Title Exploring the application of systemic ideas in teams navigating change

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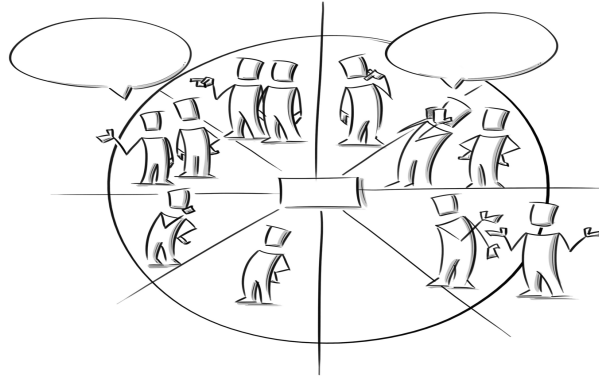
Human Systems in Motion

Exploring the application of systemic ideas in teams navigating change

(Poehl, 2105)

RESEARCH QUESTION

To what extent can systemic ideas and approaches help teams navigate emergent change and changing, as a collaborative experience for those involved, releasing their potential and creativity, enabling dialogue and learning?

By Anne Rød

A thesis submitted to the University of Bedfordshire, in fulfilment of the requirements for

the degree of Professional Doctorate in Systemic Practice,

Institute of Applied Social Research.

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AUTHOR'S DECLARATION

I, Anne Rød, declare that this thesis and the work presented in it are my own and has been generated by me as the result of my own original research. I confirm that,

- *this work was done wholly or mainly while in candidature for a research degree at this University;*

- *where any part of this thesis has previously been submitted for a degree or any other qualification at this University or any other institution, this has been clearly stated;*

- *where I have drawn on or cited the published work of others, this is always clearly attributed;*

- *where I have quoted from the work of others, the source is always given; and, with the exception of such quotations, this thesis is entirely my own work;*

- *I have acknowledged all main sources of help;*

- *where the thesis or any part of it is based on work done by myself jointly with others, I have made clear exactly what was done by others and what I have contributed myself;*

- *none of this work has been published before submission.*

AT A GLANCE- THESIS ABSTRACT

This thesis explores how teams can constructively lead, be in and with, emergence and change, given the challenges they are faced with in today's complex environment. By helping teams view change and changing as something that naturally occurs in their environments, combined with their own experience of change, the teams may approach, and be with change, in different ways. The title, 'Human Systems in Motion' speaks to the very essence of human existence; the transformational, relational and emerging nature of our beings. The target audience is leaders, teams and other practitioners in the organisational field offering an alternative approach to emergence and change processes.

The research is situated in a social constructionist perspective foregrounding the meaning-making and sense-making activities in the teams engaged with, and what awareness and possible responses and actions emerge from these. Social constructionism depicts the relational, also known as systemic processes, where the co- creation of reality is taking place inside the human interaction.

Through a parallel autoethnographical account, I share my 'come from place' that has shaped the lens through which I – as a long-standing practitioner in the field of organisational change – view, approach and explore change in teams and organisations. It provides an overview of some of the main contributors to the theories of change to create an understanding of how change is often conducted in organisations today. Emergent approaches to the topic are explored through perspectives on systems and systemic thinking. It investigates the relevance

of these ideas to teams in change, and also looks into some of the obstacles encountered in the face of emergence. The result is a model: The Wheel of Systemic Ideas.

I follow three different teams, operating in different contexts but facing some kind of emerging change. Through Participatory Action Research sessions, the teams' perception of, engagement with, and responses to, change are explored. The main and final part of the research engages the teams with the Wheel of Systemic Ideas. Each team explores its focus points in the change process, and to what extent the systemic ideas can facilitate the emerging change process. The research indicate that the model can be applied to different change topics and contexts, enabling conversations which break up binary thinking and the questions preferences for linear and normative approaches to change.

To Espen, for always saying: 'yes, we can!'

To Emilie & Henry, for every precious moment of contemplation, challenging, and

championing.

Thanks to my supervisors Ravi Kohli and Birgitte Pedersen

for all the learning created in this process.

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The Voice of Change

My name is Change. Changing Change. You have probably heard of me, maybe you know me already. Or maybe you have only sensed me brush past you at some point, like a stranger in a crowd. I go by many names; everything from evolution, development, emergence, growth, improvement, possibilities, restructuring, chaos, ageing, you name it – I have been called it.

I guess what I am labelled will depend on how and when I surface. Yes, I say surface because I am always there next to you, like a shadow. Sometimes visible but most of the time just going about my business invisibly. If you paid more attention to me, and the signals that I am here, you would be more aware of me and maybe more comfortable with my presence in your life. But most of you tend to ignore me, maybe hoping I will not touch your lives. I have thought a lot about why that is, and I think many of you fear me, and that saddens me. I mean no harm, I only want to be in relationship with you, like you are with each other.

Many theories and tales have been written about me; how people should behave when they meet me and then they treat me like I am a dangerous animal. They write about why I occur and when, who initiates me and how to control me. I find that part particularly fascinating as if I can be controlled, as if I don't have a force and power of my own!

My personal favourite is Aristotle, who says I am just a change of energy, a reshaping of substances enabling me to manifest myself in new forms. I particularly like this one because it gives me eternal life.

He proposes four different manifestations of my presence: changing place, as in location; changing qualities or characteristics; changing size; and, lastly, changing purpose which determines our raison d'être (Irgens, 2016).

I can be dramatic and fierce like a volcano. I can come unexpected, like an earthquake, and shatter your world. I can be pre-announced and sweep in over the shores of your life and create chaos like a hurricane, leaving your life in debris. I can be gradual like the seasons, reminding you to appreciate the nuances in life. I can be subtle and smooth like the lapping of soft waves of the ocean on the beaches of your life, providing comfort and respite. But I am always there, like a constant undercurrent in your life, and it is up to you to choose how to be with me.

Some people fear me, others hate me, and there are those who love and welcome me. I guess the reactions depend on how, and when, they become aware of my presence. I am often treated as something that happens to people, and they are surprised when I appear, as If I am a stranger. I am surprised that they are surprised. I am here all the time. I am your constant companion - how can you ignore me? I want you to relate to me, recognise my presence, talk about me in different ways, respect me. We are in relationship, you and I, always, one way or another, 'til death do us part. And maybe even after that?

This thesis is a story about me. After having read it, you may see me in a different light and have other conversations about, and with, me.

Your faithfully

C. Change

1. Chapter One: Introductions & Contexts

Welcome to my thesis, which explores how teams can constructively lead, be in, and with emergence and change. The first chapter will give an introduction to the thesis, its structure, content and approach. At the outset I intended this to be an exploration of a topic I am passionate about through the lens of my professional practice. It has become so much more, turning into a personal journey through a landscape that has challenged and shaped me, enabling me to morph into me. I hope you will appreciate the read, be open for some new experiences, and most importantly to me, be moved and inspired.

Greek philosopher Heraclitus (ca 535-ca 475 BC) described our world as a series of contrasts making up our realities, and that Panta Rhei – everything flows (Magee, 2010). Bridging it closer to our time, British anthropologist Gregory Bateson said: 'We *float in a world based on change. Only by creation of change can I perceive something'* (An Ecology of Mind, 2011)*.*

This thesis is about change. Change can be drastic and radical, transformational, incremental or transitional. It can be sudden, dramatic, hugely impactful, and it can happen so slowly and subtly we hardly notice it. We know that some transitions we must accept and make the best of, while others we can prepare for and engage with. As I will show in chapter 4, the main theories in the field still refer to the word 'change'.

Given that the target audience of this thesis includes practitioners, some of whom may describe their current practices and relationships as linear journeys that from time to time are interrupted by 'change', I will use the term 'change' as a reference point, despite the fact that I am going to show examples that speak against the idea of 'change' as a noun meaning a separate, on-off episode in people's lives.

In my thesis I would like to provide the philosophical position that change, and the process of changing, are natural flows of energy. Life is liquid, always changing and moving. By accepting emergence as shifting energy, as natural and inevitable as the ebbs and flows of the sea, always in motion, we can allow ourselves to navigate and be with changes in different ways as we move through life. The title of the thesis, ´Human Systems in Motion´, speaks to the very essence of human existence; the fluid and emerging nature of our beings as we interact in non-linear responsive patterns of relationships. Motion being a fluid process involving a change, transition, emergence, development or transformation. A human (relationship) system can be understood as ´a group of interdependent individuals who are linked through a web of connections, such as working in the same team, organisation or project. Hence, we can refer to any team or organisation as a human (relationship) system.' (Rød & Fridjhon, 2015, p. xv).

1.1   Why a Thesis on Change?

My interest in change as a topic has been fuelled through more than thirty years of working in organisations with first-hand experience of change at many levels.

In my practice I have met many types of what my clients describe as 'change'; be it mergers and acquisitions, redundancies, product and service development, introduction of new technologies, innovation and effectiveness initiatives, team and leadership development. I have found that organisations tend to view change as a means of survival, an imperative for the evolution of the organisation to avoid stagnation or death. When I look back on my professional practice, invitations I receive from clients always seem to involve change at some level, impacting people in many different ways. It could have been moving offices, reorganising departments, changing jobs, responsibilities or titles, leaving one team and joining another. I have found that disagreements, or even full-scale conflicts, are usually signals that change is imminent or needed. It is like a wave of energy that is being blocked or restricted, and as a consequence tension emerges.

Most organisations I have met along the way in the course of my work as an organisational consultant have been steeped in a modernistic approach with clear roots in Cartesianism. ´Modernism generally refers to the development of Western culture following the Enlightenment' (Gergen, 2015, p. 14). (I will return to the significant influnce of this in more detail in chapter 4). As a response to the centuries of religious control, the focus in society shifted towards reason and fact; known as the period of Enlightenment, paving the way for the rise of science (Gergen, 2015). In this context 16th century scientists René Descartes, became a main influencer, known for his idea of breaking wholes into parts to be analysed (Chard, 2014). Named after the philosophy of Descartes, Cartesianism, bears significant influence on today society through modernism and New Public Management. By that I mean that the focus remain on tangible tasks, processes and outcomes, which are easy to assess against a predetermined, optimal standard. However, in my work with teams and

organisations dealing with change, it gradually became clear to me that a task-orientated production focus did not harness the full potential of teams I worked with. Rather, my impression was, and still is, that it creates a position of hard facts and mechanisms that most leaders I meet hide behind to exert control and fend off uncertainty. And to many, it is the only language and logic they know, having been conditioned and subjected to this through their professional education and paths. In my work with teams I find that relational aspects are often marginalised. I have heard people argue that it is difficult to measure and place the intangible dynamics of relations into a linear framework. In my experience, relational aspects seem harder to address and engage with, as many team members, seemingly, are uncomfortable and unappreciative of the role relations play. The efforts required, both in terms of relational courage and time, are not considered worthwhile investments. In my experience, a team needs both the relational and results focus to function well in general, and especially in times of change. As we will see in this thesis, relations create a connective energy and can generate an increased feeling of empowerment in general, and especially in circumstances where many experience fears. Emphasis on relations can be viewed as a necessary ingredient in creating fertile soil for dialogical space.

As the lifespans of organisations continue to decrease and complexity becomes our new normal, I am finding that organisations are looking for new ways to be with change and changing in order to safeguard their assets, retain a position in their market and survive. To this end, many surveys suggest that new skills are being sought.

For example, Oxford Economics Survey 2012 shows that some of the following abilities will be in high demand over the next five to twenty years: dealing with ambiguity and complexity, managing paradoxes, preparing for multiple scenarios, co-creativity and brainstorming, relationship building, teaming and collaboration. (Rao, 2017). These types of surveys highlight how the global and organisational contexts have changed over the last few decades, necessitating different thinking and responses. Yet, in my work, I notice that organisations, to a very large extent, still follow a modernistic logic in how they need to operate, at the same time as they have an awareness that something needs to change but they don't know to what, or how. Let me share with you an example from my own practice:

It was a sunny day in London. I was taking some time to reach out to potential clients for my consultancy business. I looked forward to meeting the HR director of a large organisation which produced services to the public. The heat was sweltering, and I finally arrived at their offices where I was shown into a small meeting room which felt cool and refreshing, yet sparse. A dedicated professional in his field, the HR director started to talk about the challenges the organisation was facing at present, and how they were working to address these. His was a story of frustration: a new CFO had been brought in to increase the efficiency of the organisation, which meant cuts in everything from coffee cups to salaries. Despite his efforts, the HR director felt he was not being heard when he tried to explain about links between motivation and communication, engagement and performance. The CFO, he said, 'does not care if he is liked or not, as long as he delivers on the numbers. In the meantime, we are losing good people, and motivation is dropping'. We talked at length about what could be done and the challenges in bridging the different paradigms people operate from. As I left, I wished him the best of luck in his talks with the new CFO, but inside I cringed. This organisation

was a textbook example of a company steeped in modernistic thinking and acting like a large machine where people were used, discarded and replaced like cogs.

The meeting with the frustrated HR director became a stark reminder that in most organisations, management continues to be dominated by normative and binary approaches based on analytical remnants from Cartesianism and Taylorism. The latter stems from the work of American mechanical engineer Fredrick Taylor who developed processes dividing production into smaller parts. He analysed and tuned, removing ineffective elements. His thoughts on management were first published in the book Scientific Management in 1911 (Hatch, 2001).

My work with teams and organisations brings me mostly into the circles of engineers and economists. Although relational leadership is valued, I meet resistance when it comes to actually 'doing' the relational work and having the dialogical processes. Standing in the initial resistance can be daunting, lonely and frustrating, and it takes courage to do so. In my experience, people want something different, but are not willing to go beyond their comfort zone to engage in order to find that something. As I experience organisations battling with the insight that something new is urgently needed to deal with the increasing complexity we live – and organisations operate – in, I continue to meet people who read and respond differently to change. Because if we….

- … appreciate the value of interconnectedness and relationships between living things as the primary source of life…. why does relationship take a back seat to the role of productivity in organisations?

- … view change as continuous, natural and inevitable processes following non-linear patterns, why do people and organisation tend to resist and battle with change?

- … accept that change is irreversible, why do we try to recreate the past?

- … view change as context dependent and co-created, following non-linear patterns, why do organisation tend to follow normative linear approaches which are controlled, measured and monitored?

- … view reality as emerging from interconnected energies and relationships, why are decisions left to a few at the top using top-down process?

- …. view reality as co-created structures, why do organisations tend to follow large transformational reform process bringing us to a predetermined state?

How do we make the transition from a modernistic approach to one that values and incorporates systemic ideas? How can we approach change in a different way, build bridges between what has been and what is emerging? What language do we need? What conversations must we have? What assumptions can we question? What logic do we need to engage with that is more suited and relevant for this time and age, bridging an awareness for what is emerging around us with what is being co-created between us? In order to deepen my understanding of how to engage with, and incorporate, the above questions in my practice, my research question became:

To what extent can systemic ideas and approaches help teams navigate emergent change and changing, as a collaborative experience for those involved, releasing their potential and creativity, enabling dialogue and learning?

The name of the doctoral degree is Professional Doctorate in Systemic Practice. My research is situated within social constructionist thinking foregrounding sense- and meaning-making through dialogical practices. American Social Constructionist scholar and psychologist Kenneth Gergen says that: '*social constructionist ideas emerge from a process of dialogue, a dialogue that is on-going, and to which anyone….can contribute*' (Gergen, 2015, p. 4). Social constructionism depicts the relational, also known as systemic processes, where the co-creation of reality is taking place within continuous human interaction. The essence of this is echoed in the words of Norwegian complexity theory researcher Stig O. Johannessen when he refers to the work of American social psychologist George Mead (Mead, 1967) and German-British sociologist Norbert Elias (Elias, 2000): '*Reality as being constructed by the paradoxical and simultaneous emergence of individuals and the social from ongoing human interaction.* (Johannessen, 2009, p. 219)*; (*Johannessen, 2012, p. 164)*.

1.2   The Contribution of My Thesis

Through my research I have developed a model that encourages different conversations around change, challenging mind-sets, assumptions and responses. Named the Wheel of Systemic Ideas, helps teams explore how to lead, be in and with, emergence and change. It offers the position that change, and the process of changing, are natural flows of energy.

The target audience for my thesis is primarily leaders, teams and other practitioners in the organisational field, offering an alternative approach to emergence and change processes. By helping teams to view change and changing as something that naturally occurs within, and around, the organisations they are part of, they may respond to and approach change and changing in new, more collaborative and holistic ways. It is my sincere wish that you, as the reader, regardless of your background and practice, will reflect and consider how to be with and around change in your own life and work when reading this thesis.

I have reflected on what would be the impact on the design and implementation of change processes if we were to equate, balance and integrate the value of ideas such as relationship, interdependence, patterns of connectivity, feed-back loops, non-linearity, context dependence, wholeness and emergence with those drawn from modernism, such as individuation, independence, linearity, separation and fragmentation, which are often used in current, normative approaches to change (Bolman & Deal, 2003); (Kotter, 2012); (Thorsvik & Jacobsen, 2014), I have captured some of these ideas in the Wheel of Systemic Ideas, as shown in figure 1, and in the following chapters I will expand on the model; its development and application.

The Wheel of Systemic Ideas
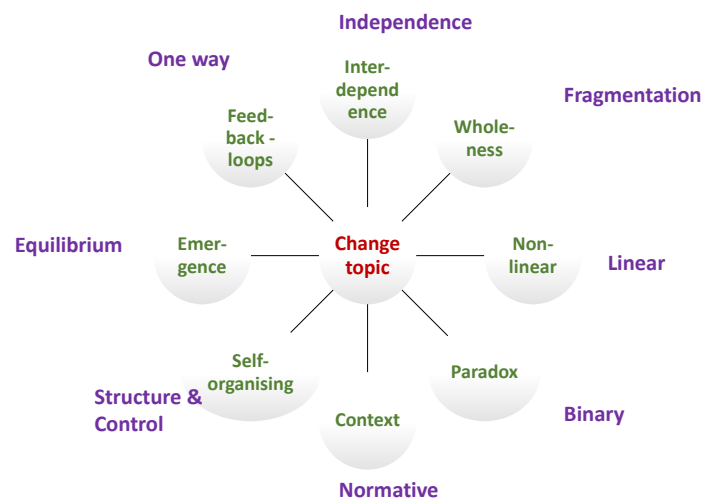
Figure 1 shows the conceptual model of The Wheel of Systemic Ideas.

(Rød, 2017).

The model is central to my research and a key part of my contribution to the field of systemic practice in teams and organisations. The thesis is structured around the model, and I draw extensively on examples from the practice research with the three teams that have contributed to, and shaped, my findings. In a modernistic ontology the words ´findings´ can understood that there is something waiting to be discovered. I am aware of this interpretation and have tried to find other words more suited to describe the interactive process of systemic practice research where possible. But as it is still a much-used term in qualitative research, it is left in in many parts of the thesis.

The thesis is structured in two main parts:

- Part 1: Arriving at the Wheel of Systemic Ideas, describing my research methodology and discussing systemic and systems ideas and approaches relevant to the development of the model.
- Part 2: Applying the Wheel of Systemic Ideas, setting context by exploring the theories of change past and present, analysing and discussing the findings of the application of the model as carried out in my research.

The final chapter concludes the research process.

My thesis foregrounds the investigation of systemic ideas that are key to the model, together with the practice research exploring change by using the Wheel of Systemic Ideas. I have backgrounded and limited the historical contexts and theories on change to a tapestry from which the application and practice of my model can emerge.

