members' basic values and assumptions are based on tacit cultural understanding (Nonaka & Takeuchi, 1995, see subchapter 2.2.9) that strengthens the community and its sense on democratic principles and their practical implementation (see subchapter 4.2.7 and 4.4.1). The practical example of how democratic principles are applied is the approach on hierarchy. Both in the artistic process and in the organisational structure there are leaders. However, the task of leaders is to smooth and observe the processes, monitor the wellbeing (such as work safety) and provide organisation members the necessary boundaries and freedom to execute the work (see subchapter 4.2.4).

5.2.2 Openness and low hierarchy

The democracy in ensemble theatre companies is, firstly, implemented through creating and sustaining structures and practices that enable openness. These create possibilities to the members to express their opinions and be heard. The weekly staff meetings, shared meeting memos and digital messaging applications are the most common tools. Furthermore, in some theatre companies the board meetings are open to all members (see subchapter 4.2.4).

Secondly, the decision-making processes are aimed to be clear and transparent and responsibility and tasks are divided to different departments (see subchapters 4.2.3 and 4.2.6).

Thirdly, most of the ensemble theatre companies are not aspiring to reach a non-hierarchical structure but a kind of a light hierarchy where there are formal positions and departments, and sufficient freedom to work independently (see subchapter 4.2.4). This is enabled through mutual trust and mutual responsibility of the whole and can be defined as shared leadership. It is based on organisational learning and principles of self-organisation where organisation members have multiple skills and readiness to support each other (see subchapters 2.2.8 and 2.2.9).

However, leaders are also seen important in the ensemble theatre companies (see subchapter 4.2.3). Implementing a democratic decision-making system requires that the leaders oversee and smooth the organisational operations and decide on suitable structures and frames for operating. This kind of post-heroic management (Stahl & Tröndle, 2019, see subchapter 2.1.4) is implemented in all four ensemble theatre companies and usually with a dual leadership system (de Voogt & Hommes, 2007, see subchapter 2.2.4).

5.2.3 Decision-making structures

In the ensemble theatre companies' shared leadership, each individual in the collective has a formal decision power varying according to the context. In some areas, decisions are made according to the formal position and responsibility. In some areas, everyone has equal decision rights (see subchapter 4.2.4).

Ensemble theatre companies are based on the functional structure where tasks, positions and departments are defined (see subchapter 2.2.4). However, an informal structure with a position power, influencers and unofficial networks (see subchapter 2.2.3) is parallelly existing. It is acknowledged that the ensemble theatre company organisation is constructed out of individuals with different personal traits, charisma and unseen friendship networks affecting behavior, dialogue and decisions. This effect can be either deliberate or intuitive (see subchapter 4.2.6). This means that an ensemble theatre company organisation cannot reach the situation where all decisions would be democratically and objectively made. According to the research material, there were several examples on how decisions are made either hastily or through persistent arguments or enthusiasm and hence, cause accumulation

of overwork and exhaustion (see subchapter 4.2.6). The democratic principle of the right to express opinions has also led to the situations where decisions are cancelled and reworked causing stress and feelings of inconsistency in the staff members (see subchapter 4.2.5). The ensemble theatre company members have a high level of trust on each other (see subchapter 4.2.2) that partly prevents members from misusing decision-making power in their positions. The same trust also gives space for making decisions related to one's own professional tasks. However, this is not implemented, for example, in marketing decisions where everybody seems to have a right to have their say. Controversially, artistic decision-making, which is at the core of the theatre company defining its identity, is seen as a highly specialised field and administrative and technical departments were reluctant in taking part in it (see subchapter 4.2.5).

5.2.4 Trust and motivation

Members in the ensemble theatre companies have a shared trust that each individual independently implements their work and makes decisions accordingly (see subchapters 4.2.2 and 4.2.5). Influencing one's own work is actualised through freedom of planning and implementing work tasks (see subchapter 4.2.4) and is enabled through the light hierarchy, decision-making structures, and shared trust mentioned in the previous subchapters. The trust is not an undisputed element as for example pawning of information or closing rehearsal processes or meetings from others create negative feelings in organisation members (see subchapters 4.2.3, 4.2.5, and 4.3.2).

The trust in the working environment is not something that is occurring naturally, whilst is nurtured and developed through the guidance of internal work relationships (see subchapter 4.2.8). With trust follows also the responsibility of the whole (see subchapter 4.2.4). The freedom to implement one's own work tasks generates motivation and commitment, and these create the feeling of being responsible for the organisation's entity. The theatre company is felt to be “ours” and creates pride over organisation and colleagues (see subchapter 4.2.2 and 4.2.8).

5.2.5 Collegial relations

Mutual trust in the ensemble theatre companies is crucial due to the small size of an organisation, tight schedules, and demanding work tasks. Therefore, it is strongly related to collegial relations and friendship (see subchapter 4.3.1). Ensemble theatre companies are constructed out of people who share the same kinds of values, hence, creating a trustful relationship, an interpersonal attraction, reflected in the organisational identity (Sluss & Ashforth, 2007, see subchapter 2.3.2). This relationship is actualised in a collegial friendship which seems to be a requirement for the productive working environment.

However, friendship is tied to the implementation of democratic principles. Firstly, collegial friendship is a means to regulate who belongs to the organisation as everybody should be getting along with each other in a tight organisation, i.e., they must share the same values and humour. Secondly, friendship strengthens the unity of the organisation, whilst can also make it blind to the need to renew (see subchapter 4.3.1). Thirdly, in the artistic process the friendship between, for example, ensemble members can generate private discussions outside the rehearsal process and hence, preventing the principle of democracy, right to have their say, from other group members (see subchapter 4.3.1). Lastly, friendships in the ensemble theatre company organisations affect the recruiting choices through choosing familiar people for the sake of simplicity (see subchapter 4.3.5).

5.2.6 Clan type of organisation

The democratic principles typical for the ensemble theatre company organisations, such as trust, motivation, commitment, and open communication are features of a clan type of organisation (Chan, 1997, see subchapter 2.3.3). A cohesive organisation is based on organic solidarity and loyalty between organisation members as there is no competition between organisation members and making mistakes is approved as natural behavior (see subchapter 4.2.2). The main features of a clan type of organisation are, firstly, the collective responsibility of both risks and rewards and, secondly, everyone overseeing the quality. These two are implemented in the ensemble theatre company organisations both on the artistic and production level (see subchapters 4.1.1, 4.2.7, and 4.3.2). The clan types of

organisations such as ensemble theatre companies are protective towards their internal cohesiveness and carefully regulate the number of new individuals and impulses. The cautious recruiting practices (see subchapter 4.3.2) are a clear example of this.

5.3 High artistic standard as a founding principle

The founding idea related to the high artistic level includes three aims (see chapter 1.7.1). First aim includes the strive to create theatre art that corresponds with each artist's view of the world. Secondly, the art is aimed to be free from restrictions and rules that are dictated from above or by external parties. Thirdly, art is created together with a like-minded group of artists and other staff.

These artistic aims still exist in the present ensemble theatre companies and the organisation structure based on democratic principles and collectivity affects them in several ways.

5.3.1 Artistic decisions

The organisational structure based on democratic principles supports artistic decisions. Choices are made through an artistic decisions model, where ensemble actors together with the artistic director and possible other artistic personnel decide which directors and actors can join the theatre company (see subchapter 4.1.4). Indirectly, they also affect decisions concerning key designers. As each theatre company has only two main productions each year, the first decision on who will direct the piece covers 75% of the future success of the work process and eventual performance (see chapter 4.3.2). For this reason, the decisions concerning the directors are especially concentrated on.

5.3.2 Motivation

As ensemble actors have the formal position to influence, i.e., they have actively taken part in the process of deciding the main production and its director, they are highly motivated in creating a piece that is successful and reproduces the artistic values of the theatre company.

From the actors' side, this is manifested when they take an active role in the rehearsal process and are willing to support the common artistic goal (see subchapters 4.1.4 and 4.2.8). This leads to several effects.