People often ask me, 'what is it you do really?' I find it hard to capture and describe my work in a few sentences, but I often say that I help people collaborate. The essence of my work is relational coordination, which British systemic thinker Gail Simon describes as taking place between, '*hypothesis and unexpected twists; between emotions, embodied knowing and cognition…….between greetings and endings; between ways of talking; between silences*' (Simon, 2018, p. 48).
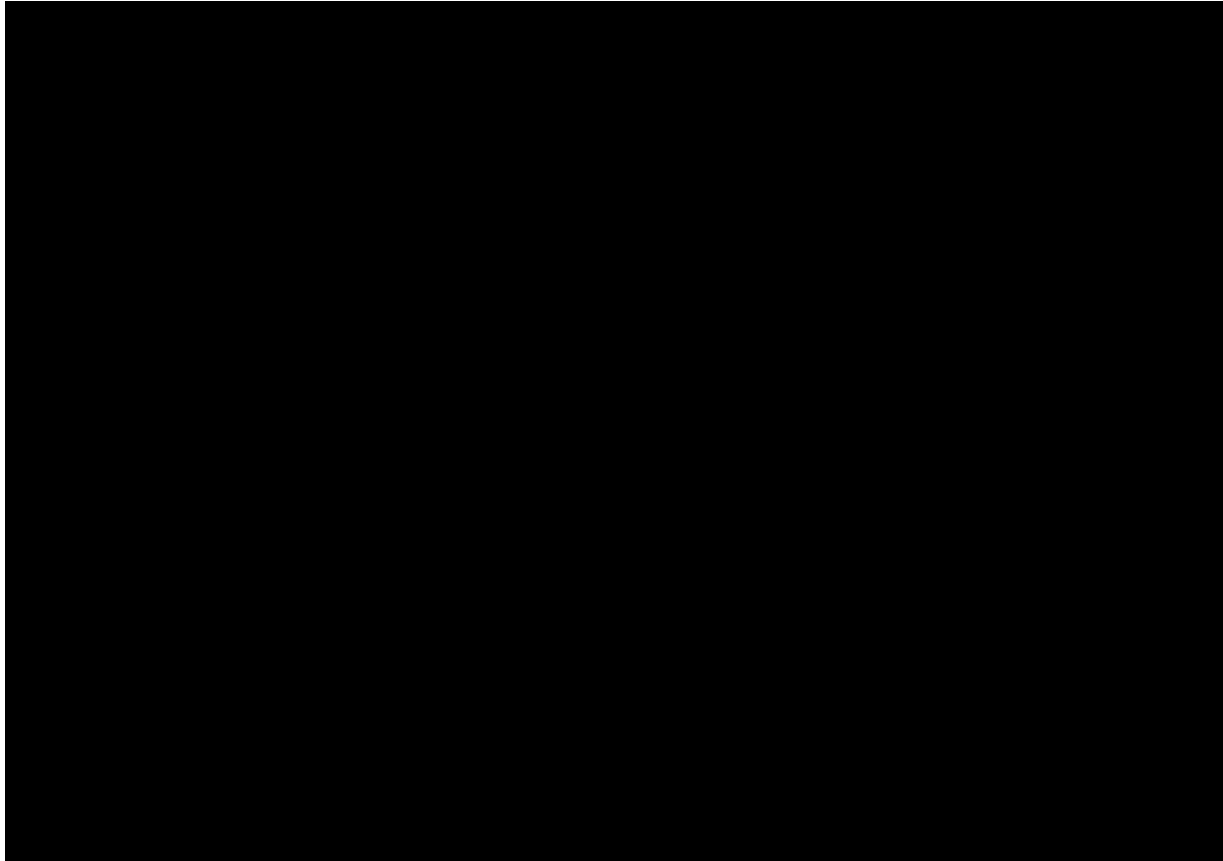
In my research I engaged with three different teams. I looked both to the private and public sector to ensure balance in the research. Through presentations and network connections I sourced three teams willing to participate in the research process. Prior to the start-up of the research period, I gave all three teams a presentation of the scope and objectives of the research, after which the team members discussed their willingness to participate in the study. In all three teams, all team members agreed and they each signed a consent form (see appendix 5 for consent form). To safeguard the voices, the teams and organisations have been anonymised and are now known as Team 1, 2 and 3.

1.3 Human Systems in Motion

We are in constant motion, moving from one state to the next. American process psychologist Arnold Mindell talks about what is primary to us at any moment in time, in terms of who we are and what we are doing (identity and process), and what is secondary to us; what we are about to become or do (Mindell, 1995); (Mindell, 2000); (Rød & Fridjhon, 2015). This is a simple way of expressing the natural ebbs and flows of life, including major and minor changes in our lives, and everything that exists in between. In my view, changing is an ongoing process of being or doing, someone or something different than I was or did, a minute, week, year or lifetime ago. Our actions are responses to something that has occurred previously, so everything becomes a response to a response. Hence, my experiences with change inform how I have approached the research, shaped my questions and filtered my observations.

In this thesis I share the impact of the research journey on me, together with my reflections, allowing for a reflexive process that reveals my own development as a person over this period. The British social constructionist thinker, Kim Etherington, points to the value of reflexivity in the researcher role. *´Researcher reflexivity ..as the capacity of the researcher to acknowledge how their own experiences and contexts (which may be fluid and changing) inform the process and outcome of inquiry`* (Etherington, 2004, pp. 31-32)*.* The first step is to explore my 'come from place', and how that has influenced my approach and journey. To understand who I am and to fully own the lens through which I view the world, I needed to look at the path that I have walked, and which has shaped me. As my research has explored the contexts, positions and agendas of others, I need to examine how my background and conditioning continue to influence my approach to, and interest for, the topic of change.

1.4 My Professional Context

A Norwegian native, eager to explore new horizons, I travelled from Norway to England at the age of 21, which was where the foundations of my professional path were formed. During my studies, I encountered a business logic based on an Anglo-Saxon, individual-focused management style centred around control and measurement. Over the following twelve years I was employed in organisations where this mind-set prevailed. However, I was driven by an interest in humans and their lives, trying to understand people's motivations and needs, mapping out possible solutions through strategies and action plans. I was especially fascinated by people's responses. What happened when he said this, or she did that? How did it make them feel? How did they act in response? Was there a shift in knowledge, attitude, words and actions, and how would we know?

Communication became my profession, in different organisation and roles. This meant being part of management teams and collaborating with a range of other functions, within and outside, the organisations I worked in. The organisational structures were designed according to functional hierarchies, and at times I felt caught up in the chain of control and command. Norwegian organisational researcher on complexity theories Johannessen, explains that, '*Control can be understood as the perception of paradoxically constraining and enabling patterns of social interaction. People experience that they constrain each other, although the paradox of the social interaction is that this at the same time also enables them to function.*' (Johannessen, 2009, p. 163). To me this was an experience of creative possibilities and enforced limitations at the same time, and a first taste of professional paradox.

Looking back at these initial years of my professional life, I can see how it shaped my relationship to change. From my perspective, it felt like people affected by organisational change were not sufficiently seen, respected or involved. Decisions were made, and changes implemented with consequences for people, without consulting or listening to those most impacted. What insights might they have had about the situation forcing the change? What solutions could they have offered being close to the problem? In my view, there were many opportunities missed and human potential left unexplored. I experienced a lack of genuine relational collaboration and co-creation, observed that internal politics ruled, and people were preoccupied with personal agendas. Gradually, my frustrations grew, and I began to think about how things could be done differently. Eventually I left the corporate world to explore a combination of consultancy, coaching and academic life.

Learning was, and still remains, my driving value, and during these years I enjoyed discovering new material I paired with my own practical experiences, resulting in my first textbook on organisational communication. Central to my work was collaborative and relational development to enhance team cohesion and results. Gradually, my work came to centre more around change and transformation in individuals, teams and organisations. Without knowing it, I was creating and taking part in spaces for systemic practices and relational co-ordination (Simon, 2018), where participants explored how to co-create common futures based on their collaborative work, where our identities and realities were shaped through the words we used and the exchanges we had. It was my first taste of what British social constructionist thinker John Shotter calls 'with-ness' and 'about-ness' thinking; 'with-ness' being the experience from the inside as a participant-part, as opposed to 'about-ness', which is observing, or looking on, from the outside (Shotter, 2014).

In retrospect I can see the impact of social constructionism on the unfolding of my professional interest and overall approach to life. British social constructionist thinker Ann Cunliffe's words speak to me, that social constructionism is more an attitude to life, than a theory (Cunliffe, 2015). I believe that contexts and relationships determine the conversations we have about something, and impact how we socially construct, view and experience our realities. By exploring new perspectives, we access new information. Gergen says that whatever perspective we take on something is what gives it value, and the language we use to describe it is what gives it meaning (Gergen, 2010).

Although my doctoral research has a formal start and ending point, the conversations that inform it, continue. They are coming from somewhere, and they will continue to unfold after the thesis is submitted. As part of the research for a book I published in 2015, I interviewed Norwegian Kjetil Trædal Thorsen, co-founder of Snøhetta, an international, award-winning architect firm. It was a conversation that inspired me greatly. He said, 'At *Snøhetta no one is allowed to say 'It was my idea', simply because they all know that every idea is inspired from something that someone somewhere has said or done at some point – which again was sparked from the inspiration of someone else'* (Thorsen, 2015). Linking his words to my own, *'This continuous flow of ideas indicates that something is always wanting and trying to emerge, bringing us forward on a tide of continuous change'* (Rød & Fridjhon, 2015, p. xii). This gives a view of uninterrupted emergence, where collaboration and the co-constructing of our realities gives us an ease of being, rather than a constrained search for one ideal truth or right solution much like an impossible treasure hunt. Shotter calls this continuous flow of responses to one another, and to events around us, *'joint action'* (Shotter, 2011, p. 58).

His words resonate strongly with me because they highlight what is created in the moments of human interaction, unique from one context to the next, one moment to another, always creating a response which we can explore by putting our mindful attention to.

1.5   A Reflexive Moment: My First Encounter with Change

During my research journey I came to realise how my own upbringing has influenced my relationship with change, and I would like to share with you what I wrote in September 2016:

> Once upon a time there was a little girl in a land far away to the North. She was a happy child with brown curls and twinkling green eyes. Her favourite utterances were 'no' and 'why'. She lived in a big, white house surrounded by a large garden where she could play and hide away, and spy on her bigger sister and parents. At the bottom of the garden was her private, small forest where she went to be on her own. One day when she came home, she found her small family standing in the hallway. Her father had decided that he did not love his little family anymore. He had packed his bag, rolled his duvet under his right arm and then he left the house with a good-bye. Her mother was very distraught and cried for two years. The four-year-old little girl turned serious. She did not understand the words that had been exchanged but she had felt the tension, hurt and despair in her home. In an instant, by the uttering of some words, her safe haven had turned into a draughty, cold space. So, she packed her rucksack and went into her private forest. Nobody noticed.

Image 1 shows me playing a native American, ready to find and explore the world, and find my own path (Norway, 1973).

Years later, looking back on myself as that girl, I have tried to understand how these life-changing events have shaped me. In many ways I know the answers, but it was not until the start of my doctorate I began to connect them to my interest in change. My father was an innovator, an enthusiast who embraced new ideas. He worked out in the gym at the first fitness centre that opened in town. He had one of the first microwaves at a time when they looked more like small fridges and used the first mobile phones when they were the size of shower handles. Always willing to break new ground, he divorced my mother at a time when it was unheard of. My mother was a tradition holder, caring for what was in her presence, showing her love by being of service to the existing. Thinking she was safe when she married, she was only able to let go of her self-incarcerated victimhood once my father passed away almost ten years before her.

Physically and emotionally abandoned by my father at a crucial time, I was also rejected in many ways by my mother. I had no faith that anyone would take care of me emotionally if I fell or broke down. So, I stood through everything, trying to avoid really feeling what I felt, feeling marginalised and objectified at the same time, my voice not important nor worth listening to, my feelings not worth paying attention to.

Being able to read moods, atmospheres and emotions at a sophisticated level, I became apt at anticipating what might happen next. This way I could also create a sense of control over my life and destiny, always paying attention to what might appear on the horizon. Creating protection and ultimately safety and survival, I learnt to move on and take care of myself. Leaving rather than being left. Jumping rather than being pushed. Staying ahead not to fall behind. Doing to, rather than being done to.

This background, blended with my innate curiosity, meant that I was always looking at '*what is going on over there?*', asking questions and engaging. Many years later I can see that my passion for wanting to understand, combined with an impatience for anticipating what is next, have fuelled both my professional and private life, my interest in human beings and what is created between us. American philosopher, sociologist and psychologist George H Mead argued that human social life was always in movement. '*It is perpetual action and construction, and the development of mind, consciousness, self- consciousness, groups, organisations and societies are this ongoing process in which humans act and always relate in interaction or dependency with other humans*' (Johannessen, 2009, p. 164). I can see how my mind, consciousness and identity have, and continue to be, shaped through the ongoing

interactions I am part of. This insight has illuminated my own biases; that I may have been unable to see the perspectives of those afraid of or resistant to change.

Dear reader, after having read chapter 1 you will hopefully have a sense of who I am, what has shaped me and why the topic of change is so intriguing to me. At this point then, may I ask you to consider the following. What is your relationship with change at present and what experiences have shaped it? Where are our experiences, mind-sets and approaches similar, and where do they differ? Why is that, do you think? And what is the impact of that recognition on you, as you continue reading my thesis?

PART I

ARRIVING AT THE MODEL

Describing my research methodology and

discussing systemic and systems ideas and

approaches relevant to the development of

the Wheel of Systemic Ideas.

2. Chapter Two: The Methodology

In this chapter I discuss the research approach, the systemic practice and methods, elaborating on choices made and why. The overall design became more complex than expected, but the combination of many different elements has allowed me to explore and combine, create and innovate, very much in line with my character and work. How many ways can we look at a topic? How many voices and positions can we hear? How many times can we change our view or perspective to discover or create something new? And what emerges from such a process?

The doctoral journey has provided me with valuable moments of reflection, inspiring interactions with people, and many levels of learning. It seemed that wherever I turned there were new opportunities for increased awareness and exploration of unknown ground. One theme remained constant; the repetitive encounter with my own reflection in the mirror, each time sensing and seeing the conditioning of a Western modernistic world view subtly programmed through years of education and training. I caught myself making binary distinctions, organising along linear processes and focusing in fast to find solutions to a problem.

True to my Cartesian conditioning and linear thinking, I embarked on my field research in 2016 with a linear timeline containing three different research phases, clear objectives and outputs for each phase. It provided a useful road map documenting the 'seriousness' of my research, topic and approach. It was presented to my colleagues at a PDSP programme in June 2016 (see figure 2).

Research timeline autumn 2016- autumn 2018

Follow and apply these systemic guidelines to a leadership team in motion

Define key systemic guidelines

Immunty to Change workshops

Project team going through change
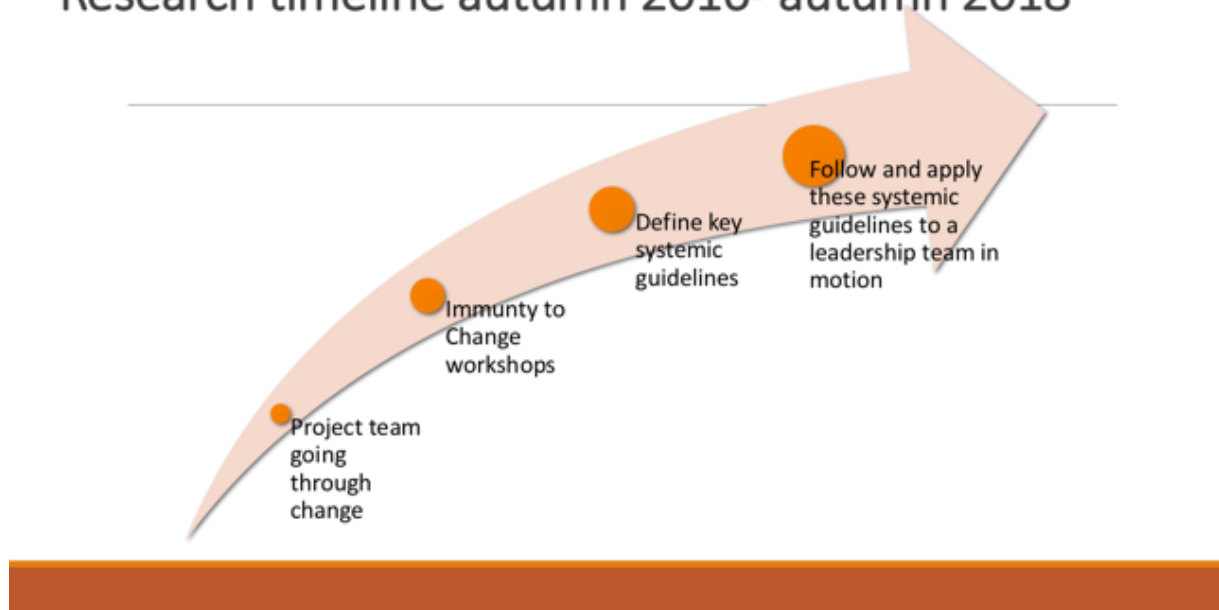
Figure 2 shows my original, linear research road map (Rød 2016).

Six months into the field research I found that things were not evolving in a linear fashion. Neither could I force them to. The Austrian-American scientist and systems thinker, Fritjof Capra, speaks of how he, as a young scientist in the 1970s, was taught to make all non-linear equations found in research into linear equations. With hindsight he says, '*this was like forcing anything non-linear into linearity*' (Capra, 2017). As I came up against different obstacles on my journey, I could resonate with Capra's words because I was trying to force everything into my linear research timeline, staying true to the proposal and what I felt was a moral and ethical obligation to the PSDP programme. I carried the conviction within me that sticking to the original plan was a sign of integrity and good character.

After some initial, internal battling, I realised that I had to allow the non-linear processes to unfold. That way, I could create new ways of learning, exploring the richness of the material I was engaging with (both people and literature) and honouring my own inner drive for undertaking the research in the first place. I finally allowed myself to indulge to the non-linear dynamics, accepting the many unforeseen influences on my research journey. It was like having a visceral experience of the theories of autopoiesis and complexity (which I will return to in chapter 3). If I were to force the elements of the research into a linear equation, I would miss out on the richness of experiencing the process as it unfolded, and even be blind to the striking moments that were not within the scope of my initial research plan.

I came to embrace the fluid nature of my field research, best depicted as a cycle with inbuilt feedback loops, accepting that there are no defined beginnings or endings to this journey. My cut-off point would be when I felt there was sufficient material to draw learnings and conclusions, from which a thesis would finally emerge. While having an overall structure on the collection of material and methods used, it became clear to me that I could not follow a traditional thematic qualitative analysis but rather pay attention to what emerged in the interaction with and within the teams I engaged with. I knew from experience in the field of consultancy that we usually had to throw away our planned timelines at some point in the process to follow the energy in the teams and with what was important to them. These were moments when shifts could be created, easily recognisable through a hesitant uttering, sharing of a personal experience, a vulnerable or uncomfortable discussion or subtle nods of recognition. Such moments could, according to American professor of qualitative research methods Wanda Pillow, trigger us to see an experience in a different light and make sense of it accordingly (Pillow, 2003).

I would add that, in my experience, these are the moments where shifts can be created, leading to new insights or awareness. It is passing from one *'aha'* moment to the next, carefully weaving them together, and noticing new relationships and patterns forming. Shotter argues that because we are engaged with what we are struck by, it becomes the start of something to be further explored (Shotter, 2011). I would call this moment an entry point, or gateway, which we step through and pursue the unfolding of enabling team members to engage with one another, their perceptions, circumstances and experiences in new ways. Through my practice and research, I have found that these precious moments weave together a deeper collective understanding, paving the way for other forms of collaborating, communicating and being in, and with, change.

2.1 About Literature Review

Literature review forms a key part of a thesis, serving several purposes; to show the author's knowledge and understanding of the field she is researching, including theories, contributors, concepts, methods; to provide an historical overview (Randolph, 2009), and to examine what is already written about a topic; to find openings or missing pieces to be explored.

I find that in systemic practice research, our line of inquiry is driven by something we, as practitioners, would like to explore further and apply to our practice. That means, although there might be much written on the topic already, both in terms of theory and practice, we would still like to explore it in the context of our practice, maybe twisting and turning what is already known to explore other positions or different combinations, resulting in the generation of new knowledge and learning.

Although we need to provide sufficient understanding of what already exists in the field, as stated above, our focus is on the empirical research of our practice. I think this is one of many areas in which research into systemic practice differs from more traditional academic research.

The aim of my research is not to fill a void, but to build upon and further explore how systemic approaches can be combined with some concepts from natural sciences and systems thinking, to develop new ways of practice in relation to change. My research emerges in the cross-section between several areas: change, dialogue, relations, leadership, team development, learning organisations, systems thinking and complexity theories, all of which are elements I bring into my systemic practice in organisation. Given this rich ground of interlinking fields, I have chosen to foreground the research into my practice, referring to, and including, thinkers and theories I see as most relevant to the topic of change. Some of these will be referred to throughout the thesis in order to build a scaffolding around the research.

As a practitioner wanting to contribute to the field of change in teams, I have foregrounded the empirical research work when writing this thesis. Instead of placing the literature review in a chapter of its own at the beginning, I use chapters 3 and 4 to create context, blending the literature review and historical context. The literature review serves two purposes: providing the foundations of the model The Wheel of Systemic Ideas and creating context on change.

While reading this thesis you may, at some point, feel a tinge of frustration, as I have omitted some contributors that may be significant to you in your practice. I found there were so many writers and theories contributing directly or indirectly, to the fields I researched, that I have intentionally narrowed down the scope of the literature review to include those I found most relevant to my topic of research. An example to illustrate my approach could be:

'Imagine a theatre with a stage where a performance is about to take place. You are sitting in the audience wondering what will happen on the stage and what you will think of it. Soon the performance begins, and I, as the performing researcher, introduce to you, at the centre of the stage, my research. You probably know, from having been to other theatres before, that the lighting technician has many spotlights, in different colours, hanging from the ceiling above the stage. Tonight, however, I ask the light technician to turn on only three spots to illuminate my research: red, yellow and blue – and I call them change, systemic ideas and systemic practice. I tell stories of the three spotlights and what each brings, tracing historic development and rendering the voices of key contributors. The colours blend and interact showing different aspects of each topic and what is created as they merge. As the performance draws to an end, I invite you to reflect how the different sources of light contributes to the illumination of the research and reflect around the contributions and significances of these. What are you thinking as you leave the theatre? What responses are you aware of?'