Firstly, actors' initiative can sometimes create challenges as the director should be the one leading the artistic process and maintain unity (see subchapter 4.3.1). Secondly, actors who have worked years together are a tight like-minded unit and this can create feelings of inferiority for visiting actors or designers (see subchapter 4.2.2). Thirdly, it is a crucial factor who can suggest artistic ideas in the working group and whether it is possible for an outsider (see subchapters 4.1.4 and 4.3.5). Finally, democratic principles can be seen as equality in the rehearsal process. As one of the actors pinpointed, one tries to merge into the piece so that it becomes a unified artistic work: work of an ensemble, not a piece of competing star roles (see subchapter 4.4.4).

5.3.3 Ensemble work

What makes each ensemble-based theatre company inimitable (see subchapter 2.1.7), is the artistic process made together with the specific individuals that form the ensemble. As history has proven (see subchapter 4.4.3) this long-term and continuous ensemble work generates and develops the artistic style that is reproduced and modified further in each production, regardless of the director.

Ensemble theatre companies were first created when people that share the same artistic preferences have gathered together. The same principle still applies. This also defines how artistic teams are formed as the “good art” is seen to be created through combination of suitable people that challenge, inspire and surpass each other (see subchapter 4.1.3).

However, the interviews also indicate that the ensemble theatre format where the ensemble is making artistic decisions and forming the artistic style on stage is not always comprehended or known by external operators even though it is in use in all four vos-financed theatre companies and is the backbone of creating art (see subchapter 4.1.4).

5.3.4 Technical and administrative work

The interview data indicate that due to the high work motivation, each individual working in theatre company maintains professional pride and hence, supports the core idea of the ensemble theatre company: creating high-quality art (see subchapter 4.1.1). It can be said that each member maintains artistic integrity in their work (Foster, 2018, see subchapter 2.1.7). Therefore, art is not the sole property of the artistic team, since the artistic process and decisions are reflected on the whole organisation. This works also the other way around. Motivated technical and administrative teams enable the art through their work. It has a significant impact on art, how the main productions are budgeted, how much time and effort the technical department is willing to offer and do they work with their heart in it (see subchapter 4.1.2). The enabling of artistic process is based on the feeling that everybody in the working group feels oneself valuable and are co-creators of an ambitious project (see subchapters 4.1.2 and 4.1.3).

As the ensemble theatre company is a tight organisation with a typical workforce of 12-15 permanent employees, all are expected to be motivated top professionals who can collaborate with each other (see subchapter 4.2.8). In the ensemble theatre company organisations, the professional pride and artistic integrity often lead to being too flexible with the amount of different work tasks, production planning, timetables, working overtime and vacation times. This creates tiredness and overworking. Similarly, scarce resources and constant state of being innovative due to this creates pressure (see subchapter 4.1.2).

5.3.5 Art and financing structure

A theme that arose independently from the interview material was the ensemble theatre companies' financing structure that unconsciously affects the artistic decisions. It was accented in the interviews, that financial income is not the primary criterion in selecting and planning the main productions (see subchapter 4.1.1). However, as the interview data indicated, unconsciously the pressure for not making financial deficit affects the artistic decisions. Productions that ensemble theatre companies create tend to have more humoristic features as they are considered to sell better than “serious” ones (see subchapter 4.2.1). This

thought or wish, however, is not overtly expressed in the ensemble theatre company organisation, whilst comes quite naturally in the production process.

The required audience fill rate in the ensemble theatre companies is significant. For example, in Ryhmäteatteri, the annual ticket sales amounts to 49% of the annual income. (Teatterin tiedotuskeskus TINFO, 2020). As each theatre company has approximately two main productions yearly, the artistic decisions on these are crucial and the importance is reflected also to the working group of each production. Tight financial frames create pressure for the organisations whose core value is to set the art first. This contradiction seems to be present in the daily work of ensemble theatre companies.

5.4 Collectivity as a founding principle

Ensemble theatre companies were initially created out of the need to implement both artistic and production work in a less hierarchical way and together with specific like-minded people (see subchapter 1.7.2). The collective mirrored the individuals' values and points of view to the current society and time both through themes of the performances and the ways of working. The implementations of the collectivity are examined in the next subchapters.

5.4.1 Collectivity and systems theory

In the ensemble theatre companies, the founding value of collective collaborative work has been developed through the error and success into an operating model (see subchapters 4.2.5, 4.2.7 and 4.4.2). For the outsiders, the model based on internal discussions, trust, and collegiality can seem as barred and self-centered. When this unity is examined from the point of view of systems theory (Luhmann 2012; Stahl & Tröndle, 2019, see subchapter 2.1.2), it explains the partly unconscious way how collective work is implemented in the organisations. The ensemble theatre company organisation is a tight collective in a constant self-referential dialogue on ways of working, artistic choices, recruiting and values. Each member of these organisations offers impulses, ideas, for the community and these are either rejected or adopted. Adopted ideas must “resonate” with the organisation's identity, i.e. they

are shared by all members. This ongoing self-referential negotiation is a key operation in systems theory and is implemented in ensemble theatres companies' daily life (see for example subchapters 4.3.3 and 4.4.1).

5.4.2 Collectivity and art

Collectivity is strongly present also in the creation of art as each ensemble theatre company's organisational identity is based on the distinct artistic style it has (see subchapter 4.4.4). This proposition is, firstly, verified through the fact that the combination of actors defines the artistic style through their collective work on stage as well as through making artistic decisions as a group. The systems theory leads the artistic decisions as it is based on the intuitive ideas of what suits the organisation and feels “right” (see subchapter 4.4.3). Secondly, the artistic style is inherited from the first years of the theatre company when its artistic brand was first created (see subchapter 4.4.3). This again means that the style is reified in the ensemble through the years and attracts certain kinds of individuals to join the organisation (see subchapters 2.1.7 and 2.4.2).

5.4.3 Collectivity and the freelancers

The idea of collectivity is expanded to include also the frequent visitors, the freelancers that join the ensemble theatre company organisation to work in productions. An inspiring and safe working environment is seen as an important feature in creating art and, therefore, the whole working group is expected to work well together and enjoy collaboration (see subchapter 4.3.2).

Since ensemble theatre companies are close-knit clan organisations, the feelings of alienation that freelancers can experience have been acknowledged in most organisations and the attempt is made to improve through feedback practices, responsibility of safety issues in formal positions as well as monitoring ethical and safe work environment (see subchapter 4.2.8). The freelancers' artistic work is understood to be valuable and, therefore, the relation must be cherished (see subchapter 4.3.5). As one of the interviewees mentions, everyone should have the feeling that they belong to the same family (see subchapter 4.2.8).

5.5 Research question 2 - artistic values and core values

2) What are the artistic values and core values of an ensemble theatre company and how are they reproduced in the daily theatre work?

The artistic core values are similar to the core values and thus the vehicle through which an organisation realises its philosophy, i.e., a context where the artistic choices are made (see subchapter 2.1.7).

Therefore, ensemble theatre company's artistic mission should reflect both the organisation's shared values and individual's values to motivate organisation members' work. Through the lens of systems theory, the artistic core value is something that should resonate in all organisation members.

5.5.1 How the artistic values are created?

The interviews indicated that the artistic decisions made in the ensemble theatre companies appear to be affected by three factors. Firstly, the people who are making the decisions are individuals with personal features, values and networks. Secondly, the ensemble these individuals have formed share the same value system and habits (see subchapter 4.1.1). Thirdly, as mentioned before, theatre company's artistic style created in the past is unconsciously reified and reproduced.

The individuals' context in which they are living and experiencing, affects what kinds of themes and artists create interest and which ideas are offered to other members in the ensemble. The self-referential discussion reveals which ideas resonate with the collective and the organisation's identity and which are adopted, i.e., brought on stage. Practical discussions lead the artistic decision process, not written guidelines or policies (see subchapter 4.3.4). Furthermore, each visiting artist brings their own set of values on the rehearsal process and on stage and, therefore, leave a trace.

5.5.2 How the organisational identity is constructed?

The organisational identity is constructed in the same way as artistic values: each individual brings values to the organisation (Ashforth & Mael, 1996; Hatch & Schultz, 2004, see subchapter 2.4.3). It can be concluded that in the ensemble theatre companies the values have an effect on two intertwined levels.

Firstly, the individuals deciding on the artistic content and creating art itself, transfer their view of the world in the form of values to the artistic process and thus the end result. This is verified in how collectively chosen production fulfils automatically everybody's value expectations (see subchapter 4.1.1).

Secondly, the personnel enabling the artistic process have their own value system (Poissonde Haro & Menot, 2013, see subchapter 2.1.5), professional pride and skills as well as the motivation to enable (see subchapter 4.1.2).

These two value levels create the organisational identity, the whole that theatre is. Therefore, the organisational identity is the distinctive theatre art, a style, it produces, whilst also the manner and values it is produced. There is a causal relationship between the artistic process, productional work, and motivation and wellbeing of all ensemble theatre company employees. In their daily work, each ensemble theatre company member reiterates the customary ways of working, cultural meanings that build the organisation's identity and, therefore, they are the representatives of the organisation (Hatch & Schultz, 2004, see subchapter 2.4.3). Each member's behaviour and value base is seen as important in these organisations.

The core values and, hence, organisational identity of each ensemble theatre company are reflected in the working environment they have. Furthermore, as mentioned earlier, history has its traces in the present organisational identity through founding principles and the reproduced and reified artistic style.

5.5.3 Embedding into the ensemble theatre company organisation

Two of the interviewees described their relationship to the organisation being close and affectionate (see subchapter 4.4.1). This is due to the fact that individuals have had a

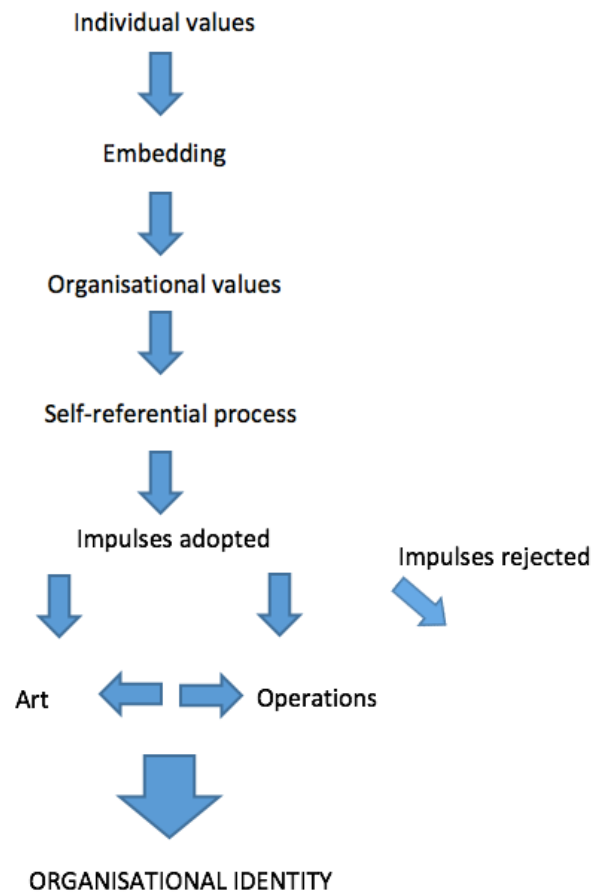
possibility to suggest values to the organisation and they have been adopted and changed into collectively shared values.

Individual values and organisational values are alike and the individual's value system is supported in the organisation; hence, the person has started to embed into it (Ashforth & Mael, 1996; Hatch & Schultz 2004; Wiley & Alexander, 1987, see subchapter 2.4.2). Embedding requires the possibility to influence and develop the organisation's habits and procedures and this, as noted earlier, generates the motivation in the ensemble theatre companies (see subchapters 4.1.1, 4.1.2, and 4.4.1). The aim to implement democratic principles explains the commitment and embeddedness these organisations encourage.

In the ensemble theatre company organisation, the individual and organisational identities seem to be intertwined with each other (see subchapter 4.4.1). The individual adopts the ensemble theatre company's ideology, ways of working and habits and thus becomes a microcosm of the organisation. When one follows one's own values, they are also the organisation's values (see subchapters 2.4.2 and 4.4.1). The clan type of organisation model, self-referential process, and collectivity strengthens the embedding.

In the Figure 1 the embedding process is demonstrated:

Ensemble theatre company: embedding and value systems



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Alongside with the embedding into the organisation, an ensemble theatre company member can have other identities that are based on occupational communities (Strati, 2000, see subchapter 2.3.1) extending even outside the theatre. Therefore, embedding is constructed by a combination of professional identity, organisational identity, and personal identity (see subchapter 4.4.1).

5.5.4 Artistic values and core values

There are no direct artistic values that could be named and which would define the artistic work made in the ensemble theatre companies (see subchapter 4.3.4). However, as mentioned earlier, the members in the ensemble and artistic team and production process transmit their individual values to the work process, artistic choices, and the end products.

Similarly, collectives that these individuals create have their shared artistic principles that in the case of ensemble, forms also the theatre's artistic style. Values are activated in the artistic decision processes as well as in all self-referential organisational processes, decisions, negotiations and discussions that the organisation has.

However, there are several artistic commonalities, principles that are crucial in creating art, that can be found from the interviews, such as: art comes first, actor-based approach, enabling the artistic process (i.e., professional pride), reflecting time and world (i.e., societal), visual experimenting and redefining, artistic risk-taking, and constant renewing.

Art is in the core of an ensemble theatre company and the democratic principles and collectivity are in a causal relation to the art. Principles such as trust, openness, loyalty, collegial respect, equality, collegial friendship, and motivation highlighted in the interviews enable the artistic process (see subchapter 4.2.2). These can be seen as core ideas in organisation, since many of the interviewees understand them as absolute requirements to be able work in the collective (see subchapters 4.3.1 and 4.3.3). Similar way as the artistic values, also the organisational values are merged unconsciously into the organisation's daily life. The core values are reproduced in all operations that theatre has and strengthen the founding principles: democratic principles, collectivity, and aiming for high-quality art.

5.5.5 How values are reproduced: work environment

It is suggested in the interviews that the general working environment is the indication on how values are implemented (see subchapter 4.3.2). The working environment reaches all individuals working in the theatre company and is reflected also to the art it creates as well as the reputation of the theatre company (see subchapter 4.2.8).

Ensemble theatre companies are carefully protecting their internal cohesion, i.e., good working environment (see subchapters 4.3.2 and 4.3.3). As they are arts organisations that constantly renew, they are at the same time open to new impulses, such as changing freelancers, whilst concerning employees with permanent contracts, they are selective (see subchapter 4.3.2).

According to the systems theory, an organisation regulates the amount of new impulses (see subchapter 2.1.4) to protect their organisational identity. Carefulness is based on the experience of when there are too many external impulses, the coherence starts to fail and the internal operations cannot be controlled. In practice, this happens in the ensemble theatre company organisation by expanding the number of projects or the number of permanent staff (see subchapter 4.4.4). Should there be too many projects and too little time, the group spirit and motivation fail and tensions and tiredness start to cumulate (see subchapter 4.2.6). This seems to happen regularly in the ensemble theatre company organisations and, therefore, they have started to focus more on internal wellbeing, production planning, and organisational processes. Should the motivation disappear, the artistic core idea of the collective enabling of high-quality art is endangered.

5.6 Research question 3 - joining an ensemble theatre company

3) What kinds of individuals join ensemble theatre companies? How does this process happen?

All interviewees emphasise the meaning of freelancers to be the crucial element in the organisation (see subchapter 4.3.5). Furthermore, the ensemble theatre company structure as well as the financing base supports inviting freelancers for productions to keep up the artistic quality. Freelancers challenge and sometimes irritate the organisational conventions and, hence, break the cohesion and bring in fresh opinions to all departments.

However, even though new people are considered to be essential, in practice the chosen people often seem to be old acquaintances or connected to the already known people. Quite often, the people that are earlier proved to be suitable and trusted ones end up working in most productions, since a tight schedule requires a smooth process without inconvenient surprises (see subchapter 4.3.1). As mentioned in the earlier subchapter, trust-based collegial friendship is seen as a one requirement for working in an ensemble theatre company organisation (see subchapter 4.3.1) as the good working environment is crucial. This is reflected also into the choice of freelancers and temporary workers.