As I engaged in my literature research, my first area of study was philosophy, aiming to understand the backdrop against which the mindset of the Western world and modernism had evolved. Then I explored the journey of how systemic ideas had emerged, followed by the reading of complexity theories.

I was left with a sense that it all merged together into ideas and concepts that can be useful and relevant in today's organisational settings, brought on by current change and needs in society and environment. Theories of change were central in my reading, along with systemic practice research methods. To better understand the practical application of these ideas, I read journals and periodicals that examined the theories in organisational contexts. I have attended courses and seminars to expand and stretch my learning canvas, examining my topic of research from several positions. To gain more clarity and to understand practical approaches to the topic, I have turned to authors and journals from my home region of Scandinavia to see how systemic ideas are applied there.

I mapped these into different areas and noticed how they built on each other and interacted, creating a wholeness. An overview of the literature I have researched is presented in figure 3 on the following page.

Figure 3 shows an overview of the fields I have explored to shape my thesis, mixed with

images of inspiration (Rød, 2019)*.*

Before I go on to describe my methodology and how I conducted my research, I would like you to meet the three teams I worked with. In doing so at this point, I hope to provide sufficient context for you to make meaning of the examples describing their experiences, and the research interactions that are referred to throughout the thesis.

2.2 Meet the Teams

Team 1 was a change project team in the Norwegian Police, responsible for implementing a Reform programme in one of twelve new police districts.

According to Collins Dictionary a reform *´consists of changes and improvements to a law, social system, or institution. A reform is an instance of such a change or improvement´* (Collins Dictionary, 2017).

The Police Reform was initiated on the instruction of the Norwegian Government in 2015 driven by an intention to make it more effective. The change project team members knew they were there to do a job and deliver on a set of expectations. Once the mission was completed, they would dissolve as a team and go back to their regular jobs. The team members represented different geographical locations and disciplines. This was reflected in how much time was dedicated to their role in the project, differing from twenty to one hundred per cent (although the team counted seventeen members, only a core of eight were present on most project meetings). Few knew each other at the start, and their previous experience with change programmes varied.

Team 2 was the leader team of a privately-owned organisation, with a portfolio of social care services serving both private and public sectors (child protection unit, schools and other institutions). With several locations in Norway, the organisation had approximately thirty-five employees. The leader team that took part in the research process consisted of nine people, including the two founders. Seven had a professional background and training in family therapy and related services, while two positions were filled by people with commercial and administrative backgrounds. Their reason for change was survival and finding more legs to stand on in order to grow their business organically.

Team 3 was the leader team of a privately-owned and independent Scandinavian bank. The organisation counted more than one hundred employees, mostly financial and legal experts in their field. Team 3 consisted of nine people with different backgrounds and competences, professional cultures and organisational experiences. It was a fairly new team meaning they were new to the role (of being part of a leader team), and to each other as people. In terms of change, they were looking to maintain the organisation's market position and needed to rally their resources to respond to changes in the market, technology, rules and regulations. The main purpose of the research was to increase the cohesiveness of the leader team, to enable them to lead the organisation in a more engaging manner.

2.3 My Systemic Practice Research Approach

What is a systemic practice? Situated in a social constructionist paradigm, I understand it to be an approach, a way of relating to, and viewing, the world (Cunliffe, 2015); (Gergen, 2015); (Simon, 2014). It influences and informs how we hold, carry out and research our practices. A systemic inquiry then, is an approach to the research and a way of being the researcher, as described by Simon: 'S*ystemic inquiry is a form of qualitative inquiry, in which methodology is treated as an emergent and ethical activity*' (Simon, 2014, p. 4)….. '*as ethical, reflexive and collaborative ways of being with people*' (Simon, 2014, p. 8).

I reflect that in the ethical lies owning the part each of us take in a process; our own preferences, our own responses, and what is shared through our reflexive processes. The key is that there is no objective knowledge or truth to be found, but we co-create our realities through our relational interactions.

To this end, I follow the stepping away from traditional science-based *'object – subject'* research methods, to draw upon theories from systemic practice research to acknowledge and capture the unpredictable responses and emergence embedded in human interactions. We can come to appreciate the unfolding research process like waves to be surfed, from the scary to the deeply moving connective moments, new awareness and shifts. The path is unknown, as is the outcome of the process, as much for the participants as for the researcher.

The American social constructionist scholar, Sheila McNamee, explores what the orientation means for research. She argues that it creates a shift in methods and interactions, and what counts as knowledge, moving away from diagnostic and interpretative research to facilitation, and the deep appreciation and mindfulness that, *'in a social constructionist orientation, the possibility for constructing new understandings, new beliefs and values, new realities is always present'* (McNamee, 2014, p. 79). It would allow for the unfolding of a process because there is no linear plan to follow or correct conclusion to arrive at. There are no right or wrong answers; rather, a social constructionist approach invites us into different conversations, where reflexive practice enables the shaping of new insights and awareness that can engage teams in co-creating their realities. These experiences, McNamee argues, count as knowledge (McNamee, 2014). If so, it would also apply to how we approach, plan and experience change and changing. My overall methodology rests on methods of research within the field of systemic practice: reflexivity, autoethnography and Participatory Action Research (PAR). I will discuss each in this chapter.
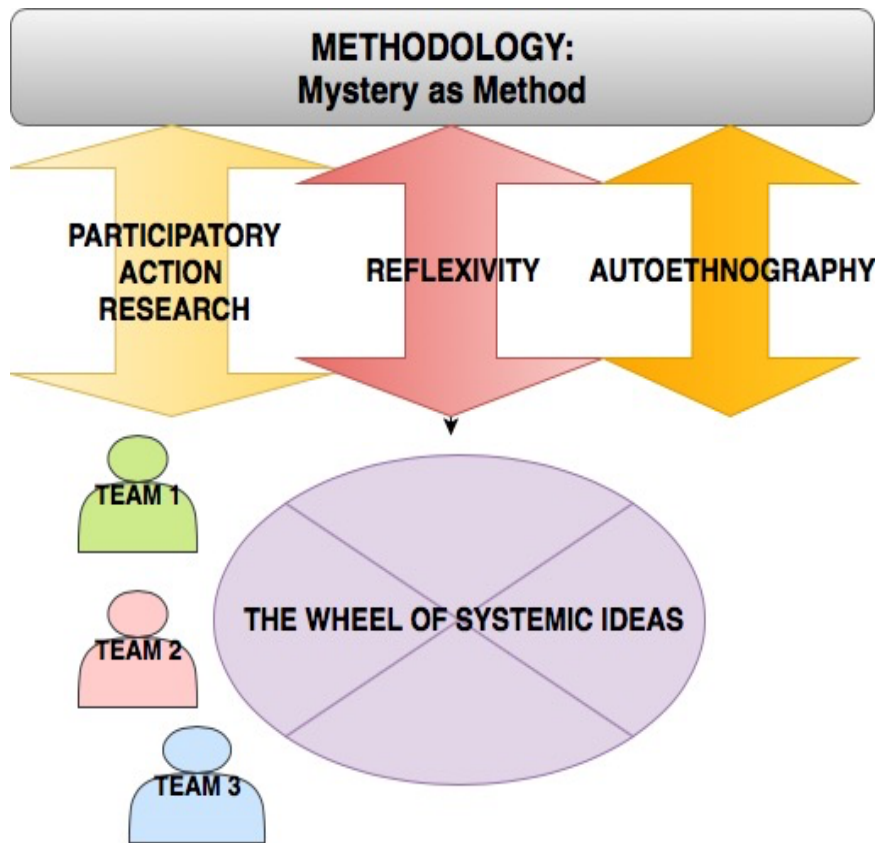
Figure 4 shows my overall research approach used in my systemic practitioner research

(Rød, 2019).

From my research emerges a model: The Wheel of Systemic Ideas, consisting of eight systemic ideas acting as lenses, through which topics relate to change and changing can be explored. It also offers a means to explore bridging systemic ideas with ideas on modernism.

2.4 'Mystery as Method' … the Unfolding of a Research Process

As my research process unfolded, I became aware of other dynamics emerging and impacting the process. To mirror the fluidity in my own research I used Mystery as Method, an approach developed by Swedish qualitative research theorists Mats Alvesson & Dan Karreman. A qualitative, post-modernist approach, it allows the research process to unfold. It provided the overall strategy or rationale for my research process, also known as methodology, and mirrors my real-life experiences with teams; as in, we never know what will emerge as the process unfolds, because we can never predict the responses. It is helpful to think of Mystery as Method as an operating system for the research allowing the emergence of the research process, and I will describe in detail how I applied it.

Traditionally, social science research has been divided into two approaches, both of which separate data and theory, relying on premeditated processes and downplaying the role/subjectivity of the researcher. One of these is the testing of preconceived idea or formulated theory. The other is the inductivist approach where theory is built based on data – for example, through case studies which can be reapplied in similar environments, thus proving its reliability and validity (Alvesson & Karreman, 2011). The stance of Alvesson and Karreman is also echoed among other researchers, and summed up in the PDSP handbook*: '…..research into people's every day home and workplace practices has either been seen as the application of theory to practice or as an evaluation of their practice in light of an academic theory'* (University of Bedfordshire, 2015).

Alvesson and Karreman offer a third way, *'a fusion of theory and empirical research in the research construction process'* (Alvesson & Karreman, 2011, p. 3). In this approach, the

material that emerges in the process becomes breakdowns acting as signposts suggesting new directions for the unfolding research, leaving us (researcher and participants) unaware of what will emerge and be created on the research journey (Alvesson & Karreman, 2011). Shotter captures this inherent unfolding process that systemic research can follow when he makes the distinction between systematic and systemic research, saying '*that the former is preplanned with a road map to predict a course of a journey. Systemic involves preparation, not planning'* (Shotter, 2016); (Simon, 2018, p. 54).

If we apply the teachings of complexity theories to teams and organisations, we can see that they, like any living organism, are in constant motion, impacting and being impacted upon by the environment in which they exist. Hence, building normative methods becomes futile, as the circumstances and contexts of each team and organisation will differ. British complexity scholars Jean G. Bolton, Peter M. Allen and Cliff Bowman define complexity is a world view, contrasting the modernistic view of the world, and organisations, as machines. There are many variations of complexity theories, emerging from a common understanding of physics and evolutions, providing a framework for understanding and being in the world. This includes being systemic; connections through emerging non-linear patterns of relationship; reflexive allowing for feedback and affected by context; irreversible; self-organising, self-regulating and will take on different forms (being dissipative) (Bolton, et al., 2015). In my view this approach offers exciting possibilities when it comes to systemic approaches to change in teams and organisations.

Looking from social constructionism to the natural sciences, we can see that CAS theories use the term 'disruption' to describe a disturbance that interrupts an event, activity, or process (Johannessen, 2012). CAS – Complex Adaptive System – theories describe how agents/systems organise themselves by using local rules, with many parts acting and reacting to each other's behaviour like a school of fish (Johannessen, 2012).

By being aware of breakdowns or disruptions, we allow for moments we can explore to create meaningful shifts in interactions. In my research, breakdowns manifested themselves emerging from contributory factors in the team interactions. As I will show in team examples, and especially in chapter 5, the engagements with the Wheel of Systemic Ideas brought about conversations that would lead to breakdowns impacting the course of the research. I was witnessing the research process unfold, and could relate it to Alvesson and Karreman's depiction in figure 5.

FIGURE 1
The Research Process: Decision Tree for Mystery-Focused Research

Breakdown

Not so interesting, difficult to grasp

Potentially interesting

Stop

Existing literature explains it

Further theoretical and empirical study

Stop

Signs of mystery stand up to scrutiny, formulation of mystery

Signs of mystery uncertain, weakly supported

Stop

Mystery is not solved

Mystery is solved

Present mystery as contribution

Present mystery and solution as contribution

Figure 5 Mystery as Method, the unfolding of a research process (Alvesson & Karreman, 2011). *(Reprinted with the permission of the publisher: Construction Mystery: Empirical matters in theory development, Academy of Management Review, 32: 1265-1281).*

By allowing myself to open up and deviate from the linear route of research, aware of the natural emergence in the research process, I noticed interesting dynamics that intrigued me. Had I pursued a more linear path, I could easily have missed these dynamics and shifting moments. This approach to the research can be expressed through the use of the following metaphor:

'Imagine that you are walking through a meadow. Your research agenda is to identify the white daisies. In focusing on the search for the white daisies (because that is all that matters in your chosen method) you may completely miss all the yellow and blue flowers that surround the daisies, providing the contexts for the daisies to thrive in. Or the bees, buzzing from one flower to another, ensuring life and relationships. You might miss the relationship between the flowers, the wholeness they create together, the contribution of each one. And you may end up drawing conclusions about daisies without awareness of other contributing factors to the existence of the daisies. By following and unfolding, an exploratory approach as described by Alvesson and Karreman, we are able to stop and follow other paths of exploration such as: where do the bees go after they have visited the daisies, what does the constellation of flowers contribute to, or let us examine how the soil differs'.

Image 2 shows a meadow of flowers, (Rød, 2018).

2.5 Ensuring Quality in Practitioner Research

As researchers we need to demonstrate that our qualitative inquiries are credible; how valid and reliable they are. In history, evidence-based research – with fixed standards and guidelines for conducting and evaluating qualitative inquiry – has been dominant. Such approaches to research, in the field in which I practice, rely heavily on linear research design, and the monitoring and measurement of results to ascertain the desirable level of validity. At this point you, as the reader, may ask how we can ascertain validity and reliability in the research when we step away from the recognised and accepted criteria applied to knowledge generation. To answer that, I will first look at how and where knowledge is created.

Gergen and Thatchenkery refer to shifts which emerge when moving from modernism to post-modernistic thinking (in which social constructionism is situated), saying that rational becomes communal, rather than individual; that language becomes a social action (Gergen & Thatchenkery, 1996); (McNamee & Hosking, 2012). I reflect that, as humans, we belong to communities which engage in these discourses producing actions. In a way, we are reconstituting ourselves and our practices through our words and consequent actions, in a continuous feedback loop. The social constructionist scholars, McNamee and Hosking, then introduce the term 'relational construction', which, they say, *'directs the attention to the relational processes as opposed to the pre-existing (individual and social) structures.'* (McNamee & Hosking, 2012, p. xiv). They view this as a way of being in, and with, our surroundings, based on the Batesonian idea that the mind is social (Bateson, 1972); (McNamee & Hosking, 2012).

I bring these thoughts into the discussion on quality and what counts as knowledge, because they highlight what is created in different communities of practice; what counts as knowledge in one, and not in another, what assumptions do we hold, and how do these influence our practice. McNamee and Hosking demonstrate these differences in how research is approached. They distinguish between how inquiry as research is viewed through the eyes of science and relational constructionism:

Science	Relational Constructionism
Data	Ongoing process
Results	Process
Control	Minimal structures and unfolding
Method	Forms of practice/performance in context
Reliability	Generativity
Validity	Usefulness to the (multiple) local communities
Protocol	Emergence and reflexivity
Science- and scientist-centred	Ongoing processes centred

(McNamee & Hosking, 2012, p. 59)

In a social constructionist paradigm, there is no objective reality to capture and be described, but an ongoing co-creation and sense-making of our realities. The same dynamic applies to the generation of knowledge. Creswell and Miller, American Action Research theorists, argue how the lenses of those involved in the research, combined with the paradigm these operate from, can enable researchers to select the best procedures ensuring sufficient validity in their studies (Creswell & Miller, 2000). They explain how each of the parties involved will have their unique lens on the research experience.

The researcher is concerned with data gathering and the material collected; the participants with the representation of their input; readers with the credibility of the work (Creswell & Miller, 2000). In my view, the paradigm the researchers operate from will be equally influential as this will bring bearing on all aspects of the study from research design to analysis and presentation of the findings. Central to this is the notion of researcher's reflexivity and autoethnographic accounts which play a central part in my research.

From this, we can infer that the social constructionist position on validity may appear not as straightforward, merely because validity can be defined as, '*how accurately the account represents participants' realities of the social phenomena and is credible to them*' (Schwandt, 1997); (Creswell & Miller, 2000, p. 125) and, '*that validity refers not to the data but to the inferences drawn from them*' (Hammersley & Atkinson, 1983); (Creswell & Miller 2000, p 125). In other words, we become entrenched in a mesh where the lenses, discourses, contexts, interpretations and experiences of researcher, study participants and readers, can pose a challenge to the sensemaking of the research material. How, then, do we infer and justify what can count as knowledge in a research process?

Simon proposes eight criteria for systemic practitioner research (Simon, 2018). In my opinion, these ensure a rigour, enabling us to assess the necessary quality to gain acceptance for our work in academic circles. In appendix 1 is a table showing how these criteria are taken into account in my research and thesis. One strategy to increase the credibility of the research can be to explore a topic or phenomena, and the experience and emergence of it, from several sources (Creswell and Miller, 2000).

This may have some merit; in that it helps us understand and expand our insights into how the processes and the relation co-ordination takes place. I have followed Creswell and Miller's approach and gathered my research material from multiple sources during the team interactions, using different collection methods as depicted in table 1.

Method	Content	Material/data gathered
Participatory *Action* Research:	Team as focus group doing group work and engaging in constellations Constellation work followed by questionnaires Reflection with group following the group work	Recordings of the focus groups interactions Transcripts of the presentations of their group work findings on flip charts (documentation) Questionnaires on The Wheel of Systemic Ideas My notes from the group interactions and presentations
Qualitative surveys	Survey after research process (post process survey) Mail survey: 'Virtual coffee with Anne' (Team 1 only)	Participants answers
Autoethnography	Researcher reflexivity and account of the research sessions and the overall journey	My notes
Generative writings	Researcher`s journaling, writing reflexive pieces for discussions and presentations	Presentations at seminars and conferences

Table 1 shows my material collection methods and the material itself (Rød, 2017).

There were big differences between the three teams I engaged with. They were in terms of context, desired change, number of team members, how well they knew each other, and perspectives on change and changing. To fit in with the schedules and needs of the three teams, the Participatory Action Research process and sessions differed in timespan, varying from day sessions to seventy-minute sessions. The contact hours therefore differed (see workshop design and content in appendix 6 and 7), totalling almost sixty hours of field research. Although my contact time with them varied due to different circumstances in the teams, we were able to follow a similar structure in the sessions and address the same three entry points to exploring change. The sessions were recorded and transcribed without individual attributions, so that anonymity was constantly assured for each participant. No personal information such as names, positions, organisation or age would be revealed.

As shown in the previous table, two different qualitative surveys were used during the research for the purpose of gathering responses to the research process. The first was an impromptu survey with Team 1, two months into the research, to better understand how they were experiencing the monthly reflection sessions. I sent an email with four questions and invited the participants to reply via email. I called it, '*Virtual Coffee with Anne*'. (See appendix 9. I will refer to this in detail as it turned out to be a breakdown (Alvesson & Karreman, 2011). I did not do the same with the other two teams as they were smaller in size, giving each participant more visibility and space). The second survey was a post-process survey. While my intention was to explore the relevance and application of the systemic ideas in the reflection rounds at the end of the workshop, I found that the teams were more concerned with the topic of the day, wanting to take away concrete actions.

As my period of research came to an end, I therefore chose to send participants in all three teams an invitation to complete a post process survey to assess the impact of the research process on them as individuals, as teams, and on the process content itself (see appendix 11).

A third way to gather responses was during the workshop. After having explored the spokes in the Wheel of Systemic Ideas using the polarity constellation (as described in section 2.13, I invited the team members to complete a brief questionnaire to describe the thoughts, attitudes and responses which could be reflected from the different positions on the spoke (see appendix 10). Figure 15 shows an example of the juxtaposition of these responses.

Before I introduce to you the value of reflexive approach in knowledge creation, I want to take a moment to reflect on aesthetics. McNamee and Hosking talk about aesthetics as inviting the reader into conversation (McNamee & Hosking, 2012). I think of it as making the material I want to share easily accessible to a range of different readers, knowing that responses will differ from one reader to the next reader. This has implications on the style of writing and use of images and presentation, considering how to make the material available for a range of groups of practitioners. To make my thesis as accessible as possible, I have given examples to illustrate theory, added my own interpretations of quoted scholars, and created figures and images to showcase my concept and ideas. I purposefully use these as forms of representations, substituting or complementing words. McNamee and Hosking introduce us to narrative scholars Rhodes and Brown, who encourage the writer to be vulnerable: '*It is no longer acceptable for us to ask others to reveal something of themselves while we remain invulnerable*' (Rhodes & Brown, 2005, p. 483); (McNamee & Hosking, 2012, p. 111).