5.6.1 What kinds of individuals join an ensemble theatre company?

The organisational identity also leads the choice of individuals to the ensemble theatre company. Firstly, the interview data indicated that the suitable person just “feels right” for the organisation, is a "good guy" (see subchapter 4.3.3). Should the process be examined from the point of view of systems theory, the organisation has been preparing and filtering the choice continuously while negotiating about the organisational identity (see subchapter 2.1.2). Therefore, what feels “right” by intuition, results from the process of the organisation's self-referential discussion, i.e. what resonates with the organisation, what kind of person feels familiar and suitable. The chosen people must fill the requirements that each ensemble theatre company organisation has (see subchapter 4.3.2). According to the interviewees, the common features for “good guys” are motivation, professional quality, ability for coworking, trustworthiness, respecting the colleagues, empathy, humour, loyalty to the organisation, and artistic integrity (in all professions).

In the case of choosing the actors, the charisma, the “it”, has a significant importance. However, being a good kind of person is even more important in choosing actors, as ensemble work is collaborating and the good working environment is crucial for the success of the end product (see subchapters 4.1.3, 4.3.2, and 4.3.3).

5.6.2 How artists are chosen to ensemble theatre companies?

In the case of choosing the artists to the production, the criterion of “a good guy” described in the previous subchapter are valid. Furthermore, the person's artistic style must match with the organisation's own artistic style and the artistic values. This is evaluated in the artistic collective through an intuitive self-referential process. As one member of artistic collective (see subchapter 4.3.3) poignantly described: someone must be excited about this person.

The artistic collective is constantly filtering everything they have seen and experienced to determine which would fit together with the organisation's own artistic style. Through the lens of systems theory, something must draw one of the ensemble member's attention to be

introduced to the other members (see subchapter 4.1.1). Therefore, the choices reflect strongly the ensemble members' view of the world.

5.6.3 Challenges in artistic renewal

If a theatre company is a clan organisation of too close-knit and like-minded people who - either consciously or unconsciously - favour people they know in their artistic recruitment, there is a risk that it begins to repeat itself in its artistic choices instead of creating new art.

Reflecting on Milgram's (1967, see subchapter 2.3.4) small world theory, the theatre field is constructed out of clusters of friends. The meaning of clusters is to validate and create credibility to the yet unknown artistic material (Uzzi & Spiro, 2005, see subchapter 2.3.4). This can also lead to a situation where the same material (for example directors and writers) travel endlessly from cluster to cluster and new material stops getting in. This phenomenon was verified taking place also in the ensemble theatre companies as the same people circulate in them (see subchapter 4.3.4). Cluster network (for example theatre field in Helsinki) is a pool of variations where artists are intentionally or unintentionally inspired by each other's work (Becker, 1982, see subchapters 2.3.4, 4.3.4). New artistic products are always a combination of new and old.

In the ensemble theatre companies repeating the same artistic choices would be against the artistic commonalities of artistic risk-taking and constant renewing as well as the founding principle of aiming for high-quality art (see subchapter 4.1.4). The controversy in the ensemble theatre company structure is that it is based on a fixed ensemble who creates their own distinct style during a long period of time, whilst at the same time it should let in new impulses, new theatre makers to maintain a high level of freshness. Yet again, not too many, so that the theatre company can attain its organisational identity and values (see subchapters 2.1.4, 4.4.4), as was mentioned in the previous subchapter. Therefore, balancing between “new” and “old” is a key element in ensemble theatres companies. The clan-like organisation model and the use of self-referential processes can create too much cohesion in the ensemble theatre company, i.e., not sufficiently differing impulses and the organisation becomes too closed and the art it creates, predictable.

6 DISCUSSION

In this chapter, the key findings of the study are examined from the perspective of arts management and are mirrored to the Finnish theatre field and its current state both in financing and trends. The last subchapter reflects on the limitations of this study and proposes topics for further research.

6.1 Art comes first

All the key findings in this research revolve around the themes of art, collectivity, democratic principles, informal organisation, and self-referential processes.

This study identified aiming for high-quality art as the main principle to which all other operations of ensemble theatre company are related. Furthermore, democratic principles and collectivity are the means through which art is created. Aiming for high-quality art, democratic principles and collectivity are the founding principles of all four ensemble theatre companies examined in this study. These founding principles have been applied, reified, and developed through ensemble theatre companies' history through a continuous process.

6.2 Balancing between the formal and informal structures

This study raises a few actual themes related to the field of arts management. Firstly, can arts management as an approach respond to the growing need to understand how art is created? Furthermore, what kinds of factors affect the artistic process and how can these be detected?

Stahl and Tröndle (2019, see subchapter 1.5) emphasise the contradiction between the inconsistent and intuitive way of creating art and the consistency of management theories widely used for producing art. They claim that arts organisations should be described and managed as they are, not as they should be according to the management's best practices (Kühl, 2011, see chapter 2). This study has examined the concept of ensemble-based theatre

company from two different theoretical approaches. Management theories chosen for this study concentrate mainly on formal structures, strategies, hierarchies, decision-making, and suitable leadership practices. The sociology-based organisational studies challenge these disciplines by offering a view into informal structure: tacit organisational learning, values and identities, networks, post-heroic management, collegial friendships, and partly intuitive self-referential collective negotiation.

This study has indicated that the concepts of informal organisation and sociology-based organizational theory can be suitable approaches for understanding often ambiguous artistic processes. The indication for this can be found from the idea of organisational identity (Ashforth & Mael, 1996, see chapter 2.4.3).

The first key finding of this study is that ensemble theatre companies' all operations gather around the concept of organisational identity. The ensemble theatres companies' organisational identity is the theatre art and on which principles, attitudes and working environment it is created.

This notion is supported in the theories chosen for this research. Albert & Whetten (1985, as cited in Ashforth & Mael, 1996, see chapter 2.4.2) claim that organisational identity reflects organisation members' behaviour and beliefs. Furthermore, when an organisation is examined from the historical point of view, the organisational identity is also constructed of values and behaviours of previous organisation members. The history is present in the organisation through collective and sociobiographical memories (Zerubavel, 1996 as cited in Olick & Robbins, 1998, see subchapter 2.4.4). Therefore, in the four ensemble theatre companies the artistic and core values are partly inherited from the past and reified by the current organisation members.

Furthermore, identity and value theories (see for example Hatch & Schultz, 2004; Meglino & Ravlin, 1998; Strati, 2000) support the idea that each individual brings their own values to the ensemble theatre organisation and people with similar values tend to gather together. Moreover, all artistic and organisational decisions are based on shared values as well as collegial trust and responsibility within the organisation. As a summary, the organisational identity, soul of an organisation (Albert & Whetten, 1985 as cited in Ashforth & Mael, 1996), is based on continuous unconscious and conscious value negotiations and dialogue.

Therefore, this study suggests that the ensemble theatre company members mutually share and support the organisational identity. This enables mutual trust and responsibility. Moreover, it gives space for democratic freedom of implementing one's duties independently and, hence, generates motivation and pride over organisation. Therefore, ensemble theatre organisation is strongly supported by its members and the relationship is committed.

The second key finding is that the democratic freedom, informal structure and shared idea about the organisational identity cannot exist without structures, hierarchies, and at least some amount of leadership. Therefore, arts management theories based on structures and hierarchies, i.e., formal organisation, have validity in the arts organisation. The key principles of democratic organisation, namely transparent decision-making, open dialogue, and supportive organisation structures (de Jong & Witteloostuijn, 2008, see subchapter 2.2.6) require planning, monitoring, and leadership to be realised. Furthermore, the democratic key principles enable organisational learning, which is a distinct feature in ensemble theatre companies.

This study suggests that through the operational years, different principles and phases of organisational democracy have been tested in the ensemble theatres. The history has shown the development from the egalitarian, anarchistic and ideological community to the functional organisational structure with shared responsibilities and a defined decision-making structure. However, the shared ideology has still a strong foothold in these organisations.