I hope that through the honest sharing of my journey through the research and thesis, I can invite you into a safe space of reflection. That brings us to reflexivity and autoethnographical accounts.

2.6 A Reflexive Research Approach and Autoethnographical Account

In the land between ontology – what something is (Greek origin *onto*= as is) – and epistemology – how do we know, (Greek origin e*pistēmē*= 'knowledge' and *epistanai*= understanding and knowing) – is reflexivity. Reflexivity is a three-part dialogue between the text, the research and myself as researcher, allowing me to think deeply about how the material is impacting me, and open to what emerges from this interaction**.** Pillow sums up the value of reflexivity this way: '*To be reflexive, then, not only contributes to producing knowledge that aids in understanding and gaining insight into the workings of our social world but also provides insight on how this knowledge is produced'.* (Pillow, 2003, p. 178). By processing our experiences, our '*ontos',* we can build knowledge and a new '*episte'.*

In a social constructionistic setting, revealing the researcher's own lens and 'come from place' is central. Through reflexivity, autoethnographical methods, and the model of analysis applied in this thesis, I share the context I come from, my own processes, filters and choices. Alvesson and Karreman refer to a quote by Denzil and Lincoln to illustrate the inner experience of each individual, which cannot be experienced from outside. '*There is no clear window into the inner life of an individual. Any gaze is filtered through the lenses of language, gender, social class, race and ethnicity. There are no objective observations, only observations socially situated in the worlds of the observer and the observed*' (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994, p. 12); (Alvesson & Karreman, 2011, p. 7).

That is why it is so hard to ever understand what is taking place in the mind and experiences of others, and what makes reflexivity such a valuable and necessary practice. When we allow space for relational interactions and reflexivity, we offer the opportunity for increased awareness and the possibility to question our sense-making, both our *'onto'* and *'episte'* in the world. In other words, we expand our awareness, understanding and knowledge of ourselves and others.

In my view, reflexivity on the sense-making of the material in relation to the topic, own praxis and the researcher's personal journey, becomes a vital part to understand the positions and context in the meaning-making of the thesis. It can take on the shape of a narrative, and I have chosen to merge an autoethnographical account of my personal doctoral research journey through my writing, with reflective commentary in the discussion of the findings. With autoethnography as method, *´the researcher becomes the research subject´* (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011, p. 417), and the material is the reflexive accounts and personal narratives. Gergen explains the value and purpose of autoethnography in this way: '…*The researcher is simultaneously the object of the research. The researcher takes advantage of his or her own unique life experiences and share these with the reader'* (Gergen, 2015, p. 179)*.* This helps the reader place the researcher in the context, and to make sense of the relationship between the researcher, the research process and the text. The learnings we gain from inquiring into, and sharing, our assumptions, perceptions and experiences create new forms of knowledge (McNamee, 2014).

According to Hayler (Hayler, 2011) the approaches to autoethnography offer a continuum, from evocative (Richardson & Adams St Pierre, 2005) which contributes to *'social understanding, aesthetic merit, reflexivity, emotional & intellectual impact and expresses a reality'* (Lake, 2015, p. 682), to analytic autoethnography. The latter, as proposed by Anderson (Anderson, 2006) refers *'to research in which the researcher is (1) a full member in the research group or setting, (2) visible as such a member in published texts, and (3) committed to developing theoretical understandings of broader social phenomena'* (Anderson, 2006, p. 373).

As I journaled during my own research journey, I was less concerned with where I could place myself on the autoethnography continuum, and more with research itself and my own experience of it. Simon talks of relational ethnography as speaking from within the relationship and being transparent about the research process (Simon, 2013). She describes it as *'a philosophical stance which embraces reflexivity, responsivity, transparency of the researcher(s) relational awareness and dialogical coherence between what is being researched and how the research material is shared with other`* (Simon, 2013, p. 11). In it she adds the relational dimension of the ethnography which also bring with it an ethical aspect.

Throughout the research I paid special attention to being responsive to the needs of the participants, what impact I may have while also noticing what was created within in me. In retrospect I would place myself closer to the evocative position for several reasons: I was not a full-blown member of any of the teams, my voice did not intermingle with their autoethnographical accounts of the experience, not did I aim to develop new theories. Rather, I was concerned with creating new awareness and ways of making sense, and as Marshall talks of next; the usefulness of our responses.

The British action researcher, Judi Marshall, talks about living life as inquiry, describing the process of asking questions to ascertain what responses are useful, what is productive, and what contributes to what (Marshall, 1999). Journaling remains my faithful companion, allowing freedom and space for both reflections on my journey and reflexivity in the moment. Drawing from my research notes and my own reflexive practice, I share sequences of my own narratives from the research, inviting the reader to gain a sense of my experience of the process, and what it created in me. Some extracts from my journals are shared as Reflexive Moments throughout the thesis, weaving my research journey together with my own experiences. Marshall says her '*learning is enhanced by articulating it to myself and by opening it to comment by others*' (Marshall, 1999, p. 5). As a learning addict, I know no other way of living but through learning.

2.7 The Voices in My Thesis

In writing this thesis I wanted to express the many voices I encountered, engaged with, and experienced on my research journey. The result is a collection of voices and positions stretched out on a canvas of change, on which a collaboration of ideas could emerge. The figure on the next page shows the array of voices that speak throughout this thesis, bringing life to the theories, ideas and positions presented. The voices are colour-coded so that you can easily recognise them when you read anecdotes, reflexive moments and examples throughout the thesis.

You may, as the reader, ask where your place is in all of this, and my response is that I hope you will engage with all of the voices, as well as listen to your own as you read on. Let me introduce the other voices you will meet while reading this thesis:

Voice of Researcher Reflexive Moments and Autoethnographical Journey

Voices of Team 1 (VOS1)*

To what extent can systemic ideas and approaches help teams navigate emergent change and changing, as a collaborative experience for those involved, releasing their potential and creativity, enabling dialogue and learning?

Voice of Change

Voices From The Literature Review

Voices of Team 2 (VOS2)*

Voices of Team 3 (VOS3)*

Figure 6 shows a representation of voices as expressed in my thesis (Rød, 2019).

First, as I described earlier in this chapter, you will hear voices from scholars in different fields bearing relevance to the research topic. Second, in the context of this thesis I have chosen to give a voice to 'Change', the one everyone talks about, to explore what new insights might emerge. Depending on the reader's own area of practice and experience, you may be familiar with the use of external voices in narrative tradition. It is a way of re-storying a position and can be used to place an experience '*out there*' (Gergen, 2015). The third focus is on the voices of the teams participating in the research.

Most of the mainstream leadership and organisational literature on change, that I have read, is situated in a modernistic tradition focusing on changing others – as in, doing something to someone, objectifying, forcing or making them change (Bolman & Deal, 2003); (Thorsvik & Jacobsen, 2014). The purpose with my thesis, however, is to explore how people can take part in and navigate change and changing, regardless of whether it is brought upon them from outside forces or initiated from within one's own self or one's team/organisation. The inside-out positions are essential, and to capture the co-creation of change and the changing processes I needed to ensure that these voices could be heard clearly. In doing so, I draw upon Mindell's process work, where he calls participants in a process information 'carriers', or Voices of the System (VOS) (Rød & Fridjhon, 2015). I will use this concept throughout when referring to voices in the team. To underscore the richness sought through this approach, I turn to McNamee and Hosking, who draw upon the American linguist and de-constructionist theorist, Johnathan Culler, to emphasise the importance of many texts' relations in narrative analysis and the embedded role of deconstruction, '*to articulate muted, suppressed and excluded voices, and in this way to re-situate dominant voices/stories, enable a play of differences and open up new possible realities and relationships*' (Culler, 1982); (McNamee & Hosking, 2012, p. 51).

As the reader, you may question why I use the term 'Team' when each team is really a collection of individuals. I do so because they belong to a team, and in my experience, teams usually refer to themselves as the project team, leader team, administration team, etc, to illustrate their role, function and identity in the organisation. In this thesis, I hold the term '*The Team*' as a collection of the different voices in the team, sometimes diverging, opposing

and, at other times, in agreement. The fragmented experiences of the individuals in the teams make up a whole – the total experience of, and in, the team.

The above is fundamental to my approach. In the interactions within each of the three teams I followed, the focus was not on the individuals, but on utterances and actions from the team members as a whole. The collection, of voices (VOS) expressed, is intended to show the range of differences in opinions, perceptions and position that are possible within a team, but also to show how similar experiences or insights are expressed with different words. These collections of voices from the teams make up my material, and I will refer to them as Voices of the Team or Team Voices.
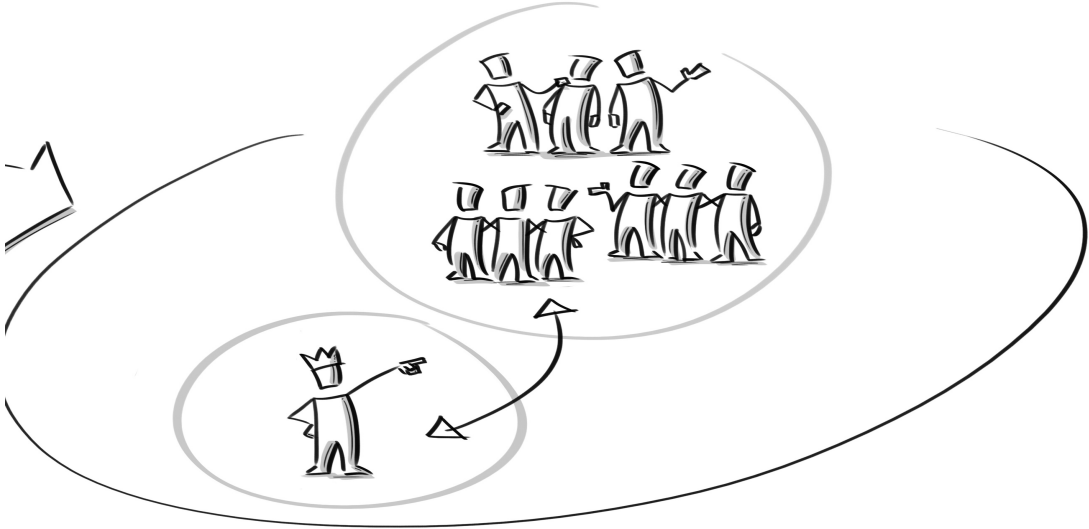
Figure 7 shows how I as the researcher interact with the team as a whole while paying

attention to their individual voices (Rød, 2015, p. 73)

2.8 Reflexivity and Reflections in the Teams

Social constructionism proposes that our actions and words are responses to something that has occurred previously, so everything becomes a response to a response. This underscores how valuable it was that the teams in the research actively reflected on the dialogical and relational processes in the teams. In my view, these interactions allow for a new form of '*episte*'; exploring our assumptions and meaning- making to move beyond the individually centred to collective co-creation of some common understandings of our worlds. In qualitative research there are no objective means of measurement, and we therefore rely on our individual perceptions to experience and derive knowledge. In this context, reflection and reflexivity are central.

In my research I introduced reflection and reflexivity in the team session as key elements for learning about changing and change. In my experience, reflexivity stimulates awareness and surfaces new knowledge, which can then be shared in the teams to create a diverse, yet common, platform of knowledge and understanding. It is worth noticing the distinction between reflection and reflexivity, and what knowledge it produces. I think of 'reflect' as bending back, pointing our attention back *on/at,* and evaluating someone, something or an event. In it, there is often an implicit evaluation or assessment. Reflexivity, on the other hand, indicates that we *are in* the moment, noticing what and how we are experiencing the situation and the impact it has on us, what is *true* for us in that moment. Reflex is a circular process, the purpose being to question what we are taking for granted/perceive to be true in the moment, so that we can better understand, and to expand our learning (Cunliffe, 2015).

In my experience the former is very common in teams and organisations, while the latter is quite new and warrants a large degree of safety in order for people to expose their feelings and share them openly. Pillow argues that the value of reflexivity can help surface our practices and how we create knowledge, and I believe that to be of high importance to teams in change. '*Reflexivity thus is often understood as involving an ongoing self-awareness during the research process which aids in making visible the practice and construction of knowledge within research in order to produce more accurate analyses of our research*' (Pillow, 2003, p. 178). With reflexivity, we are in the moment, noticing our engagement with, and experience of a situation, person or topic. It is a circular, moment-by-moment, unfolding process. The purpose is to question what we know or take for granted and investigate the newness of our experience in the moment, increasing our awareness and expanding learning.

I found it difficult to introduce reflexive practice in the teams, as they were unfamiliar with it. Even reflecting upon the sessions was a challenge, and I found that one of the teams did not consider reflection time as productive. Team members tended to look back (reflect) and evaluate the content of the workshop in terms of what was useful or not. I encouraged a more reflexive approach by engaging conversation of their learning in the moment, and what they could draw from this. To this end, I used a format I have named ELA: Experience, Learning and Application (Rød, 2015), encouraging the emergence of a reflexive process through the entry point of experience. In a process, I would invite all participants to share their answers to the following:

- Experience – How would you describe this experience?
- Learning – What did you learn from this experience?
- Application – What are the possibilities for application of the learning?

The first question will centre around the experiences we are having or have had, followed by asking for the learning emerging from the experience, ending up talking about how, where and when we can apply our new awareness and learning. In my view, we seldom ask why, and how, we know what we know. When I started pursuing this inquiry with teams I worked with, I found that some people were unused to, or even uncomfortable with speaking about experiences in this way. Reflexivity and reflection came easy to Team 2 but were more of a struggle with Teams 1 and 3. To illustrate the attitude to reflection in Team 1, I would like to give an example from an early session:

> *'One of the participants stated clearly at the outset that she was not interested in spending time on reflection, because there were so many tasks that needed to be addressed and she wanted to spend the time in the monthly project meetings on solving issues. She felt that reflection for the sake of reflection was of no value. Being dialogical, I felt I had to offer a response to her concern, and we agreed that I would provide the space each time with a combination of tools, reflections and a summing up where possible action could be taken. I explained that the process would build their collective intelligence, and that it would be a lot of learning (some were very interested in Participatory Action Research). On the basis of their needs, a team agreement was designed between them (see section 2.9 for example). I felt nervous and insecure in the role as a researcher, and I did not know how to fill it, thinking maybe they would even kick me out if I, or the process I introduced, did not provide value.'*

The reflective sessions with the three teams varied in their richness from team to team. It took practice and evolved.

After a session with Team 2 I reflected on how the time spent on reflection could clear up simmering misunderstandings, in this instant relating to the meaning of a word. Because we had allowed the reflective space and for all the voices to be heard, the different meanings were given room to be expressed, as in this case of the word 'irritation', which had come up in the discussions:

> *'During a discussion the word 'irritation' had been thrown around creating different responses with the team members. When it came to reflection time, a young man in the team shared his version of irritating and what it meant for his relationship with his colleagues: 'We are all annoying/irritating people, therefore we are all okay (as in, not irritating)'. One of the women drew a breath; she had meant something completely different with the word, wanting a different response from the team. Her view was: 'We are all annoying/irritating people; therefore, we are annoying/irritating, let us talk about it constructively.' The revelation of the different takes on a word and how it could bring about such different responses in attitude made them laugh. A small shift was created'.*

Our reflections allowed us to explore and create understanding and not fall in the trap, as expressed by Austrian philosopher and linguist, Ludwig Wittgenstein: *'A main source of our failure is that we do not command a clear view of the use of our words'* (Kenny, 1984, p. 42)*;* (Hennestad & Revang, 2017)*.* It takes time and patience to build safe dialogical practices, but they offer space for developing our relationship and build safety.

2.9 Relational Ethics & Safe Spaces

As researchers, we arrive with our own agendas and reasons for undertaking the research and are influenced by our backgrounds and experiences. In our eagerness to pursue our research, we may lose sight of who we are working with, and how. In social constructionism we move away from observing the object of the research. Ethics are key to systemic practice, and how we relate to and act in our research process, which becomes an interactive process between the researcher, topic, research participants and the process. Simon argues that relational ethics include how we engage in conversations with each other; awareness of power issues; managing our inner and outer dialogues; questions our attachment to theories, hypothesis and methods; review what we have done together, and acknowledge the value of the exchanges between us (Simon, 2014, p. 17).

While engaging with the teams in my research, I became aware of how the context and purpose of my role as a researcher differ from a practitioner. The practice of journaling helped me become more aware of my personal experiences and responses before, during and after the research sessions. This enabled me to step into the role of researcher with a more humble and less visible approach, accepting what emerged and appreciating that I was part of a research process. During my research I found that this required me, as the researcher, to alter between a centred and decentred position, initially setting the scene and then stepping back, to allow the participants to engage in the process with dialogical interactions to increase their awareness. In the interactions with the teams I withheld my observations and opinions, to avoid influencing the research. I had to make a conscious switch in my head when acting as researcher compared to a practitioner.

It meant I had to carefully explain the background to, and the purpose of, the inquiry the team was about to explore, then step back and not offer confirmative comments to what is being said or presented.

An ethical concern I had in my research was about consent, power and influence. In a Scandinavian organisational environment, the leader is very accessible, as echoed by the writer on culture, Richard Lewis: '*Middle managers' opinions are heard and acted upon in an egalitarian fashion, but top executives rarely abandon responsibility and accountability'*. (Lewis, 2006, p. 346). In my experience, the power imbalances stemming from the Scandinavian low-power distance culture (Hofstede, et al., 2010) are normally quite subtle, impacting the relational aspects more covertly. Dutch sociologist and professor of culture, Gert Hofstede, defines power distance as '*the extent to which the less powerful members of institutions and organisations within a country expect and accept that power is distributed unequally*' (Hofstede, et al., 2010, p. 61). In Scandinavia, this leads to flat organisational hierarchies, which, in my experience, often confuses the understanding of what is accepted, and in what context. This implies that a team may appear to have an open and direct communication, linking managers more closely to their staff (Lewis, 2006), but all issues may not be acceptable or welcomed to discuss. In my research all team leaders participated fully.

A reader unfamiliar to the Scandinavian organisational culture may ask, how do you work with this dynamic? My answer is that you feel your way into it gradually, given that the limits for what is acceptable and not, will differ from one person to the next. In my experience, a leader may say all comments are welcome but still respond strongly.

To deal with this in an ethical manner, the reflection moments are important to clear up any misunderstanding or hard feelings. An example was an incident with Team 3, where they had a meeting in which actions, apparently, were agreed upon as half the team did not object to the ideas proposed by the CEO and Head of Sales. During one of our sessions this incident came up and it turned out that the rest of the team had not thought it their place to question the decision, nor did they feel comfortable doing so. This both surprised and annoyed the CEO, who had assumed everyone in the team spoke their mind. From this conversation a new awareness emerged, creating a shift in how the team interacted and increased the acceptance as to what was allowed to say and share.

To ensure that relational ethics were maintained in the research, the reflective – and reflexive when possible – practice in the teams was important in creating awareness and engaging with emerging dynamics. The thesis will show more insights and shifts created as a consequence of this practice. Simon talks of systemic practice as relational co-ordinations and suggests that these involve '*asking, responding, consulting, listening to inner and outer dialogue; maintaining an exquisite balance as one walks a risky edge between inner and outer dialogue aware of immediate and delayed consequences*' (Simon, 2018, p. 48). In my view this implies a relational responsibility between the researcher and the research participants, but also between the participants in the team. To create a container for the research encouraging reflexivity and openness within each team, a safe space was required, and I facilitated discussion around the needs, expectations and possible outcomes of their involvement. Similarly, safeguarding the participants, their input, feelings and engagement in the research process, required creating conditions for dialogue, as echoed by American educational researchers Kamberelis and Dimitriadis:

' *The pedagogic function* , [….of the focus group – my comment] *basically involves collective engagement designed to promote dialogue and to achieve higher levels of understanding of issues critical to the development of a group's interest and/or the transformation of conditions of its existence*' (Kamberelis & Dimitriadis, 2011, p. 546). To create such safety, I encouraged a team agreement as a starting point. In my experience, from working with teams, this is necessary to create a level of trust that allow participants to share their views and experiences openly. It can be a very vulnerable space, requiring courage and sensitivity from everyone in the room. From my practice I have seen that the deeper the sharing, the more impact it has on the collective learning of the team, enabling constructive joint action. Hence, the engagement with the teams commenced with a team agreement where we designed our collaboration to include the following: confidentiality, openness, honesty and how to create a good collaborative space.

TEAM 1- Creating Safe Space

Because of the importance with creating safety and aligning expectations, we started the work together in the initial session with the creation of a team agreement. The team was divided into smaller groups, each answering one set of questions before bringing it together at the end.