According to contingency approach (Byrnes, 2009, see subchapter, 2.2.7), it is vital that each arts organisation evaluates the amount of democracy and suitable means to enable it in their organisation. During their operational years ensemble theatre companies have found this balance. Through introducing both organisational theories and managerial theories, this study suggests that acknowledging and supporting the covariance of both informal and formal structures is a key to stable organisational work and sufficient freedom for the creation of art. Furthermore, it helps to understand the various processes, networks and individuals related to art creation.

6.3 Systems theory and collectivity

The third key finding in this study is that in a tight-knit ensemble theatre company the features of an informal organisation, such as networks, relationships, friendships, unconscious decisions, and values guide all operations. The art and individuals creating the art are tied together. Therefore, the personal traits, perceptions and aims are always present. It is crucial to understand that in tight-knit organisations with artistic integrity and professionalism, the significance of informal organisation can turn out to be more essential than planned structures.

This observation is firstly supported in the notion that the ensemble theatre organisation member's private and professional lives can blend through the embedding process (see subchapter 5.5.3). This means that an individual and the organisation are unified and the individual's interest becomes also the organisation's interest (Wiley & Alexander, 1987 as cited in Ashforth & Mael, 1996, see subchapter 2.4.2). This creates commitment to the organisation.

Secondly, ensemble theatre organisations are organic, clan type of organisations with a high degree of collectivity and cohesion. The systems theory (Luhmann, 2012, as cited in Stahl & Tröndle, 2019, see subchapter 2.1.2) explains well how ensemble theatre organisations operate. The tight, clan-like communities such as ensemble theatres are based on intuitive self-referential processes. This means that a theatre company as a community negotiates the values and artistic values of the organisation. This process happens both in formal and informal organisation consciously and unconsciously.

Thirdly, the informal organisation enables the existence of collegial friendships, conglomerations, networks, and professional clusters. Inside the ensemble theatre company organisation these affect power relationships and decisions. At the same time, the various internal networks reflect the current field of arts and the individuals working there.

6.4 Creation of a quality art

The second actual theme related to the field of arts management is how to create high-quality

art that interests and, at its best, fascinates audiences, artists, and reviewers?

This study suggests that there are several aspects that affect the creation of quality art. First, it must be noted that in ensemble theatre companies the distinctive theatre art is the primary factor reflected in all operations. Furthermore, the theatre art each company creates reflects the organisational identity based on individual and collective values and perceptions.

The fourth research finding in this study is that the wellbeing, collectivity, and good working environment were seen as indispensable in order to create quality art. Ensemble theatres' organisational identity is based on the art it creates as well on the conditions in which it is created. Similarly, it must be acknowledged that all members in the organisation maintain artistic integrity regardless of their job title. This notion opens the view to the core of artistic process: each member in the process is valuable and must be respected.

The four case theatres have invested in developing work processes, feedback practices, and policies for preventing sexual harassment and an abuse of power. They are seen as vital acts in order to be able to create art. Everybody in the organisation must get along with each other and at its best, be friends with each other. If this is not actualised, theatres are ready to analyse and develop their operations in order to improve.

Therefore, according to this research, the quality art is pursued with choosing suitable individuals through self-referential processes, monitoring work safety, and securing a safe and fruitful work environment. This demands both solid democratic structures and planned operations as well as intuitive self-referential process.

The valid criterion for choosing both artistic ideas and individuals is the notion that “it feels” right for the particular organisation and community. Ensemble theatres are based on collectivity, however, collectivity includes all members working in the organisation. The artistic ensemble in its widest sense is the whole theatre community.

6.5 Threats and possibilities of collectivity

The third actual theme related to the arts management is how the interpersonal relationships affect the organisation and artistic process. Can these relationships be harmful?

This study suggests that self-reference is the primary method that strengthens the collectivity in the ensemble theatre companies. In this light, self-reference can be seen related to the identity and value theories. As an example, understanding and sharing the internal values strengthens the interpersonal relationships in organisations (Meglino & Ravlin, 1998, see subchapter 2.1.5). Furthermore, the members' consensus and trust in the organisation makes it strong (Ashforth & Mael, 1996, see subchapter 2.4.3).

In ensemble theatre companies, these features are reflected in requiring the collegial friendship, being the “good guy”, from all organisation members. This is a prerequisite when working with a tight schedule, demanding tasks, and scarce financial resources, whilst at the same time maintaining the good working environment and a highly motivated work collective. Both in the systems theory and a clan type of organisation introduced in this research, the organisational identity is protected through regulating the number of external impulses and individuals joining the organisation.

The fifth research finding is that the principle of collegial friendship and cohesion has gradually led to the situation where trusted people are most often recruited both to artistic and production tasks. Here lies the the same risk all similar small cultural organisations, carry. According to the systems theory, should there be only few external impulses that challenge the organisation and introduce contradicting voices, the organisation becomes stagnant. This is especially hazardous from an artistic point of view as ensemble theatre companies see themselves as renewing arts organisations (see subchapter 4.1.4). The organisation's inner logic is reflected on stage and, consequently, in the artistic profile of each ensemble theatre. This again has an impact on the whole theatre field and audience's perceptions on current theatre art.

To prevent this artistic repetitiveness, ensemble theatre companies need to gradually start taking in new impulses, new theatre makers without endangering their organisational identity and the artistic core. The next subchapter examines this need for renewal through the actual topic in the Finnish theatre field.

6.6 Renewal through the new financing law

The fourth actual theme related to arts management is how changes in the state financing model could enhance the much-needed change in the cultural field.

Actor Geoffrey Erista who graduated from the Theatre Academy of the University of the Arts Helsinki in spring 2020 criticises the theatre field in Finland as being in a stagnant phase where new theatre makers and perspectives do not have the possibility to break through:

To be honest, the programme that has been offered in the last few years and my own essence as an actor have not exactly met. Those stories that are told there don't address in the same way as they could do. If we think that theatre is the mirror of society, that is not actualised in the professional stages. (Erista, Yleisradio, KOM-teatteri, Q-teatteri, Teater Viirus, Ryhmäteatteri, episode 16: "Tuokaa sylliset sissään", 2020)

The reform of state financing for professional theatres that comes into effect in 2022 can overturn some power balance in the Finnish theatre field. The objective of the reform is to grant financial support for a wider group of performing arts professionals and groups and to provide them with access to more stable financing. (Opetus- ja kulttuuriministeriö, 2020). The reform considers also the four ensemble theatres who will need to re-evaluate their fundamental operating principles and begin gradually changing their current working model. The new financing system encourages employing more freelance employees and to have more contact with the freelance field as a whole.

Artistically, this can be seen also as a threat. The core of the ensemble-structured theatre is the close collaboration of an artistic ensemble consisting of carefully chosen individuals who have tuned their collaboration into a nuanced artistic work. This is their most crucial value which has produced distinctive theatre art in the Finnish theatre field (see subchapter 1.8). As this research has indicated, the theatre's artistic style is inherited from the times of its foundation and reified and developed further with close-knit ensemble work. In a wider perspective, daily work in an ensemble theatre company means delicate collaboration between all departments and members of the organisation. Adding too many external impulses, new projects, artists, perceptions, ways to work is seen as an actual threat. The additional pressure is created from the tight financial framework with which these theatre companies are already working. They balance between audience's expectations, audience fill rates and creating risk-taking high-quality art. However, change is unavoidable as theatre is a constantly renewing art form that lives in a moment and reflects the current society (see subchapter 1.4).

6.7 Limitations and further studies

This study was motivated by a desire to understand the complex structure of a tight-knit arts organisation. As Paavolainen suggests (2002, see subchapter 1.5), it is both tempting and ambitious to study how art is created. At the same time, it is a demanding journey. When being partly an insider and working in one of these organisations, one easily notices the various causal connections existing in the ensemble theatres' structure. It is a challenging task to describe it in a clear and understandable manner. My position as an insider could have been more efficiently taken into use by concentrating only on one theatre organisation, production process and a distinct period. Ethnographic (see subchapter 3.2.1) observation during a long time-span might have revealed different power relations, social relations, and inconspicuous friendships connections that exist within an ensemble theatre company organisation and affect artistic and production decisions. This method would have also brought out how freelancers and other external visitors find their place, or do not find, in a tight-knit collective organisation. However, in practice this would have been impossible, since this research was set in the time frame of the exceptional COVID-19 crisis when theatres were closed and their staff were prevented from working face-to-face.