Team Agreement:

- My question: *What do you need from the researcher for this to be a good process for you as a team?*

- The team voices reply:

    - *Anne is clear about what she wants to get out of the process*

    - *Concrete frameworks so that we can understand the task (for reflection)*

    - *Help us get into reflection mode. Move us from task-oriented to reflection mode (i.e. pc lid down, read in advance)*

    - *Basic information and background*

    - *Context and introduction for reflection*

    - *Presence / guidance*

    - *Challenge us so that we can get somewhere*

- My second question: *What are your needs and expectations from our sessions?*

- The team voices reply:

    - *To gain a broader perspective, more nuances, more dimension= add value*

    - *Use it to understand and deal with the experiences of others*

    - *Reflections on how to do things differently*

    - *Guidance*

    - *Get to know each other in a different way, not just about our tasks and disciplines*

- My third question: *What agreement do you need between you as a team, and with me, to achieve your needs and expectations?*

- The team voices reply:

    - *Respect, openness, honesty, have a positive atmosphere, recharge and re-energise*

    - *Everyone contributes and is heard*

    - *Give some good advice*

o   *Confidentiality, room for voicing different opinions*

I was already experiencing true Participatory Action Research – the co-creation of the research process. During the course of the research, I discovered that the discussions became very sensitive at times, as shifts were created, and the process more profound than I had anticipated. This included the impact of change on people and lives lived in organisation, addressing concerns, sharing examples of frustrations and power relations.

The team agreement set the stage for a collaborative approach, and I took care to remain in the researcher role and not guide or give advice around their process. The team agreement was later referred to as the container that had created a safe space for the team enabling them to share openly and honestly as they moved through the Reform programme. As expressed by one team member: *'It is great to reflect and gain a common platform and understanding because then we can work out together what to do'*.

(Team 1, second session).

As the flow of the research process unfolded, I continued to follow the three teams working with them on all aspects of the research, impacting the length of the engagement with them and broadening the research foci. This meant that, rather than following the episodic phases as outlined in my original ethics proposal and research plan (see figure 2), the three original phases merged into one flowing process, involving the teams to a much larger extent in the shaping of the workshops. I followed the three teams, with their collaboration and consent, taking them through all the phases from surfacing phenomena and dynamics created through the transition process, through to the introduction and application of systemic concepts and approaches developed, which in the process became the Wheel of Systemic Ideas.

I had cited focus group and Action Research as my choice of method, and this merged into focus group and Participatory Action Research. It became a more collaborative process in line with PAR. Reflexivity and autoethnography remained throughout. As I was learning more about systemic practice research I was engaging differently with the teams, as is reflected in this thesis. I note that I, in the proposal, wrote that I would observe the teams, what McNamee and Hosking refer to as the 'object – subject' orientation (McNamee & Hosking, 2012), whereas the research became an ongoing inquiry into change, the term implying a practice *'toward exploration and opening up in the senses along with a curiosity of what might be'* (McNamee & Hosking, 2012). This is an adequate description of the process because, as you the reader, will see in this thesis, there where themes we engaged with that ran throughout the process. For example: in Team 1 there was continuous frustration around the Reform process, combined with an appreciation for the team itself; in Team 2 vulnerability was a theme; and, in Team 3, the purpose of the team itself was an ongoing discussion.

Because the scope of the research changed slightly in the process, I submitted a new ethics proposal. In appendix 2, I have enclosed both ethics proposal approval letters and the updated ethics approval application, with its five appendices, These include: information sheet original phase 2 and 3; consent form teams in original phase 2 and 3; consent form and information sheet combined for the police group in phase 1; research overview and timeline; two examples of team agreements. These changes pertained only to process, and not to other ethical considerations. The evolving research process did not impact how the data and material from the teams were collected, analyses and stored.

2.10   Psychological Safety

Working on my emerging hypothesis that the weaving of relationships is needed to feel safe, I was curious to explore the level of safety in the teams. I therefore found that the concept of psychological safety naturally followed on after exploring production and relation. Through the literature, I became familiar with American researcher Amy Edmondson's concept of team psychological safety – '*a shared belief held by members of a team that the team is safe for interpersonal risk-taking*' (Edmondson, 1999, p. 350) as originally put forward by Schein and Bennis (Schein & Bennis, 1965), pertaining to organisational change. In her work, Edmondson argues that sufficient psychological safety enables learning at a group level, and can be described as an ongoing process of reflection and action, characterized by asking questions, seeking feedback, experimenting, reflecting on results, discussing errors or unexpected outcomes of actions, testing assumptions and discussing differences of opinion openly for the purpose of learning, without fear of failing, and where one is not afraid to be rejected if making mistakes or speaking one's opinion (Edmondson, 1999). In my view, these are key factors when involving people in a collaborative change process, providing a deep understanding of the necessity of safety to experiment and innovate. Looking at psychological safety in the sessions turned out to be a turning point for two of the three teams, and something they kept referring to.

In order to fully benefit from PAR sessions, I believe psychological safety to be very important, and I added it to the research sessions as another way of creating and exploring a safe space. I will share with you an example of how we worked with it:

Team 2 - Psychological Safety

In the fourth session with Team 2, a dialogue emerged around the issue of acceptance and safety. It struck me that for many in the team, and maybe elsewhere, there was a need to feel safe. I became interested in how we could use this insight in the research. The need to be alike was strong, but they were also beginning to accept and appreciate their diversity. I introduced the concept of psychological safety to Team 2, turning it into a linear constellation, asking two questions:

To what extent do you personally feel psychologically safe in this team?

To what extent do you experience that the team as a whole feels itself as psychologically safe?
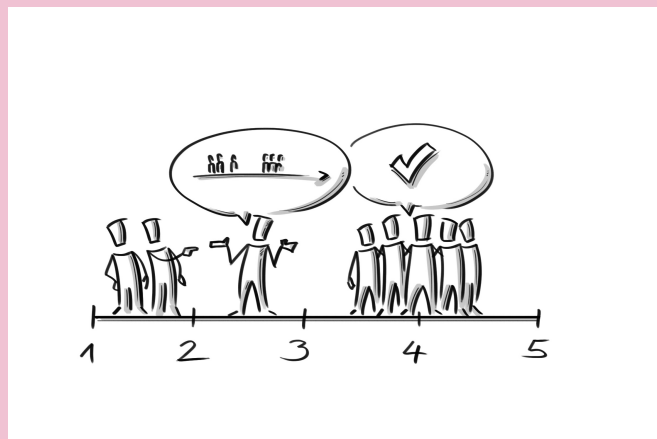
Figure 8 depicts the dialogue emerging from a linear constellation (Rød, 2015, p. 195).

Using the line from 1- 5 (being the highest), team members voted with their feet, placing themselves in a position that most resonated with them.

Reminding the team members that they were Voices of the System – Information carriers telling us something about the team and its interaction (Rød & Fridjhon, 2015) – we used the constellation to create an explorative dialogue. Some of the voices of team expressed were: *'I think how important it is that the relational works, and when it doesn't, I have also experienced the impact of that; knowing it is safe to come here and share what is and that it is room for it. I am and discovering that I am different – that is a bit of an 'aha'. I am concerned with how we communicate across the differences.*

In Team 2, they were surprised to find a spread in the perception of psychological safety. Voices of the Team reflected on the process: *'The lack of psychological safety surprised me, I am curious about what can be said in this room and not - seems to come up a lot. I notice that we have many opinions but don't ask that many questions and wonder what that is about; the setting, or if we are too unsure of each other to say how we feel. I think I have lived with a glossy picture of us that may not be completely true, so it is important to see this so that we can address it. I need to see the group in a different way than what I have done, maybe I have been feeling into something that actually isn't there. The exercise on psychological safety really hit home, and maybe I have also had a perception that the group is different to how it really is, either because I wanted it to, or maybe the map and the ground do not fit together as it has done before'.* This interaction was a major shift for Team 2, revealing where the dog laid buried; it was about acceptance, safety and relations. *(*Team 2, fourth session).

Some may question the purpose of psychological safety, and what level is desirable in a team given context and time. Can it be counter-productive, maybe producing complacency? Can team members' different levels of psychological safety be compared or even measured? What happens if some team members experience a high level of psychological safety expressing their views uncensored, while others hold back resulting in an imbalance of power and possible marginalisation? My findings showed a deep appreciation of safety as necessary to experiment and innovate.

In my experience, it seems likely that the level of psychological safety is fundamental for the conversation team members dare to have, or not, within the teams. It can provide a safe container for the dialogical processes, and how the team members respond to emerging changes. I introduced the concept to the teams I worked with in the research process (as well as with the rest of my practice) and found an increased appreciation for the time spent on reflection and relations. The teams also asked themselves what level of safety they needed to function well? It might not be a 5, but at least a need to be pushing for a four. How to arrive there became a vital question. As the teams explored psychological safety, the time spent not being productive and task-orientated seemed more justified. Once introduced in Team 3, the conversation became more honest and direct, and as they expressed; more beneficial to them as a team addressing some long-standing disagreements.

2.11   Participatory Action Research as Method

Rather than undertaking individual interviews with participants, I was looking for a method that would involve the participants in the collective shaping of the research sessions, while determining the content that was relevant for them. The purpose was to address their particular change topic, with the associated issues, in a way that served them in a meaningful way. I was curious about what was being co-created in the collective field, in the space and interactions between the participants, how they build on each other's point of view, rejected or argued against. Research scolars Kamberelis and Dimitriadis argue that '*focus groups often produce data that are seldom produced through individual interviews and observation thus yield particular powerful knowledge and insights*' (Kamberelis & Dimitriadis, 2011, p. 559). In my experience is this particularly relevant when dissimilar experiences and perceptions of a situation are shared openly, and the team gains a collective awareness of the different values, assumptions and worldviews present with the individuals in the teams. I often see genuine surprise at the diverse opinions and multiple positions expressed, and also notice that it adds to the team's self-awareness and collective understanding.

Drawn to Participatory Action Research because of its inclusive and collaborative approach to the research, I was aiming to produce practice knowledge and make it possible for this to happen in a fluid, non-linear manner. *'Action research is not so much a method as an orientation to inquiry*' (Reason & Bradbury, 2008, p. 1), in my view it highlights how the systemic cycles of action and reflection help generate knowledge and action. Although *action* seems to be implicit in Participatory Action Research, I would argue that the generation of collective knowledge may, or may not depending on context, lead to a change in beliefs, assumptions, reponses and actions.

If we follow the ideas of complexity theory, our reflections may also result in actions in a non-linear manner, and/or in places where we would not have anticipated a response.

Originating in the work of Kurt Lewin and other social science researchers post-WW2, the Action Research tradition has been associated with social justice and causes, as a tool for generating positive change (Reason & Bradbury, 2008). (Greenwood & Levin, 1999) describe Action Research as a method which advances broad involvement among participants in the study where they collaboratively identify the issues and work on these in group, in order to generate knowledge concerning these issues. Although in the same tradition, Participatory Action Research takes, as the name indicates, the level of participation further, appreciating the unique input of each team member in working towards a solution (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011). These cycles of reflection and action bring about the change in awareness impacting decision-making and stimulating joint action. '*Action researchers literally help transform inquiry into praxis or action. Research subjects become co-participants and stakeholders in the process of inquiry. Research becomes praxis-practical, reflective, pragmatic action- directed to solving problems in the world* ' (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011, p. 21).

Paulo Freire`s work into social justice laid the foundation for some of the tenets of PAR, where the blending of reflection and action is what leads to transformation and generation of movement (Freire, 1970); (Baum, et al., 2006). After having familiarised myself with both Action research and PAR I tended towards the latter as methodology for several reasons: The participants were fully involved in the shaping and adapting of the research process which included setting the goals for the process, agendas for the workshops, and freely reflecting and evaluating upon the content and responses in each session. In line with the social change

tradition of PAR, they say it as a process what would bring about a desired change in their teams. In addition to, PAR enables participants to pay close attention to their history, culture, local contexts and power relations (Baum, et al., 2006). Through the nature of the PAR processes we are encouraged to reflect upon what counts as knowledge and who has the power to define knowledge. In my experience this is as relevant in a team context as it is in a community.

Participatory Action Research is an emergent field with a more recent addition, that of DPAR (Dialogical Participatory Action Research) (Olsson, 2014), which pays more attention to the experience from within with listening ears and questions, while also being responsive, as a researcher, also at an emotional level (Olsson, 2014). As a practitioner in the field, I find this is something we should always point to and encourage between the participants in doing this type of research.

There are three aspects that are of overall importance to me in a research process. The first is involving, being with and responding to the participants in a relational and ethical manner. The second is to engage with, and not observe, the participants and the research process. The third is helping to co-create a safe container where the participants can hear and respond to each other, that will benefit them as a team. This co-creation of intended future, rather than an analysis of facts situated in the past, puts social constructionism apart from more traditional research. It is what Hersted, Ness and Frimann calls ´*future-forming research*´ (Hersted, et al., 2020, p. 7).

My research meets with the criteria of PAR, as defined by Swedish scholar in the field of empowerment research, Bengt Starrin, in that it allowed the teams to be part of the planning and implementation of the research sessions, determining objectives for the process, how, when, where and for how long we would meet, the content of the workshop. The research set out to create direct and positive effects on those involved, and that knowledge was generated through collective processes. It not only uses new methods but a new overall approach, or strategy. It aims to create new awareness that leads to action, which Starrin describes as three interacting elements: research, learning and action. My position as the researcher was equal to that of the teams, in our interaction as well as their input into the evolvement of the process (Starrin, 2007). In my view PAR, by its very nature, encompasses relational ethics.

Each team followed a series of sessions (see table in appendix 6 and 7 for overviews). Progressing through the sessions, the teams acted as focus groups whose primary purpose was to achieve a higher level of understanding of the topics of their concern (Kamberelis & Dimitriadis, 2011). This was created through group work and collective engagement designed to create dialogue on topics and positions on change. Afterwards the group engaged in reflections on the process, using the ELA approach as described earlier.

2.12   Participatory Action Research Sessions and Topics

The PAR sessions used four different entry points to explore change, and changing, within each team.

These were; context of change for the team in question; team members' previous experiences with change and changing; exploring blockages or hinderances to change; and, finally, applying the systemic ideas to their change process.

As the reader, you may be curious as to why and how I chose this complex approach rather than a straightforward research design? In my view, this approach embraced the diversity in the teams and allowed me to explore the topic of change from different positions, engaging and collaborating with the teams in the process. Let me explain how. First, the contexts in which change was experienced varied between the teams in my research, as did the time span of the engagements. For the first team the topic of change was given: a public reform programme, but the participants were instrumental in the design of the content and used outcomes of the sessions to improve collaborations in their own sub-teams. The second and third team chose their own topics of focus for the change: organic growth and organisational development, with a set of issues related to this, which we addressed during our sessions. Appreciating the context and agendas of change, was necessary to understand the team and engage more fully.

Secondly, adding to the above, I wanted to explore the team members' individual experiences of change and changing in the past; impacts and learnings; and, paying special attention to the dynamics that arose during these processes. By exploring their relationship with change and changing, I could better understand their perception of change and 'come from place' influencing how they approached and engaged with change and changing; past and present. This differed between the teams, but also within each team, strongly impacting the team dynamic. As the researcher, I was looking for moments that created shifts in the team.

Based on the premises discussed above, the findings are shaped as narrative dialogues between the researcher and the team (members) on topics of change. The voices are written down as they appeared in the discussions, showing the non-linear, often random, responsive manner in which, the dialogues unfolded. By not seeking a linear sequential format, the diversity of the team voices is expressed, shedding light on the range of what exists in the team and the random, yet responsive, nature of the dialogues. Gergen argues that context and relationship determine the conversations we have about whatever the topic is (Gergen, 2010). I was curious to find what differences and similarities we can find on the same topics discussed within the three teams, their contexts and positions. The example below shows my approach in practice while expressing experiences with change as voiced in Team 3.

Team 3 – Reflecting and Sharing Previous Experiences

During the first session members in Team 3 were asked to reflect around their different experiences of change. This was done in order to create a reflective space and activate their memories, surfacing the perceptions and attitudes they may bring with them to the research process. First, everyone was given the time to reflect on their own experiences before sharing in the group. This helped build a common experience and understanding of experiences of change and the responses created in them.

I asked them: *What are your worse or most difficult experiences of change and changing, and the dynamics occurring?* The team voices responded and shared: *'Like lightning from a clear sky. No dialogue. No being told/explained 'why'.*

Not being told/explained why this is important, how or the purpose; this created uncertainty and led to people becoming restless, taking away their identity and finally trust disappears. Management gave one-way information and then walked away. One was left with the feeling of being dumped. Not reflecting over why, or the challenges. Expectations were not in line with outcome. For some reason, implementation was not working. Lack of ownership. No analysis. No common goal. Use of force. Lack of internal communication. Lack of communication and relationship-building with the stakeholders (and clients). No specifications/ requirements given. Compromises. Hidden agendas revealed. No clear idea of common goal. Organisation felt stressed and pressured. Politically- or prestige-driven processes. The argumentation was hollow (did not stand up to scrutiny); someone wanted to show force and drive. No analysis. Weak basis for decisions. Not enough knowledge about the situation. Did not have capacity for implementing/carrying out the decisions. Not enough information and lack of ownership. Management did not understand the changes and consultants brought in. Organisation was not ready for the change. Top down approach, with lack of understanding of where the organisation was in the process. New leader wanted to make changes with no sense of urgency in the organisation. Lack of clarity. Lack of engagement.' (Team 3, first session).

We then reflected on what this meant for the team navigating more change, and the fact that people had experienced change from different roles – from CEO of a large organisation, to being an employee without responsibility. The different experiences of being part of a leader team were hinted at several times, questioning the team's collaboration. This process further unfolded in the work with Immunity to Change below. (Team 3, first session).

Returning to my description of the four entry points, the third explored blockages to change. Given the team's desire for change, what prevented or hindered change processes at present? In my practice, I often find that teams have identified areas of change, but for some reason they are not able to implement what they have aligned around. The American scholars within learning and change leadership, Lisa Laskow Lahey and Robert Keegan, have developed an X-ray model that explores how individual, and collective, beliefs can hinder or even block desired change. They use the term 'immunity to change, referring to the body's immune system, as a metaphor for how change is resisted or avoided.

A way of looking at assumptions in an organization

Immunity to change X-ray

1. Visible Commitments	2. Doing / not doing instead	3. Hidden competing commitments	4. Big assumptions
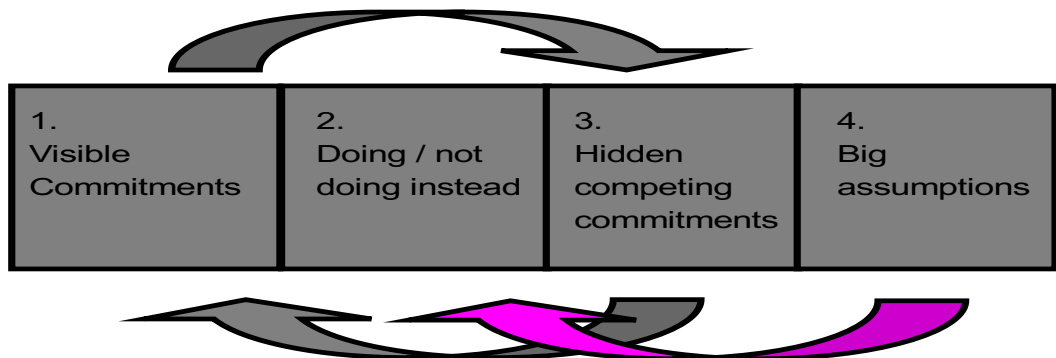
Immunity to Change by Kegan & Lahey, 2009

Figure 9 shows the X-ray process of Immunity to Change (ITC), (Keegan & Lahey, 2009)*.*

Consisting of four steps (in an X-ray), the model is suited for exploring why a change may not turn out as intended, and how best to deal with that. This is done by shaping the desired change as a goal in the first column, before the team explores what they do or don't do instead. In the third column, they examine visible and non-visible competing goals and commitments, and in the fourth column hidden assumptions, on both an individual and team

level, are discussed. To give you an example of what the process can unfold: Team 2 had cited growth, recruitment and internal communication as their objectives in the change process, but when drilling deeper it was really about working together, alignment, being good enough and fear of failing. This in turn led to a different series of conversations and shifts, as shared in section 5.3.

The ITC approach is a way of finding out what this is really about, paving the way for dialogical processes exploring the real barriers to change. The X-ray tool challenges our mindset, and how we apply ourselves when faced with change and changing. Do we rely on a technical skill and mindset which are already familiar to us, and do not require new ways or skills, to address issues? Or maybe we need to adopt an adaptive mindset, embracing complexity allowing for a new way of approaching change by the connection of thinking and feeling? The following example from Team 1 shows how using the ITC tool brought about a significant breakdown, putting the value of relations on the table. Breakdowns are not planned, they occur, and it is up to us to further explore them (Alvesson & Karreman, 2011).