The theme of how "good art" is created is a fascinating topic and applicable for future research. Firstly, it would be relevant to examine how different members and departments in a small organisation take part in the artistic process and what is their relation to art (see Foster, 2018, 2.1.7). Further on, this kind of research could help to improve the work processes and production planning and give a wider perspective and understanding for people working in artistic professions on how other departments comprehend the shared artistic core values.

Secondly, it would be recommendable to study the strings attached, the internal power relations, the chemistry between members and personal connections and perceptions that consciously and unconsciously steer the artistic process and artistic decisions. The outcome of this kind of research could help artists to understand more comprehensively how theatres' artistic profiles are created. It would also make the artistic decision process more transparent both internally and externally.

The second intriguing theme area for further studies is the combination of people in the artistic team and how either stagnation or variety of new people affect the artistic process and the end products. Uzzi and Spiro's (2005, see subchapter 2.3.4) research on cluster networks is based on calculation of amount of “new” and “old” artistic material in Broadway productions. This would be an interesting approach to apply to the Finnish theatre field. Is the key for interesting new theatre art related to the amount of “new” artistic individuals or rather “old” acquaintances reifying and fine-tuning their artistic collaboration? Or combining aptly these two. This type of research could also serve the ongoing discussion on which people are given the possibility to create their art, on which financing and how and which kind of voices are generally heard in the theatre art.

When there is a profound understanding on the effects of renewing and taking in new people in the like-minded group, the process of renewal can be planned adequately without causing damage to the existing artistic collectives. This is also a relevant theme when the new financing law comes into effect in Finland.

The third theme area for further research is related to how the upcoming financing law will affect the funding of ensemble theatres. The same general financing law is applied to all different types, structures and sizes of arts organisations. What kinds of effects does it have on smaller organisations with a distinctive artistic style and only few productions each year? Further on, the upcoming financing law might also have an effect on art itself as well as ways of collaboration. There is a fair chance that a new financing law opens the possibility to create new ensemble-structured theatres to Finland with a younger generation of artistic individuals challenging the dominant theatre culture. This is how the four ensemble theatres have been founded. In this case, the long-term work with democracy and collectivity that the four ensemble theatres have applied, can offer a useful base on the new ensemble theatres. Democratic principles, wellbeing and preventing the misuse of power that have been tested, applied and developed in these four ensemble theatres, are seen more and more crucial themes in the future work environments.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1: EXAMPLE OF AN EMAIL TO APPROACH FOR INTERVIEWEES

Moi [name removed]!

Olen tekemässä tässä töiden ohella Sibelius-Akatemian Arts Management-ohjelmaan gradua, jonka aiheena on helsinkiläiset ryhmämuotoiset teatterit. Haluaisin keskittyä erityisesti [theatre's name] ja [theatre's name], mutta yleisellä tasolla, jossa en vertaile teattereita, vaan pyrin löytämään yleisiä lainalaisuuksia. Juuri nämä teatterit ovat valikoituneet, koska molemmista on tehty erinomainen historiikki, joka avaa teatterin kehityskulkua.

Pääpaino tutkimuksessa on jokapäiväisissä työtavoissa, työtehtävissä, päätöksenteossa, suunnittelussa ja ihmisten välisissä suhteissa liittyen tapoihin, arvoihin ja traditioihin.

Haastateltavikseni haluaisin teatterilaisia eri ammattiryhmistä.

Vaikkakin olen itse töissä [theatre's name] yritän pysyä objektiivisena ja tehdä haastattelun tutkijan positiosta käsin.

Olisiko sinulla aikaa haastatteluun? Se veisi maksimissaan noin 2 tuntia ja voin lähettää kysymykset etukäteen. Haastatteluajankohdaksi minulle sopii melkein mikä tahansa aika toukokuun puolella. Ja jos se vain sopii, tekisin mielelläni haastattelun kasvokkain, toki turvavälillä ja turvallisessa ja rauhallisessa paikassa.

Tervehtii,

Mirkka

[contact information removed]

APPENDIX 2: EXCERPTS OF INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS TO THE MEMBERS OF THE ENSEMBLE THEATRE

Kysymykset 4.6.2020 haastatteluun

Teatterin rakenne

- Millaisena näet oman positiosi teatterissa?
- Minkälaisissa asioissa sinulla on päätäntävaltaa?
- Miten päätöksiä tehdään teatterissa? (kokoukset, yhteydenpito, tiedonkulku, epäviralliset kanavat)
- Miten teatterinne ja produktioidenne työryhmät ja tekijät valikoituvat?
- Kuka tekee lopulliset päätökset, onko jollakulla/joillakuilla veto-oikeus?
- Miten demokratia toteutuu teatterissanne?
- Onko teatterillanne pitkän tähtäimen suunnitelma (esim. strategia) tai muita kattavia työsuunnitelmia?
- Miten näet oman “osastosi” toiminnan suhteessa muihin osastoihin (eriytynyt/limittynyt)?
- Miten koet työskentelyn freelancereiden kanssa suhteessa teatterin omaan henkilökuntaan?
- Miten teatterin nykyinen ensemble on muotoutunut?

- Mitä ensembleen kuuluminen tarkoittaa. Mistä ollaan vastuussa? Mihin se velvoittaa?
- Mikä on tärkein asia ryhmätyöskentelyssä?
- Koetko olevasi osa jotain tiivistä ryhmää-tai useampia ryhmiä?
- Koetko, että teatterissa on ryhmittymiä, joista jäät ulkopuolelle?
- Kenellä sinun mielestäsi on teatterissa tärkein positio?
- Onko kaikilla mahdollisuus ilmaista mielipiteitään tai kehitysehdotuksia? Kuunnellaanko sinua?
- Koetko, että sinulla on mahdollisuus olla oma itsesi?

Tuotantoprosessi

- Mikä on sinun mielestäsi kaikkein tärkein vaihe tuotantoprosessissa?
- Missä tuotantoprosessin vaiheessa syntyy mielestäsi eniten ongelmia ja miten niitä voitaisiin välttää?
- Miten työryhmän työskentely voi vaikuttaa negatiivisesti teoksen syntyyn? Entä positiivisesti?
- Miten työprosessi näkyy esityksessä? Voiko prosessi olla tärkeämpi kuin lopputulos?
- Toteutuuko demokratia harjoitusprosessissa?
- Jääkö tuotanto elämään jollain tavalla vielä esitysten jälkeen?

Historia ja traditiot

- Millainen on [theatre's name]? Millaisia ominaispiirteitä sillä on?
- Näkyykö teatterin perustamisen aika tai muut merkittävät käänneet teatterin nykyisessä arjessa?
- Miten teatterin arkinen työskentely on muuttunut aikojen kuluessa?
- Osallistuvatko teatterin perustajat tai muut “[theatre's previous members]” vielä teatterin toimintaan? Mitä siitä ajatellaan?
- Minkälaisia rituaaleja teatterillanne on? (juhlat, tapaamiset, esityksiin liittyvät) Mistä rituaalit ovat tulleet?
- Onko omalla “osastollasi” rituaaleja? Mitä ne ovat?
- Miten teatterin “henki” pidetään yllä?
- Oletko tuonut teatteriin omia toimintatapoja ja minkälaisia toimintatapoja olet oppinut/omaksunut teatterista?
- Minkälaisen jäljen olet mielestäsi jättänyt teatterin toimintaan/historiaan?
- Vaikuttaako teatterin historia ja perinteet työhösi ja millä tavalla? Ns. perinteet velvoittavat
- Mikä on mielestäsi teatterinne tärkein arvo?
- Miten teatterin arvot ovat muotoutuneet ja toteutuvatko ne arjessa?
- Miten koet yksittäisten työntekijöiden arvomaailman? Välittyvätkö ne arjen työssä?