Team 1 - Using the Immunity to Change Model to Drill Deeper

Halfway through their Reform programme, Team 1 said they were experiencing resistance, stress and a lack of alignment in the organisation at large. I was curious to understand what was preventing the change from taking effect and how to engage people. We worked with Immunity to Change, which allowed us to drill deeper into the barriers to change, the

obstacles presented as competing commitments of underlying/unconscious assumptions. One of the topics they chose was trust, ownership and improvements. By using the X-ray, Team 1 discovered the value of relations. The below charts document the outcome of their discussions and process:

Group 1 7th June 2017				
VISIBLE COMMITMENT	**WHAT DO WE DO, DONT DO INSTEAD**	**HIDDEN COMPETING COMMITMENTS**	**UNDERLYING/ UNCONSCIOUS ASSUMPOTIONS**	**TESTING OUR ASSUMPTIONS**
Create trust, ownership and improvememts over a period of time	Find faults and critise Distancing oneself – it is not about me Why change something that is working well, dont see the need of development (lack of self insight) Closed up functional areas/ »we have been here before» Operational don`t see bigger picture (focus on production)	Protect one`s own job and position Lack of competing agents and enterprises Belief that we are so unique Hierarchical organisation Broad engagement can lead to silo thinking Large degree of autonomy	Noone can do the job the way I do This does not concern me, it is something POD/PNP (central office) is doing This leads to less control of my area/function The quality of my my area/function is reduced as a consequence of the whole of the Reform programme	Noone can do the job the way I do- TRUE This does not concern me, it is something POD/PNP (central office) is doing- TRUE This leads to less control of my area/function- TRUE The quality of my my area/function is reduced as a consequence of the whole of the Reform programme - TRUE

Table 2 shows the Immunity to Change X-ray for Team 1.

The team voices discussed column 2 in their group work: '*The challenge is that people don't believe in the project. And then, then, what is the goal? The goal is to create trust and ownership over time. What are we doing or not doing instead? Finding errors, criticising what is presented. I think that many people distanced themselves…That complacency prevents us from seeing the need to develop. But is it because then we have a lack of self-awareness? But it is also about lack of improvement over time... we work very much in the hamster wheel.*

So, we do not widen our perspective.... *It has to do with ownership, right? So, improvement over time has to do with understanding where we are, both in society and other interactions.*

The team voices discussed column 3: *'But what is it that gets in the way of the goal? I feel a bit guilty with a lack of self-awareness and not widening my perspective. But is it, in a way, to be afraid of not being competent enough, can there be something here? Are people so afraid of their own positions? There are turf wars. And then, probably, the hierarchy has something to say. It's a pretty tight hierarchy in the police. There are not all places you should come and think something, very open in any case. But I also think there is something about the enormous commitment then, for your subject area, right? There are high ambitions and commitment, which are positive things, but we see that after all, they become hindrances to thinking in totality, because you are so concerned about your subject.'*

The team voices discussed column 4: *'But underlying unconscious assumptions that hinder us, what is it that makes us find mistakes we then criticise? It is because we believe that we are so unique that we are so good ourselves. Perhaps the change is not professionally justified, for example. Can it be a fear that my subject area ... so you have a very high level of ambition on your own behalf, right? What about my career? Because, let's say I want to create confidence in ownership and improvement over time ... what underlying assumptions prevent us from achieving it? The quality will drop in my field of expertise, because now we are going to think totality, right? And the idea 'this does not concern me' is one that maybe ... it is an underlying thought in many people.'*

The team voices reflected on the group work afterwards: *'Good and useful exercise which we need to include as we move on. We must not assume anything. I really want the interim management to have foresight and be ahead of the game. We need to think of the entity and collaborate across the district. Responsibility is evaporating – no one seems to take it on. The Project Head Office is not able to pick up the signals from the organisation. We don't do anything before we are in the middle of it. Overwhelm. People need to get out of the hamster wheel before they can implement the new methods.'*

Listening to the team voices during the X-ray exercises was very enlightening for me. Dialogue in the organisation seems to be sacrificed at the altar of efficiency. As they shared openly around their experiences, they kept referring to individual focus and needs that existed in the police organisation at the time, and the lack of trust in each other's competence. As one said: *'We need a more adaptive mindset. Fourth column is all about feelings.'* That created a deep shift in me.

As I watched and listened to their group discussions, it struck me that this was a real shift for them too. It showed that the reason the Reform programme was struggling was that the leaders did not engage people emotionally. They did not press the right buttons, which, according to the team, had to do with communication, building the WE, culture and relations. This became so evident that the project leader wanted the Chief of Police in the district to go through the ITC exercise in her management group. The project leader said they had been missing the ball completely, only focusing on delivering work packages, not appreciating the importance of the other, above mentioned, aspects. The focus on linear processes and hierarchy seemingly became a bottleneck for ideas and initiatives. (Team 1, fourth session).

2.13   The Wheel of Systemic Ideas and Constellation Work

The three above mentioned elements paved the way for the fourth, and main part of my research, which was to introduce systemic ideas in PAR workshops. The Wheel of Systemic Ideas opens up for an exploration of what application and impact systemic ideas could have on the team members' relationship with change and changing within the team, and between the team and its surroundings. To this end I chose to use constellation work giving a physical experience of movement during the dialogical process. Some readers may be familiar with constellation work through Bert Hellinger`s model of family therapy (Cohen, 2006); (Whittington, 2012), so at this point I would like to make the distinction between family constellation processes and how I work with constellations in teams and organisations. The former is rooted in a psychotherapeutic tradition drawing on existential-phenomenology, psycho-drama, family sculptures and Zulu ancestor traditions (Cohen, 2006). The latter is ´A *constellation is a visual mapping of a team, showing how the team members place themselves in relation to each other on a given topic. It provides considerable information about the team's perception of a topic and can be an effective starting point for an intelligent team discussion. Constellations are sensitive exercises requiring a high degree of safety and trust…….To ensure this, a team agreement needs to be in place before doing constellations´* (Rød & Fridjhon, 2015, p. 73)

The decision to use constellations, as defined above by Rød and Fridjhon, in my research is based on my own experience with the method working with groups of people in a professional capacity and in the context of the workplace. The aim is not to do therapeutic work, but to have the constellations act as a conversation starter on selected topics such as the team´s goals, style of communication and collaboration.

In my experience it opens up for, and creates shifts in positions, for the individuals and the team, helping them to explore their come from place, experiences and preferences. It helps the team view itself from the outside in, as well as from the inside. In my experience team members become curious and readily engage in more open and conscious dialogue to understand and resolve issues they face and navigate challenges at hand.

I draw upon two concepts in my work: a model developed by the family therapists, Marita Fridjhon and Faith Fuller, called the metaskill wheel (Rød & Fridjhon, 2015), which uses constellations as a way of revealing and aligning teams through the sharing of experiences and positions. I use this concept in how I have structured the wheel. The Wheel of Systemic Ideas has eight spokes, each representing a systemic idea as shown in image 3 below. The ideas become lenses, through which the team members view and explore the change topic. To engage the teams and make it applicable to their context and circumstances, they chose topics relevant to the teams' particular change processes. It can be easier and richer to explore one or two spokes at a time, and each of the eight can be unfolded to explore a spectrum of positions, with a systemic idea at one end and a modernistic idea at the other end (as seen in figure 1 and image 3). To this end, I build on the work of a pioneer in bringing the systemic approach to organisations, the American systemic practitioner, David Campbell, and his work on semantic polarity (Campbell & Groenbaek, 2006); (Grønbæk, 2013). Campbell used constellations to start explorative conversations in the group, breaking the binary relationships. In it, he suggested that members of the group should take up a position and explore the power relation in it. At the same time, he encouraged them to hold it lightly as it was only a position.

He would also invite them to try the position on the other end of the polarity. He would set up a line on the floor, inviting members to physically stand in the position of each polarity:

i.e. The new changes are exciting-/-----/-----/----/----/- The new changes are challenging

(Grønbæk, 2013, p. 197)

Letting go of a 'right' or 'wrong' position, members began to see the connectedness to the other end of the polarity and became curious about the positive intention of each position.

In my experience, this type of constellation work is of benefit to many teams, allowing them to express their position in a physical manner. By first holding one's own position, then visiting the opposite, one can explore the polarities and richness of each position, developing empathy and increasing awareness. Given that we are not looking for a binary answer, it becomes interesting to explore what exists between the polarities, and what could emerge through co-creation from that space? The model is also helpful in showing the interrelationship between the positions team members choose on the line.
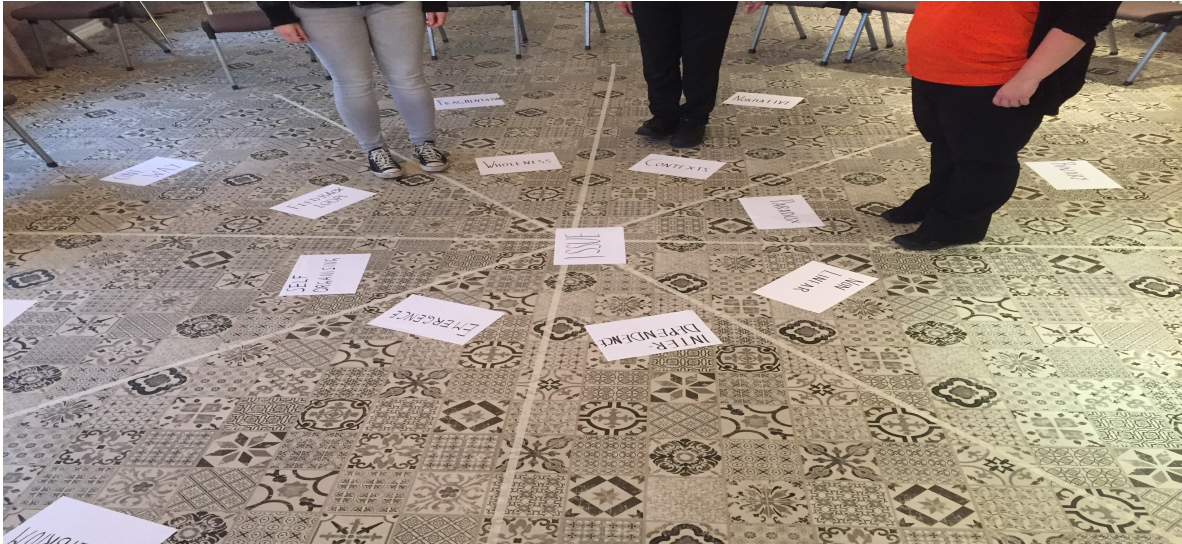
Image 3 shows The Wheel of Systemic Ideas placed on the floor and how the participants can engage using it. The participants choose their topic of change which is placed in the middle, and the meaning, contribution and impact of each systemic idea is explored through constellation work and dialogue. (Rød, 2017).

To follow the flow of the change topics discussed, we picked spokes from the wheel to explore in detail using the Polarity Theory. To avoid binary comparisons, a gradient was put in the middle allowing the participants to explore the range of possibilities when using the ideas. Participants would then add words to deepen their position. We worked through one spoke (dimension) of the Wheel at the time, placing a relevant change topic as focal point in the middle. The participants placed themselves according to their preferred mind-set, then changed positions to visit the opposite polarity, before exploring the space in between the two and what is possible there. This opened up for discussions of the impact of these ideas on their roles and behaviours in the organisation.
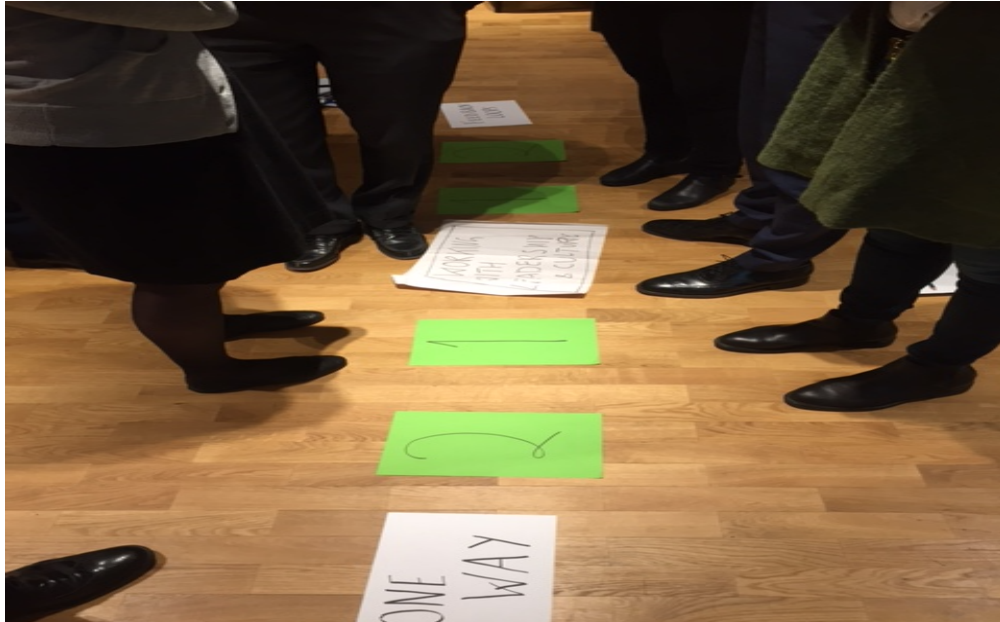
Image *4 shows Team 3 exploring one spoke – feedback loops – and one way (from The Wheel of Systemic Ideas), and the range that exist between the two.*

To illustrate the use of the spokes, I show two here: one way and feedback loops in image 4 and equilibrium and emergence in figure 10.

The experience of using the polarity constellation was described by the team voices in Team 2 as: '*The constellations where we physically move around enable us to focus on the task at hand together, and it visualises something abstract in a good way. It makes it easier to remember and is more useful than talking and talking. It creates awareness and we can remember more easily. We are making progress as a group that we have not done before. We have started new processes that we need to continue working on. Put words on things; how similar do we have to be, or not.*' (Team 2, fourth session).

At the end of each constellation each team member filled out a questionnaire describing possible responses from the different positions (see appendix 10). Although from different backgrounds, change contexts and paradigms, and working on different topics of change, the team voices expressed were quite similar, as figure 10 shows, using the spoke of equilibrium and emergence as the example:

Topics for the constellations:
Team 1: The Police Reform
Team 2: Organisational DNA
Topic 3: Developing the organisation

Colour codes:
Team 1: Green
Team 2: Pink
Team 3: Blue

Equilibrium

2

Not very including or open to influence/adaptation
Little genuine contact with the surroundings, repeats behavior in role independent of feed- back, set in ways, can´t deal with change, few new ideas, lack of willingness

Boring, demotivating, safe, dogmatic, little development and creativity, a nice day at work for some, implement but not challenged

Happy and content, lack of initiative, administer, status quo, no fresh thinking or innovation, no business development, focus on what we do today without changing

1

Dynamic but stable core, need for safety and stability, will be influenced where necessary, allow for change in course of time

Resistance to change, skeptical, stability, do same things, for some this is enough change

Administer current business, against change, quiet and degree of focus varies, reactive,

0

Evolving, innovative, dynamic, developing, some standstill but still a lot of change, you are very «with it" and happy with pace, achieving and mastering

Develop according to market , creative and close to the customer, agile, in business, excited to do new things but careful, curiosity, stakeholder analysis, certain basic processes are working but one searches for new possibilities to find angles

1

Openness to change, safe and stable core, pragmatic, play dough, adaptable, some exploration for change, curious, exploring, room for thinking in new and different ways, seeks challenges

Can become too much, too many become burnt out and ill, a motivational factor for some, restless, chaotic, tiresome, constant evolvement, flexible, can lose sense of history, committed to continual development, can create uncertainty and unrest, reduce effectiveness and stability

Creative and innovative but too unstable, restlessness, hunting for new impulses and tasks, challenges, swaying in opinion, choices and behaviours, many loose ends, competition and insecurity

Trial and error, permission to fail, tries to adapt to different situations, constant development of business products, panic, dysfunctional, one is hungry and everything is changing
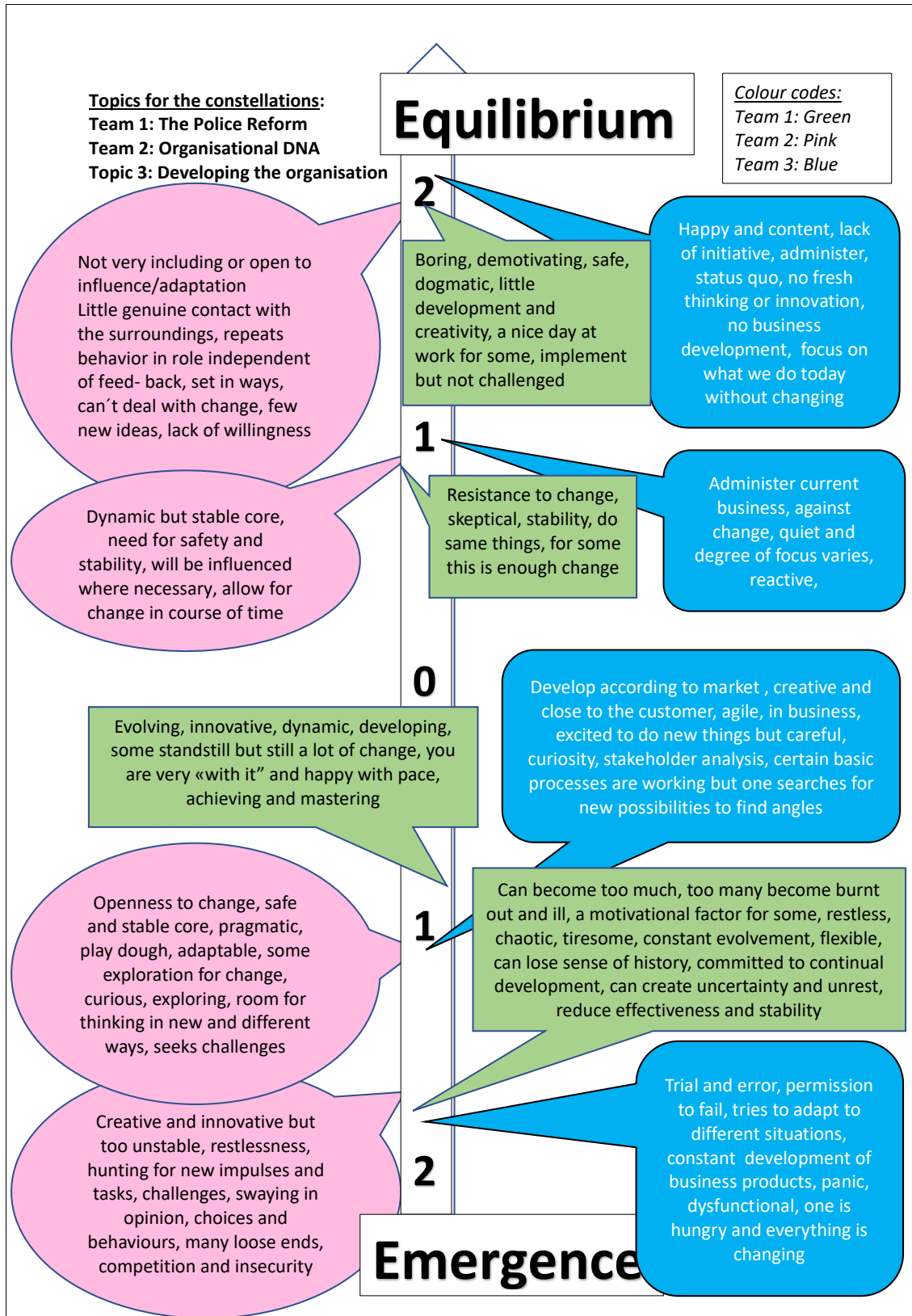
2

Emergence

Figure 10 show a juxtaposition of answers from all three teams on the spoke constellation of emergence and equilibrium.

87

The findings showed that, regardless of the team, the context and the topic focused on, there are many similarities in the answers. Some of the language used was different because it was context- specific. For example, bank (in blue) talks of market, business and stakeholders; police (in green) uses words like history, stability, burn-out; social care providers (in pink) are about stability, change, choices. I found it interesting to see how value was found in each of the positions, and that there were little differences between the teams in terms of the thoughts and responses described.

You may, as the reader, question my choice of using Polarity Theory, and how I, with the Wheel of Systemic Ideas, position ideas from social constructionism up against those of modernism, reinforcing a binary thinking I have already admitted to being critical of. My response to that would be that, in my practice, I find that people try and find the 'right' answer to a problem or situation. They often speak in binaries: 'it is like this or like that'. By setting up the spokes in a binary fashion, with gradients in the middle, I find that the team members start to recognise how prevalent binary thinking is in organisations, and as they respond to this, they can start to question the binary and explore what is in the middle.