- Mikä on mielestäsi tärkein luonteenpiirre kollegassa?
- Mikä on tärkein arvo työssäsi? Asia, josta et suostu luopumaan?
- Miksi olet töissä juuri [theatre's name]? Mikä tässä teatterissa innostaa?
- Mikä on [theatre's name] suhde muihin ryhmäteattereihin?

Taide

- Minkälaiset perusarvot ja periaatteet linjaavat taiteellisia valintoja?
- Minkälaiset tekijät sopivat erityisen hyvin [theatre's name] ja sen ilmapiiriin?
- Miten taiteellinen linja on muuttunut vuosien kuluessa?
- Mikä on sinun vaikutuksesi taiteellisessa prosessissa?
- Miten sinun mielestäsi syntyy taiteellisesti onnistunut esitys?
- Miten teatterin rakenne (esimerkiksi ryhmäteatteri, vapaa ryhmä tai laitosteatteri) vaikuttaa mielestäsi taiteelliseen lopputulokseen?
- Mikä on mielestäsi taiteellisesti onnistunein teos, jonka työprosessissa olet ollut mukana? Miksi se onnistui?

Tulevaisuus

- Minkälainen olisi ihannetuotantosi / ihanneteatterisi?
- Millaisen arvelet olevan tulevaisuuden teatterin tai sen toimintakulttuurin? Esimerkiksi 20 vuoden päästä?

QUESTIONS TO THE FREELANCE DIRECTOR

Kysymykset 15.5.2020 haastatteluun

Teatterin rakenne

- Millaisena näet oman positiosi teatterin vierailijana?
- Minkälaisissa asioissa sinulla on päätäntävaltaa?
- Miten päätöksiä tehdään tuotannon sisällä? (kokoukset, yhteydenpito, tiedonkulku, epäviralliset kanavat)
- Voiko teatteri vaikuttaa tuotannon sisällä tapahtuviin asioihin? (taiteellinen/tuotannollinen)
- Miten teatterin arkeen liittyvä tiedotus ja päätöksenteko tavoittaa sinut?
- Miten teatterin yleisistä toimintatavoista ja säännöistä kerrotaan sinulle? Minkälaista tietoa tarvitset erityisesti?
- Miten työryhmä ja tekijät valikoituvat? Onko sinulla mahdollisuus vaikuttaa valintoihin?
- Kuka tekee lopulliset päätökset, onko jollakulla/joillakuilla veto-oikeus?
- Miten näet oman työskentelysi suhteessa teatterin muuhun toimintaan ja eri osastoihin (eriytynyt/limittyneet)?
- Miten koet työskentelyn teatterin oman henkilökunnan kanssa? Tunnetko olevasi osa teatteria/työryhmää?
- Koetko, että teatterissa on ryhmittymiä, joista jäät ulkopuolelle?

- Kenellä sinun mielestäsi on teatterissa tärkein positio?
- Onko sinulla mahdollisuus ilmaista mielipiteitäsi, tunteita tai kehitysehdotuksia? Kuunnellaanko sinua?

Tuotantoprosessi

- Mikä on sinun mielestäsi kaikkein tärkein vaihe tuotantoprosessissa?
- Missä tuotantoprosessin vaiheessa syntyy mielestäsi eniten ongelmia ja miten niitä voitaisiin välttää?
- Miten työryhmän työskentely voi vaikuttaa negatiivisesti teoksen syntyyn? Entä positiivisesti?
- Joudutko työprosessin aikana huomioimaan joitain ihmisiä tai ryhmiä enemmän kuin toisia?
- Miten muuttaisit harjoitusten/työskentelyprosessin rakennetta?
- Miten aikataulutus vaikuttaa työhösi?
- Koetko, että sinulla on tuotantoprosessissa taiteellinen vapaus ja mahdollisuus olla oma itsesi?
- Minkälaiset teatterin työtavat voisi sinun mielestäsi heittää romukoppaan? Mitä toivoisit tilalle?

Historia ja traditiot

- Minkälaisia rituaaleja tai tapoja sinulla on liittyen tuotantoon? Kuka niihin osallistuu?
- Mistä rituaalit ovat tulleet?

- Oletko ollut mukana vastaanottavan teatterin omissa rituaaleissa (juhlat, esityksiin liittyvät traditiot, epäviralliset kokoontumiset)?
- Miten näet oman työsi suhteessa vastaanottavan teatterin historiaan?
- Minkälaisia toimintatapoja tuot vastaanottavaan teatteriin ja minkälaisia toimintatapoja olet oppinut/omaksunut teatterista?
- Minkälaisen jäljen olet mielestäsi jättänyt ryhmäteatterien historiaan?
- Vaikuttaako teatterin tai ryhmäteatterien historia ja perinteet työhösi ja millä tavalla? Ns. perinteet velvoittavat
- Välittyvätkö vastaanottavan teatterin arvot sinulle. Näkyvätkö ne arjessa?
- Miten koet yksittäisten työntekijöiden arvomaailman? Välittyvätkö ne tuotantoprosessiin?
- Mikä on mielestäsi tärkein luonteenpiirre kollegassa?
- Mikä on tärkein arvo työssäsi? Asia, josta et suostu luopumaan?
- Mikä on henkilökohtainen suhteesi ryhmäteattereihin, mitä ne antavat sinulle?
- Millainen on suhde vastaanottavaan teatteriin ensi-illan jälkeen? Jatkuuko yhteydenpito/dialogi?

Taide

- Mikä on sinun vaikutuksesi taiteellisessa prosessissa?
- Miten sinun mielestäsi syntyy taiteellisesti onnistunut esitys?

- Miten teatterin rakenne (esimerkiksi ryhmäteatteri, vapaa ryhmä tai laitosteatteri) vaikuttaa mielestäsi taiteelliseen lopputulokseen?
- Millaiset seikat ovat sinun mielestäsi tärkeitä produktioiden ja työryhmän valitsemisessa?
- Miten työprosessi näkyy esityksessä? Voiko prosessi olla tärkeämpi kuin lopputulos?
- Mikä on mielestäsi taiteellisesti onnistunein teos, jonka työprosessissa olet ollut mukana? Miksi se onnistui?

Tulevaisuus

- Minkälainen olisi ihannetuotantosi/ihanneteatterisi?
- Millaisen arvelet olevan tulevaisuuden teatterin tai sen toimintakulttuurin? Esimerkiksi 20 vuoden päästä?

APPENDIX 3: EXAMPLES OF TRANSCRIBED INTERVIEWS

EXCERPT FROM INTERVIEW OF ENSEMBLE THEATRE MEMBER (Date: 6 May 2020)

Interviewer: Mikä on sinun vaikutuksesi taiteellisessa prosessissa?

Interviewee: Muahhaha. Rajoittava. Siinä mielessä rajoittava, että mä asetan ne raamit. Mä arvioin jonkun lavastuksen toteuttamista siinä mielessä, että... Mä voin arvioida, että onko tää sen arvoista, onko tällä niin paljon taiteellista sisältöä tai käytännön merkitystä, että se kannattaa tehdä sillä vaivalla mitä se vaatii. Se on todella, todella vaikea asia ja sehän tulee vuosien kokemusten kautta. Mutta se muuttuu... joka produktio on erilainen. Jokainen teksti joka tuodaan on erilainen ja vaatii erilaista lähestymistapaa ja yleensä ohjaaja on se joka määrittelee miten lähestytään tekstiä, miten toteutetaan tämä sitten näyttämöllä tämä kirjailijan näkemys asiasta. Se että sitten... ja tässä mä ehkä tunnen suurinta puutetta omassa osaamisessa, se että mun pitäis sitten arvioida se että... että mulla on budjetti, mä tiedän että nyt meillä on 4000 euroa lavasteisiin. Mun pitää pystyä arvioimaan se, että tarvitaanko tähän 4000 euron karvamattoa. Vai onko se silleen että, nyt oikeesti lavastaja, nyt me tehdään sama asia, mutta Ikean 30 euron matolla. Siinä tulee myös tää ongelma, että... vaatiiko joku lavastuselementti tai joku lavaste, niin vaatiiko se kuinka paljon sitä työaika. Että onko nyt järkevää käyttää kuutta viikkoa siihen että tehdään rokokoo-pöytä. Aika huono esimerkki, mutta kuitenkin... Sitä joutuu tekemään tosi paljon, ja käymään näitä keskusteluja just esimerkiksi lavastajien kanssa. Ja siinä näkee tosi hyvin, siinä on niin isoja eroja, että miten ihmiset toimii.