I find that this approach makes people more aware of their own thinking; the paradigms they, mostly unconsciously, subscribe to, and the many paradoxes that exist. Through their dialogues and inquiring of each other's' positions, new awareness emerges, opening a 'yes, and…' attitude, which embraces the viability of all the positions. The spokes in the wheel then become a spectrum in which people start to make connections between the overlapping ideas, which can fertilise new ways of approaching change.

Next, you may now ask, what is the difference between polarity and binary? My response to that would be that the binary is more locked; it is an 'either/or' thinking that limits the emergence and exploration of possibilities. We can be drawn to polarities, like magnetic fields, without a clear-cut response. During the sessions, I also noticed participants sliding back and forth, as on a scale, as they engaged with the ideas, showing the fluidity possible.

2.14   Break Downs, Striking Moments and Shifts

In the sections above I have described the overall methodology, Mystery as Method, the PAR workshop and the four workshop topics which provided my research approach with a framework. The different collection methods I described, in section 2.5 and in table 1, allowed me to use several sources to understand the dynamics around change and changing. It was my intention that the research findings be a reflection of the experiences as described by the teams, so in my analysis I step away from quantitative step-by-step linear approaches, to pursuing qualitative approaches within social constructionism, more specifically Mystery as Method (Alvesson & Karreman, 2011) and striking moments (Shotter, 2011), to explore shifts in awareness, thinking and responses in the teams.

Socrates claimed that 'philosophy *begins with wonder*' (Shotter, 2011, p. 144). I would argue that, when we allow space for relational interactions and reflexivity, we offer the opportunity for increased awareness and the possibility to question our meaning-making, both our '*onto*' and '*episte*' in the world. Shotter refers to the work of Fisher and Wittgenstein when he discusses the importance of being struck by something; a phenomenon, an experience, or an event, stressing the insights the quality and depth of the moment offers. Because of its unfamiliarity, the experience gives us a new and different value (Shotter, 2011).

Alvesson and Karreman refer to the moments when you come across, or notice, the process moving in a different direction, as breakdowns (Alvesson & Karreman, 2011). In my analysis, I make the distinction between larger breakdowns, where something emerges in the process altering its content and course, and smaller shifts or striking moments (Shotter, 2011). There were four significant breakdowns in my research process, impacting the interactions within each of the teams. These related to Immunity to Change (as described in section 2.12); a pull between production and relation (described in section 4.6); psychological safety (described in section 2.10) and the value of DNA (described in section 3.5).

Rather than being '*theory -led outsiders*' (Shotter, 2015, p. 95) trying to apply deductive theories to the lived world, Shotter suggests that we go into the human systems as participants and notice what is happening within. He suggests several ways to create a (heightened) awareness that can inform and influence our next steps and actions I include these here because they can help us in noticing the striking moments, the shifts that produce something new and different at some level. Shotter says we first of all can be moved by something that happens to us, likewise by something that emerges from within, through our explorations and interactions during a difficult or confusing situation. Then there is a sensing of '*something is not quite right',* creating a feeling of uncertainty. He talks further of '*spirende former´* (Shotter, 2015, p. 95)*, (*a Danish expression for something starting to grow and take shape), and what can be co-created and emerge from circular dynamics. Shotter also refers to '*dialogical routines*' (Shotter, 2015, p. 96) used to avoid addressing the pink elephants in the room. In my experience, these elephants, which I also call ghosts, can become more and more prevalent in a team process, and almost manifest with their own physical energy. Noticing and bringing these into the dialogical practice creates shifts.

Similarly revealing are the enlightened moments, when people mentally connect the dots becoming aware of any underlying patterns. Finally, Shotter refers to a 'fornemmelse' (Shotter, 2015, p. 96), a Danish word for having an intuition that there is something else trying to emerge of which we are not yet aware When noticing these moments, how can we make sense of them and what do they create in the team, and in relation to change and changing?

We may be astounded or surprised, I have found, by the unintended impact our words have, how easily we can be misunderstood by others, and to hear the thoughts of someone we know well and find them very contrary to our own. Such interactions pave the way for understanding *'struckness'* as an integral part of a conversation. To me, this allows for a reflexive interaction with the unpredictable and unknown, offering the opportunity to see or grasp connections not previously visible or known to us.

Shotter argues that because we are engaged with what we are struck by, it becomes the start of something to be further explored. In my practice, I have often noticed how a phrase uttered, or an action taken by one team member, can create a response in another which again leads to a big shift in the team interaction. Such interactions therefore allow for *'struckness'* and are an integral part of a conversation. Pillow understands being *'struck'* as '*a spontaneous sensation, which occurs in a sticky or striking moment, which triggers an individual to make sense of an experience*' (Pillow, 2003, p. 4). To me this allows for a reflexive interaction with the unpredictable and unknown, offering the opportunity to create connections previously unknown to us.

The Social Constructionist scholar, Ann Cunliffe, refers to the French philosopher, Ricoeur, who introduces the term poetic moments as *'…. instants, moments that have the effect of rupture, of beginning to think about or see something differently……..'* (Cunliffe, 2018, p. 9). ´Poiesis, the Greek root of the word poetry, which simply means 'making'….. by which we make ourselves together' (Shaw, 2002, p. 27). So we are making ourselves together through whatever and whomever we are interacting with. In my view, 'striking moments', 'breakdowns' and 'poetic moments' all have in common that they create shifts in awareness or consciousness that produce different responses in people. They aren't necessarily captured in a moment's realisation, but in a process that allows some new awareness to emerge, impacting the teams. These concepts can be applied to understand the emerging dynamics in a team and the shifts that are created. I appreciate how the American organisational theorist, Karl E Weick, describes this: *'Whenever one reacts with the feeling that's interesting, that reaction is a clue that current experience has been tested against past experience, and the past understanding has been found inadequate'* (Weick, 1989, p. 525); (Alvesson & Karreman, 2011, p. 58).

This voice from Team 3 refers to a moment that created a shift and gives an example of the inner dialogue and reflexivity: *'I have gained several insights during the process that have helped me to gain a better understanding of what we must do together to improve the functioning of the leader team. The single episode that was most important was when we discussed a decision made in the leader team, where we discovered that most of the team had reacted to how the matter had been presented and discussed, and it was very clear that everyone had different starting points for how they perceived the situation.*

It became an eye-opener for me, where I understood that I had to think much more carefully about what assumptions and motivations everyone has. If I do not pay attention to this in important discussions/decisions, I will never get the team with me. That episode also made everyone much more open with their opinions, which made the process considerably more rewarding'. (Team 3, post research survey).

Drawing on the above, I have, during the research process with the three teams, noted striking and poetic moments that created a new awareness within the teams, in myself and in relation to the research topic. In my journaling I have recorded the moments that struck me, be it an insight, an event, an interaction, or words uttered. In order to trace the striking moments as experienced within the teams in my research, I revisited the team interactions through recordings, transcripts, flip charts (of their responses to group work), and my own notes. As the researcher I was looking for the above dynamics expressed as 'shifts', creating new awareness and connections, forming patterns impacting the teams and what is emerging. The moments could be what are directly expressed as striking or impactful experiences by the participants, or a change in the dynamics in the team space. The result is a collection of voices, picked when walking through the meadows of the research, to express diversity, disagreement, frustrations, alignment, vulnerability, insights, increased awareness, and shifts, as expressed throughout the thesis.

Image 5 is a metaphor for Alvesson and Karreman's model of the research process showing a collection of flowers (material) picked in the meadow of many flowers, forming the end results of my research (Rød 2018).

2.15   A Reflexive Moment – Going Beyond My Comfort Zone

Emerging from the summer holidays at the beginning of August 2017, I should be feeling charged up and ready to go. I am not. My head and mind are spinning in a vortex. I feel heavy, dizzy, nauseous without any logical explanations. What is wrong with me? While walking one day, I am struck by a feeling of being told off. As if I am a little girl and have done something wrong. The feeling hits me in clear daylight, and the sensation resonates throughout every cell in my body. Every part of me recognises the fear nesting inside me. Am I doing something wrong?

Unfolding the *'struckness'* within me, I come to understand what the feeling is about. Thinking back on what I have read about uncertainty and mankind's search for a truth to hold on to, and to help him make sense of the world, I come to understand my process and what is going on. In someone's world I am doing something wrong. I recall words uttered during a doctoral seminar: *'it is almost like we are subversives'* (Simon, 2015). Ever since I was a little girl, I have challenged the rules and norms society had conditioned me into. I was the *'why'*-person, always asking the questions or stepping up to try new things. I remember my mother's words: *'Why do you always have to stick your head out*?' *'Why do you always have to do things out of the ordinary?' Why can't you just be like everyone else?'* At the time I felt very unsupported, for which I blamed her, but as I sit here forty years later, I see that she was only afraid. I rocked her boat and she responded in fear-based anger. Every time I questioned something or did something out of the ordinary, my parents were dismayed because I threatened their order, their stability and their worldview. And now I am doing it again, but in another environment, surrounded by different people.

What are the negative thoughts in my head about? What am I afraid of? Of doing something wrong, of being told off. Because I have, like so many of us, been conditioned into thinking that there is a right and wrong answer. I recall humiliating sessions from school, standing by the blackboard in front of the whole class, while the math teacher relentlessly asked me to find the right answer to the equations he had written on the board. I had no chance. I was completely paralysed. The consequences of not finding the right answer, of being wrong, failing. Being left out.

Through my doctoral journey, as I am sharing my reflections and ideas, I feel that I am threatening parts of the academic establishment I work in; the worldview of some of the teams I engage with; and, the structure and strategy of some the organisations that come to me for help. My big realisation is that I am not doing something wrong. I am merely questioning the predominant paradigm and discourse of modernism, which seem to be deeply rooted in many of us. I have come to realise, when I get a mental chiding, I am not doing anything wrong per se, but merely creating a disturbance that can be uncomfortable for people to be with, hence their response. I know from experience that you can't lead a system, you can only disturb it, then it moves on its own accord where it wants and needs to go. So, if I can't lead a team to new pastures, maybe I can influence it through disturbance so that it may find a new path it needs to walk. I think there is a part of me that will enjoy that.

After having read chapter 2, you, as the reader, may think that my research approach is complex with many interacting elements. I would agree. I would also argue for its necessity. It is part of an emerging process. Simon puts forward that systemic practice research should be ethics-led over method-led (Simon, 2018). Having discarded the linear research plan at an early stage, I allowed the research to emerge with its interdependent elements interacting in relationship to each other. The teams and I needed to appreciate the contexts of change, give life to the topic by sharing personal experiences and reflect over these, look behind the words to explore what really prevented the change we had set out to do, and finally how could we do it differently? As we are leaving the shores of methodology in chapter 2 and heading to the systemic world of chapter 3, may I ask you what you are taking from this so far? What responses emerge in you? What are you curious about?

3. Chapter 3: Systemic Systems, Paradoxes and Positions

Given that my research is a systemic inquiry on change, exploring to what extent systemic ideas and approaches can help teams navigate emergent change and changing, it is time to dive into the world of systems and systemic thinking, to explore paradoxes and positions. This chapter sets context and positions for the concepts relevant to my inquiry. In doing so, I explore the historical origins of the field and describe positions from literature. Towards the end of the chapter I collate the ideas applied in the Wheel of Systemic Ideas. My literature review took me through highs and lows. It is a complex field with many conversations. Sometimes the voices of all these wise people sounded like noise; at other times, like music to my ears. Only to find that when I listened again, the noise was endearing and the music one I could hum to.

Most teams and organisations are in some type of transition at any point in time. The rapid speed of change and the increasing complexity facing teams and organisations today makes the ability to navigate change, in a constructive manner, a crucial capacity for survival. These transition processes seem to favour the mechanical measurement approach rooted in a modernistic paradigm. By that, I mean that the transitional work is based on measurement tools assessing performance and effectiveness to identify an optimal state of affairs – a universal, single truth to be uncovered. Less attention seems to be given to the living aspects of the organisation. What approaches, discourses or paradigms could be evolved or added? What might prove to be useful for a team or an organisation, given the fluid environment in which they operate? How can we come to view change as a natural emerging process, which we can, at worst, accept as inevitable, and maybe – at best – welcome and embrace, even be

part of, and influence? To ensure sustainable solutions we need to explore the living and relational aspects of teams and organisations, and co-create collaborative human systems using systemic approaches. (Rød, 2016). In the pursuit of answers to the above I was drawn to nature and physics and read broadly to find what ideas could be applied to my systemic practice.

3.1 Another Reflexive Moment – Getting Lost in the Maze

Entering into the world of systems feels like entering a garden maze – at first attractive, green and lush, with well-maintained walls, sharp angles and clean straight lines. It appears inviting and easy to stroll through. After the initial delight, confusion sets in. Which turn to take next? Where will it lead me? Will it lead me anywhere? Is there a right or wrong way to go? Who can I ask? Who holds the 'truth'? What am I supposed to find? Will I get lost, confused or even panicky? Will I ever find my way out? Will this result in anything?

On the doctoral journey, I have experienced a range of emotions and asked myself the above questions. Being a doctoral student has shaped me into being a researcher, also outside of my practice, allowing for insights to emerge in me along paths, around corners and in encounters where I least expected it.

My first encounter with systems was with Relationship Systems Intelligence (Rød & Fridjhon, 2015) in 2005, as a practitioner and team coach in organisations. The PDSP course introduced me to social constructionism and the field of systemic practice, looking back to its origins and also current thinkers.

Dialogical practices, relational ethics, withness and aboutness thinking (Shotter, 2011), systems or systemic, foregrounding and backgrounding, monologues about dialogues, make it up as you go, or then again maybe not. It felt like being immersed into murky waters of terminology that were alienating in their immediate appearance but familiar in their content when more carefully explored. I was struggling to make sense of it all, unaccustomed to turning every word for exploration.

Image 6 shows my attempt at meaning-making from the research maze (Rød 2019).

I came up gasping for air, in an attempt to free myself from these covertly politically charged manifestations of human sense-making. Knowing that I am part of the meaning-making processes, creating my reality as I interact with others, I also needed to get a sense of the territory, by putting down some signposts to help me navigate.

I am partial to overviews, seeking to understand the bigger picture before diving down to explore the terrain beneath. Through the reading, I tried to arrange some of the pieces around the terminology associated with systems and systemic practice. When the sun emerged from behind the clouds it all looked simple and easy, before it disappeared again leaving my horizon blurred and foggy. What is being dialogical? What is a system? What is it to be relational? What is being systemic? In the coming pages I will make a humble attempt to answer some of these questions and make sense of them within the context of my research.

3.2 What is a System? And What is Systemic? An Overview

Exploring the literature within the fields of systems and systemic, I was struck by the wide variety of contexts in which the two concepts are applied. Narrowing it down to change and organisations, I became curious about the distinction between the two.

The fields of systems and thinking systemically are vast and continue to evolve. We can trace the historical roots of systemic and systems thinking back through the centuries, where its expression has varied depending on the context and dominant discourse at the time. The American Social Constructionist thinker, Barnett Pearce, discusses the origins of the word systems: 'system' comes from two words, 'together' and to 'cause to stand' (Pearce, 2002). Other applications of the word are an 'arrangement'; 'belonging to' and 'wholeness' (Pearce, 2002).

The application of the word system has shifted from analysis to recognising patterns and understanding processes (Pearce, 2002). A brief look at Collins Dictionary confirms that, despite the many contexts and usages of the word system, the relationship of elements into some kind of structure or wholeness is recognisable throughout as shown in these two examples:

- A **system** is a network of things that are linked together so that people or things can travel from one place to another or communicate.

- A **system** is a way of working, organising, or doing something which follows a fixed plan or set of rules. You can use **system** to refer to an organisation or institution that is organized in this way

(Collins Dictionary, 2017).

Barnett Pearce distinguished between systems and systemic. '*The distinction between thinking about systems and thinking systemically hinges on the perspective of the person doing the thinking. One can and usually does think 'about' systems from outside the system. That is, whether we might describe the thinking as ontologically a part of the system or separate from it, in this instance the thinker takes the observer-perspective. When thinking systemically, on the other hand, the thinker is self-reflexively a part of the system and takes the perspective of a participant or component of the system*' (Pearce, 2002, p. 2); (Chard, 2014, p. 40). Pearce proposes that we experience and describe something differently depending on whether we are inside and part of the system, or outside and separate from it.

This speaks to the flexibility, which is needed, and I often find lacking in teams, of shifting positions or even better holding both. In my experience, people in a team are not able to see the system they are part of from the outside, considering how they may be perceived and what responses they may create in others. On the other hand – and this a paradox – many see organisations as systems to be managed as objects, without recognising the human experience on the inside.

Peter Senge, American systems scientist and author, known for his work on organisational learning, speaks of organisations as systems and calls for system leadership. A systems leader, in his view, cultivates collective leadership and needs three key capabilities: the ability to see the larger system; foster reflection and generative conversations; and, shifting the collective focus from reactive problem-solving to co-creating the future. (Senge, et al., 2015). I would argue that he maintains an outside-in, aboutness view of organisations as system, but with an increasing emphasis on dialogical and reflective practices to build trust and arenas for learning. Although this seems like a viable path to follow, Complexity Theory researchers Stig O Johannessen and Lesly Kuhn (Johannessen, 2012) criticise Senge for arguing that a strong vision and set of values are necessary to hold an organisation together and drive it forward to reach its goals. Their critique rests on the top-down approach often followed in organisations (as is also my experience) and that too much rests with the vision and charisma of one strong leader.

If we move inside the human system, we encounter a relational focus between the individuals, as expressed by Robert L Flood, British organisational scientist:

'S*ystemic thinking is the discipline which makes visible that our actions are inter-related to other people's actions in patterns of behaviour and are not merely isolated events'* (Flood, 1999, p. 2); (Chard, 2014, p. 32). Flood here speaks to the patterns of relationship that exist between people, and which cannot be ignored.

Gergen introduces the concept of *'relational leading'* which focuses on the attention to processes of relationship essential to organising, sustaining, creating, and developing the activities of people working together (Gergen, 2016). He argues that this is a response to traditional thinking and juxtaposes the two types of leadership:

Traditional leading	Relational leading
individual is primary	relationships are primary
generate structure	attend to process
adapt	innovate
set task	set conditions
direct	enlist
maintain surveillance	maintain mutual support
define rank	model good relating
dictate	listen
correct	appreciate

(Gergen, 2016, pp. 30-33)

I am including Gergen's thoughts on relational leadership as I believe they lay the foundation for good dialogue, much needed in processes emphasising implications for change. He points out the position of social constructionism of '*shifting the focus beyond the individuals to the relational processes of which we are apart*' (Gergen, 2015, p. 199). While I subscribe to the focus in relationship, having experienced the shifts this can create in teams first-hand, I am concerned that while some may relational leading as the answer to everything, others hold it as 'fluffy feely' stuff. Others also see their individuality as threatened. To gain ground and build bridges to the many modernist leaders of today, I believe relational leadership could be situated in a business context proving its merits to the effectiveness of the organisations.

3.3 Some Influences from Natural Sciences

A key development to systems thinking was General Systems Theory, pioneered by the Austrian biologist, von Bertalanffy after WW2. In an attempt to find commonalities in different systems approaches, he developed a structured model applicable to all systems (Chard, 2014). Von Bertalanffy also drew inspiration from the natural sciences and pointed to central ideas that can be recognised in systemic thinking today, such as; inter-relatedness, patterns, complexity and emergence. Within the same school of thought, Arthur Koestler used the term '*Holons*' in his book '<u>Ghost in the Machine</u>' (1967), referring to '*a semiautonomous unit independent, yet interdependent on a larger system*' (Chard, 2014, p. 36). First introduced by Greek mathematician Pythagoras, who combined mathematics and philosophy, Koestler uses holonics to explain the connection between the smallest atom and the galaxies (Magee, 2010).

Research into natural sciences has usually meant an observer position, while the dynamics taking place within nature have contributed to systemic ideas, among these biology and complexity theories. Hermeneutics is an approach that helps us explore how something is understood or interpreted (Gergen, 2015). The German hermeneutic philosopher, Hans George Gadamer, criticises the observer position, which we also can recognise from modernistic thinking (Gadamer, 1960); (Abma & Widdershoven, 2011). Through detached observation, the world is viewed and explained through universal laws, organisations are viewed as entities and defined structures with clear boundaries. It seems that people tend to talk about organisational change as something that happens to them, often outside of their frame of influence. They observe the occurring dynamics while reflecting upon these in a disassociated manner.