(...)

Interviewer: Voiko freelancereilta ihan suoraan myös kysyä, että miten niillä menee?

Interviewee: Freelancereiden kanssa juu... Jos ajatellaan ihan normaalia sosiaalista kanssakäymistä, niin juu, eihän siinä mitään. Mutta sitten jos mennään semmoiseen taiteelliseen prosessiin, niin joku lavastaja voi olla hyvin, hyvin käytännönläheinen ihminen, jolle tärkeämpää on se että joku asia toimii käytännössä kuin miltä se näyttää. Kun taas joku

toinen voi olla semmoinen, että hänelle on paljon tärkeämpää miltä joku asia näyttää, vaikka se vaatisi kymmenkertaisen työponnistuksen kaikilta, jotka siihen valmisteluun osallistuu. Niin hän ei siitä välitä pätkääkään, koska hänellä on se visio, että näin sen pitää olla. Niin siinä tulee enimmäkseen... just tämmösissä tulee niit hankauksia. Jos ei tunne sitä ihmistä ja tiedä et esimerkiksi...okei, nyt meille on tulossa tämmönen lavastaja ja sillä on nää omituisuudet tai nää vahvuudet ehkä... niin siin tulee helposti just semmosta vittuuntumista ja hermojen menetyksiä ja tämmösiä. Ja sit välttämättä ei myöskään ymmärrä että minkä takia toi toinen nyt ei ymmärrä, että meillä on nää realiteetit. Se pitää löytää se oikea tapa selittää, että minkä takia me ei nyt voida gravitaatiota poistaa tosta salista. Esimerkiksi.

Interviewer: Miksi ne ei ymmärrä niitä realiteetteja?

Varmaan suurin yksittäinen syy... Se ei oo sitä etteikö ne välttämättä ymmärtäisi niitä realiteetteja, mutta niillä on niin vahva visio siitä mitä ne on tekemässä. Sitten ne ei halua tehdä kompromissia sen suhteen.

EXCERPT FROM AN INTERVIEW WITH A FREELANCE DIRECTOR (Date: 15 May 2020)

Interviewer: Vaikuttaako se ryhmäteatterin, tai jonkun tietyn teatterin, historia ja perinteet työhön? Perinteet velvoittaa johonkin?

Interviewee: Siis tietenkin jos teatteri on tehnyt just ennen mua myyntihittejä tai taiteellisia hittejä ikään kuin vastaanoton kannalta. Niin se tuottaa painetta, että tuleeks nyt mun jutun myötä se kuoppa. Se on helpompi mennä teatteriin, jossa ei oo sellasia megahittejä just takana. Varsinkin jos megahitin määritelmä nyt on taiteellinen ja myynnillinen, jostain yleisön näkökulmasta ja kriitikoiden näkökulmasta täysosuma. Nehän on aina subjektiivisia, mutta jos sen määrittelee näin, niin silloin se tuottaa jonkun paineen. Muuten mä koen ehkä enemmän just niin, että tuntuu kivalta lähtökohtaisesti pystyä vähän ravistelemaan niitä perinteitä. Tai että tuntuu vaikeammalta mennä tekemään jotain juttua, joka muistuttaa... tajuaa että tää muistuttaa niitä edellisiä. Aina tavallaan on pyrkimys tehdä jotain uutta. Se on mun mielestä se ohjaajan paine, että mun pitäis nimenomaan ei toistaa, vaan uudistaa jotain.

Totta kai onnistumiset velvoittaa onnistumaan. Se on helpompaa tehdä... siis sillai just joku laitosteatterin yksittäinen pieni näyttämö on helpompi just suhteessa perinteeseen. Mitä vähemmän on yleisön odotuksia, että minkälaista täällä tehdään, sen vapaampi se on se kenttä mihin lähtee tekemään. Sillä lailla se on myös rasite se perinne, suhteessa yleisöön. Siin voi tulla sellainen törmäys suhteessa yleisöön. Jos ryhmäteatteri, jos sen profiili on vähän hajanainen, niin se voi olla mulle helpompi lähtökohta. Kuin että se on kauhean selkee se, että minkälaista täällä yleensä aina tehdään. Silloin se on vaikee.

Interviewer: Onko yleisö tietyn tyyppistä ryhmäteattereissa?

Interviewee: Ei. Mun mielestä just vaihtelee, näissäkin ryhmäteattereissa mistä ollaan puhuttu, niin niissäkin on isoa vaihtelua just sen profiilin suhteen. Että näyttääkö ne jutut samanlaisilta ja minkälaisilta ne näyttää. Ne on must tosi tosi eri. [ensemble theatre's name] ja [ensemble theatre's name] perinne ja profiili on valtavan eri, tässä mielessä.

EXCERPT FROM GROUP DISCUSSION (Date: 29 May 2020)

Interviewer: Onks teidän mielestä tässä teatterissa jotain ryhmittymiä? Ollaanko me eriydytty vai limittyneitä. Onko ryhmittymiä mihin te ette kuulu?

Person 1: En mä koe poteroitumista oikeestaan millään tavalla...

Person 2: Mites ginikerholaiset...

[people laughing]

Person 3: ...kuka kuuluu, kuka ei...

Person 4: Yks mikä tässäkin korostuu, että on puhujat ja ei-puhujat, tai ne jotka puhuu vähemmän. Tai ainakin on ne jotka puhuu enemmän.

Interviewer: Onko niillä enemmän vaikutusvaltaa, jotka puhuu enemmän?

Person 2: Totta kai. Kyllähän se niin varmasti on. Sehän on jotenkin ihan matemaattista.

Interviewer: Jääkö joku jalkoihin tässä teatterissa?

Person 1: Tuon luontaisena seurauksena voisi joskus kuvitella, että ne jotka käyttää ääntään vähemmän jää paitsi päätöksenteosta.

Person 5: Mul tuli tällainen jako, että on ne jotka puhuu paljon ja ne jotka haluais että kokous loppuis jo. Ne on ne kaks leirii. Voi olla omii mielipiteitä, mutta tuntuu siltä, että jos mä sanon tän asian, niin tää avaa uuden Pandoran boxin, et se ei oo niin tärkeätä just tässä tilanteessa, et mä sanon.

Person 6: Mä uskon kyllä että jos on joku tärkeätä, niin kyllä kaikki täällä puhuu, jostain asiasta, josta haluaa avautua. Joku näkee. Tai jos ei ryhmässä, niin sitten pienemmässä muodossa. Et sit se ehkä ei oo niin tärkeätä. En mäkään puhu tässä tilassa.

Person 2: Mä koen että mä en oo puhuja. Mut nyt mä huomaan, että nyt oon puhunut enemmän kuin jossain viikkokokouksessa en ikinä puhu. Totta kai se, että mikä se aihe on ja mikä ryhmä. Mikä kokoonpano. Et se rooli voi muuttua tosi paljon. Toisethan ei yhtään handlaa isompia ryhmiä. On helpompi vain tarkkailla.

Person 4: Alan tarkkailla tota omaa puhemäärääni. Mä en silti koe, että tääl puhujat puhuu niin kuin pääasiallisena tarkoituksenaan saada omaa agendaansa vain sen agendan omuuden vuoksi läpi. Allekirjoitan [person's name] havainnon, että mä toivon että se todella on niin että jos joku haluaa sanoa, niin uskaltaa ja kokee sen että se on mahdollista sanoa. Se vois olla niin, että ne jotka puhuu tavallaan vaan runnoo asioita läpi, koska ne haluaa runnoa asioita läpi. Sitä mä en oo kokenu jotenkin meillä, että se jotenkin menee meidän yhteiseen suuntaan.

Person 2: Onks joku kokenut niin? Et joku runnoo ja ei olis mahdollisuutta olla mukana tai vaikuttaa?

[silence, no discussion]