Gadamer also suggests that the subjectivist view is insufficient because it places him/herself from inside a situation, trying to make sense of the world from the position of self or other. He puts forward a third way of interacting with the world, that of being dialogical (Gadamer, 1960); (Abma & Widdershoven, 2011). In the dialogical position is engagement and interacting, responding to the world around. Dutch researchers Abma and Widdershoven capture Gadamer thinking when they says: *'The knower listens to the other from a readiness to accept the other's input as being relevant for himself. Knower and known engages in a joint learning process in which both change in identity and new horizons emerge. The knower no longer looks at the world but interacts and takes responsibility of development´* (Gadamer, 1960); (Abma & Widdershoven, 2011, p. 672).

This means that being dialogical is being responsive to other living things and being in relationship with these. To me it carries an implicit respectfulness of the autonomy of other beings, and how they respond. Being dialogical is therefore a way of interacting with the living world. We are in a constant process of responding to responses, and, through this co-construction of realities, our perceptions and experiences are shaped and filed. From this, we have the opportunity to develop new meaning by examining our experiences and reflections.

Gregory Bateson, anthropologist and social scientist, put forward ideas bridging natural and social sciences, helping us to see the relationships between elements in the system, resulting in some of the systemic ideas we have today such as context, patterns of relationship and feedback loops. Bateson, who was one of the first to apply cybernetics into social sciences, contributed to the foundation of systemic family therapy later evolved by the Milan group in Italy and KCC in the UK (Pearce, 2002); (Chard, 2014), spoke of a larger mind, or ecology, implying an interconnectedness between all living things, urging increased self-awareness to act more responsibility in the world (Bateson, 1972).

Cybernetics was originally fathered by the American mathematician and philosopher, Norbert Wiener. Cybernetics stems from the Greek term for 'steering' or 'control'' (Gergen, 2015, p. 213) and is used to understand self- organising systems that evolve on the basis of feedback loops. It pays attention to how a system can be purposeful, observe itself and learn through feedback loops; acting, observing results of action before acting again (Pearce, 2002). Because the system is self-organising and learns through feedback loops, it is able to adjust its processes and direction.

This means that by introducing regular forms of feedback, gathering information from a series of internal and external sources, an organisation can more rapidly self-adjust adapting its structure and direction. We can turn to the Theory of Autopoiesis to understand this ongoing, non-linear process.

Chilean biologists Humberto Maturana and Francisco Varela developed the Theory of Autopoiesis (referring to the relational activity of making ourselves together (Shaw, 2002) also meaning self-generation). Capra and Luisi draw upon Maturana´s and Varela´s understanding of an autopoietic system when they describe it as: '*An autopoietic unit .....can be defined as a system capable of sustaining itself due to a network of reactions that continuously regenerates its components- and this from within a boundary of its own making´* (Maturana & Varela, 1992); (Luisi, 2006)*;* (Capra & Luisi, 2014, p. 134)*.* With biology as the basis for the theory, it goes on to state that a cell needs nutrients and energy from the outside to survive, but not to define what it is. However, because it is an open system its interactions with its environment gradually reshapes the cell enabling its survival. So, when a system responds to signals through feedback loops, it has the opportunity to become self-organising.

Capra describes the big turning point of the 20th Century as being that systems could not be understood by analysis; rather, they had to be seen and understood in context (Capra, 1997). He explains that organismic biologists helped give birth to a new way of thinking – 'systems thinking' – focusing on connectedness, relationship and context. '*In the systems view we realize that the objects themselves are networks of relationship, embedded in larger networks. For the systems thinker the relationships are primary'* (Capra, 1997, p. 39). Central to this were the quantum scientists, Niels Bohr and Werner Heisenberg, and their Double Slit experiment.

Simply put, and what I believe is relevant for systems work, is that their experiments showed an atom going through a slit would change its appearance and energy, alternating between a wave and a particle, depending on the context and the observer. This provides the co-existence of a 'both and'. The atom is a particle AND a wave at the same time, depending on the methodology you use to 'see' it. The scientists woke up to the presence of paradoxes, the importance and impacts of contexts (Capra, 1988). American scientist and organisational thinker, Margareth Wheatley, argues that if context is crucial then nothing is transferable. '*Everything is new and different and unique to each of us...... and we need to engage with each other*' (Wheatley, 1999, p. 9). Like Stacey, Wheatley has brought complexity ideas into organisation in relation to leadership awareness and development.

The arrival of computers in the 1970s allowed for the emergent handling of bigger data, leading the American scientist, Edward Lorenz, to develop the Chaos Theory, which, contrary to the name, captures an order in what can at first appear chaotic. The theory's main principles centre around non-linear relationships; that small fluctuations in local conditions can create large-scale changes elsewhere (also known as the Butterfly Effect), and that chaos is actually complex information interacting in extended feedback loops. My takeaway from becoming familiar with this theory is that everything is interconnected and in relationship, even if not visible to us. We can benefit from looking deeper into how a seemingly minor change can influence us or our surroundings in different ways – short, medium and long term. By expanding the boundaries of what we are looking at beyond locality, we increase our awareness of the implications of our responses and actions. As a consequence of such reflections, we may choose different solutions to our pressing problems or urgent needs.

And, it can impact how we view the world as a research participant shared in Team 2: *'What I remember from Chaos Theory is that what might look like chaos close up isn't the same when you step further away to look. It's a pattern one must be higher up to see it. A mindset so you don't get caught in the details, become a coping mechanism.'* (Team 2, second session).

Complexity theories, which focus on dissipative structures inherent to a system, emerged from the work of the Nobel prize winner and Russian-Belgian scientist, Ilya Prigogine, who contributed to the origins of this theory from a Natural Sciences perspective (Capra, 1997). Dissipative means to exhaust, scatter or break up (Latin - ¨*disperse*¨). Again, Capra draws attention to the impact of Prigogine's findings:' *a radical change, showing that in open systems dissipation becomes a source of order….'* (Capra, 1997, p. 94). I understand this to mean that when a system experiences an increase in energy or matter flowing through it (as with feedback loops), it will transform into new structures with increasingly complex patterns. It is as if the system, as a response to the energy and matter, seeks new ways to self-organise, manifest its energy and evolve to the next level of complexity. This is second-level cybernetics in action; the system observing itself, rather than being observed. Transferring this to organisational practice, it provides us with an insight as to how teams can continue to evolve, and self-organise for survival, based on previous learning through feedback loops. It also speaks to how energy can move from the manifestation in one form through to another. Organisations and teams can cease to exist in one sense or shape, and the ideas, competence and intangible energy manifest themselves in other ways at another point.

Systems exist on many levels and this is reflected in the emergence of CAS (Complex Adaptive Systems).

Some of the characteristics of CAS are that they are adaptive to the environment, inter-related, and that the connections can also be non-linear. Barnett Pearce explains that each CAS is a network of many interacting agents, constantly acting and responding to each other. This makes control difficult and everything becomes fluid. Each CAS is a building block in a higher-level CAS, constantly shifting positions in an interdependent dance (Pearce, 2002).

The work of the South African-British complexity theorist, Ralph Stacey, exemplifies in my view how the use of complexity thinking intersects with the relational and dialogical approaches key to this thesis. His approach, Complex Responsive Processes in organisations, which draws upon CAS, examines how humans relate, from an insider position, and applies this to learning and knowledge creation in organisation. Adding to Pearce's description above, CAS is a system of self-organising entities, each with a/ set of local rules, and as these entities interact interdependently, they adapt their rules to each other. There is no overriding rule or vision of what these interactions or entities should look like, but the activities emerging between entities create non-linear patterns balancing between stability and randomness (Stacey, 2001). Stacey draws on social psychologist George H Mead's argument, that human action can be described in process terms, rather than systems terms and sociologist Norbert Elia's view that the ongoing interacting processes are providing both stability and change (Johannessen, 2009). I understand this to mean that the interaction between the humans, and what is created between them, almost takes on a life and meaning of its own, evolving something new, i.e. knowledge. '*Knowledge is a relational phenomenon emerging in human interaction*' (Johannessen, 2009, p. 166).

To follow their argument, knowledge then becomes a resource in organisations arising from human interactions where formal structures and role assignments may be counterproductive to what trying to emerge. Networks of self-organising task agents may respond as a process in itself to an influence of energy manifested through feedback loops. Johannessen and Kuhn argue that organisations are patterning processes of human interactions and actions, not tangible structures. People are motivated by a sense of belonging, and to what extent the themes and discourses applied are relevant to them or not.

It is as if this process takes on a life and identity of its own, removing the individual focus, because everyone is participating in the creating of it, whatever the 'it' is. The ongoing movement between stability and change resembles the ideas of Maturana and Varela and reflects the ebb and flow of life.

In the context of understanding change, and drawing upon CAS, Stacey argues that organisational knowledge is the relationship between people in an organisation, and dependent on the quality of these (Stacey, 2001). I am bringing Stacey's voice into this thesis for two reasons: I find learning and knowledge creation, which I see emerging from reflective practice, are fundamental to navigating and being with change in collaborative and new ways.

When studying the natural sciences, we may adopt a stance of observation, looking for patterns, interactions and movements. Following the traces described above, we can see a move from observing the system (as part of natural sciences), to a social science's context, where the human aspect was foregrounded.

The British social constructionist thinker, Kim Etherington, puts it *as: 'Social constructionism invites us to see the world and ourselves as socially constructed and challenges us to view grand narratives (including those of science and mathematics) as one of the many discourses that are possible among others of equal value. When we begin to view these discourses as social constructions we can begin to deconstruct fixed beliefs about their power and invite in other ways of thinking'* (Etherington, 2004, p. 21). Not only does this argue for an equality of the discourses, bringing forward the humanistic approaches that, in my experience, are marginalised in organisations steeped in a modernistic paradigm, but it also points our attention to what is going on in the systems we are part of; how we can construct and deconstruct knowledge and beliefs.

Like many other fellow scientists, the British-born physicist, David Bohm, later a contributor to the field of dialogue practice, gained an understanding of the universe enabling him to see human interactions in a new light as reflected in this quote: '*The notion that all these fragments are separately existent is evidently an illusion. And this illusion cannot do other than lead to endless conflict and confusion*' (Bohm, 1980, p. 1); (Wheatley, 1999, p. 42). Bohm argued that we need an understanding that enables us to see the wholeness as a process, with, and in which, we can move harmoniously. It is this understanding of the wholeness, and the ability to pan out and capture it, that I sometimes miss in the social constructionist literature I have read. Stacey criticises Bohm when he refers to the wholeness as something constant to tap into. I would counter that argument by suggesting that when we are co-creating with each other, we are making up a wholeness which we are also co-creating with. As we co-create the relationship, it also feeds into us, making it a circular process emphasising our connectedness.

The systems are always anticipating what is next, constantly unfolding and never in equilibrium. The latter is equal to death (Pearce, 2002). This sentiment was echoed by one of the teams in the research. During a constellation session with Team 1, we examined the spokes equilibrium and emergence, and the gradients in-between. We placed the Police Reform as a topic in the middle and used the spoke constellation to discuss the impact the systemic ideas could have on change: *'Equilibrium is like The Pond of the Dead* (author`s note: the name of a famous Norwegian thriller film from 1958)*. What we have worked with is just the start. With HR we need to continue and evolve, it is always a process. Some things are in place while others are in emergence. In IT I want to have emergence, otherwise I would be bored. I wouldn't mind some processes that work well'.* I then asked*: 'What does Equilibrium, the Dead Pond, mean to you?'* The team voices responded and shared: '*Boring, but safe. Doing what we do is boring but maybe we could do it slightly better every time? Few people will survive in working life by placing themselves here. The world is constantly changing. And we will soon have a new reform. How high can you turn the volume before disturbing people level of comfort? How can you engage without scaring people?'*

(Team 1, sixth session).

3.4 Systemic Systems – Bridging and Combining

Dear reader, did you notice how my discussion on the concepts from the natural sciences above gradually merged into systemic thinking as you may be familiar with? When writing this, I found it difficult to see where one set of ideas ended, and another begins. There is no clear cut but a co-existence, feeding each other.

And, over decades, scientists like Bohm, Capra and Wheatley and others, have advocated an approach to leadership and organisations inspired by aspects of the natural sciences. Increasingly, theorists, organisational practitioners and consultants are looking to nature for inspiration in co-creating new emerging realities (Capra, 1997); (Wheatley, 1999) as a way of facing our complex environment. An example to illustrate this is composed of three points fundamental to nature that organisations can learn from, put forward by Wheatley:

- Nothing exists in isolation. Everything exists in interdependence to something else.

- Every element will change its shape or energy depending on the context.

- Everything is energy.

Applying this in an organisational context, it opens up for a systemic and relational understanding, in that we are dependent on each other and collaborative networks for our functioning, production and existence. What works in one setting will not necessarily work in another, as contexts differ. Hence, the normative ways cannot serve as prescriptions for success. We cannot rely only on what is tangible, observable and measurable. We must also focus on what is intangible – the energy in what we do, what is created between us and the impact of this. I am interested in what we can learn from nature's way of being in change, renewal and survival, and how this can be applied through systemic practice in teams and organisations, expanding our range to see what is beyond our normal patterns of interaction and problem-solving. Many have reflected, shaped and presented ideas that could carry strong influences. Yet, in the organisations I work with, I still see little trace of these emergent thoughts turning into actions; rather, the discourses remain binary, approaches linear, and we still seem to suffer from analysis paralysis enforced by New Public Management (NPM).

NPM is a way of organising resources through managerial control with explicit standards and measures for performance, emphasis on output controls (Hood, 1991).

The normative, modernistic approach of many of the current theories is not optimal in the world we are facing today with the challenges these offer. In my view, people seem to be struggling, knowing they need something new to relieve their pain but unable to land it in ways that make sense. We need a new logic accompanied by a new language to share the experience of living it.

This poses several interesting tenets: how do we experience our individual realities – our 'ontos' – and how do we build knowledge – our 'episte'? Central to this co-creation of realities are our interactions with, and responses to, each other, which can be seen as advanced feedback loops nourished through reflexivity. Being able to 'tell on' ourselves and our experiences, as we have them, provides us with a feedback loop that makes it possible to influence how we adjust and develop our realities. This becomes especially interesting in an organisational setting and change context. Rather than becoming 'victims' of change we can use reflexivity as an approach to re-generate what we are part of at any given time.

A shift in current systems theory moves the focus from the system to the process itself, as argued by the Danish author and organisational consultant, Kim Leck Fischer (Leck Fischer, 2012). He proposes that this impacts the flow of collaboration and quality of teamwork in organisations, but, more importantly, how organisations are led, goals set and achieved. A strong voice for non-linear approaches, he argues that the 'doing' is the primary in complex systems.

This 'doing' is not a direct result of any one person's effort, but a consequence of many interacting processes (Leck Fischer, 2012). I associate doing with production, while being is more about relationship. The doing he refers to may be replaced with action, or movement of energy describing a continuum, rather than an organisation which is always performing.

Leck Fischer puts forward what is, in my view, an interesting position: it is not the CEO's ability and willpower that determines the successes of an organisation (and, adding from my personal experience, nor is it his/her charisma or singlemindedness). Rather, the achievements are a result of many moving elements, internal and external to the organisation, interacting in complex processes. As I understand it, this non-linear, constant flow of energy will change shape and expression. When we glance at the more tangible manifestation of the processes we have laid out, we are pleased because they appear to be in line with our desired goals and visions; we think we are looking at the result of our strategy, plans and efforts (true to a linear, cause-and-effect thinking). Other times, we reject the manifestation of the processes, declining responsibility for them and looking for scapegoats to be held responsible for what has happened (again, a linear, cause-and-effect thinking). What we fail to understand, in my view, is that these tangible manifestations are transient expressions of an ongoing process, only temporary results or snapshots, not to be mistaken for an ultimate, final outcome, of which there are none. This would be in line with complexity theory, where the ongoing non-linear processes interact, and energy takes on new forms and structures to extend itself, in continuous fluid processes with no cut-off point.

We exist in a fluid context, also known as an ecosystem. Let me introduce the Dutch professor and engineer, Gerda M. van Dijk, who is a scholar on Ecological Leadership and Organisational Ecology. To this end, she uses an image of a dam in her native Netherlands, showing all types of life that lives there (van Dijk, 2017). It is evident that by removing one element, in this case one species, taking it out of its context has at least two implications: it will impact the rest of the system in the dam but also the species itself, as it is taken out of its element (context) and it is therefore likely to behave differently in a new environment (context) it is introduced to (and impacting that). A strong believer in dialogical leadership, which she defines as '*the concept of the dialogical leader is about transcending the self and the organisation by reconciling/transforming various I-positions and multi-voices*' (van Dijk & van Loon, 2015, p. 67), I understand van Dijk to put dialogue into an organisational context and collaborative leadership process, where pursuing individual positions are merged into a larger context to make up a whole.

I find that the above can easily be related both to the pace and the dynamics facing many organisations today. The feedback loops provide a circulation of information that helps anticipate what is next, allowing people to influence from within the system. This stands in contrast to the modernistic mindset that any element can be taken out of a context and analysed; and, why linear, control and demand structures alone are insufficient for the survival of organisations.

Current practitioners of dialogical processes are embracing the intersection of systems and systemic ideas and applying these in team and organisational settings.

To exemplify this, I refer to an overview of forty different approaches to creating dialogical space and practice (Bushe & Marshak, 2016), and we can recognise the influences from the natural sciences in many of them. The American organisational development practitioners, Gervase R. Bushe and Robert J. Marshak, claim that dialogical approaches '*work by fostering generativity to develop new possibilities rather than problem-solving, altering the prevailing narratives and stories that limit new thinking, and working with the self-organising, emergent properties of complex systems*' (Bushe & Marshak, 2016, p. 407).

1. Art of Convening (Neal and Neal)	21. Preferred Futuring (Lippitt)
2. Art of Hosting (artofhosting.org)	22. Reflexive Inquiry (Oliver)
3. Appreciative Inquiry (Cooperrider)	23. REAL model (Wasserman & Gallegos)
4. Charrettes (Lennertz)	24. Real Time Strategic Change (Jacobs)
5. Community Learning (Fulton)	25. Re-Description (Storch)
6. Complex Responsive Processes of Relating (Shaw)	26. Search Conference (Emery & Emery)
7. Conference Model (Axelrod)	27. Six Conversations (Block)
8. Coordinated Management of Meaning (Pearce & Cronen)	28. SOAR (Stavros)
9. Cycle of Resolution (Levine)	29. Social Labs (Hassan)
10. Dynamic Facilitation (Rough)	30. Solution Focused Dialogue (Jackson & McKergow)
11. Engaging Emergence (Holman)	31. Sustained Dialogue (Saunders)
12. Future Search (Weisbord)	32. Syntegration (Beer)
13. Intergroup Dialogue (Nagada, Gurin)	33. Systemic Sustainability (Amodeo & Cox)
14. Moments of Impact (Ertel & Solomon)	34. Talking stick (preindustrial)
15. Narrative Mediation (Winslade & Monk)	35. Technology of Participation (Spencer)
16. Open Space Technology (Owen)	36. Theory U (Scharmer)
17. Organizational Learning Conversations (Bushe)	37. Visual Explorer (Palus & Horth)
18. Participative Design (M. Emery)	38. Whole Scale Change (Dannemiller)
19. PeerSpirit Circles (Baldwin)	39. Work Out (Ashkenas)
20. Polarity Management (Johnson)	40. World Café (Brown & Issacs)

(Bushe & Marshak, 2016, p. 408)

Table 3 shows an overview of forty different schools of, or approaches to, dialogical methods.

I find that many of the ideas of the natural sciences provide an outside-in view to human relationships describing the processes and phenomena, while social constructionism offers an inside-out view with relational approaches focusing on the experiences of the processes and phenomena in the interactions between the individuals. In Shotter's words, we would be shifting our attention from an about-ness to a with-ness point of view (Shotter, 2011), where we are aware that we are in the system, contributing to it and influencing its co-creation, moment by moment. While I appreciate the distinction, I believe that we need to practice our flexibility in moving between the two, and other, positions, respecting that we are always in relationship with many moving parts, impacting and being impacted upon. I would argue that both allow for reflexive, ontological experiences. Shotter himself argues in an unpublished paper (Shotter, 1998) that everything is systemic, connecting and interacting with each other.

While I subscribe to the value of dialogical practices, I am concerned with what may become a strong individual focus at times. While appreciating the need and necessity for the position of the individual, I would argue that the focus on, and presentation of, individual responses can become the focal point of such discourses, foregrounding the individuals while backgrounding the collective co-creation. In my experience, such dialogical practices are also in danger of becoming a series of monologues, with little or no attention to what is created collectively with an ensuing awareness of the potential in the 'WE'. The real challenge lies in being able to appreciate seeing and being with a team from the inside and the outside interactively: What am I a part of, contributing to and responding to? How am I impacting and being impacted? Where are my interdependencies and how do I foster these?

During one of my research sessions a participant expressed that it was good to work on issues they had in common, rather than always having to express her own values and how she felt about everything. It is interesting to see how the dynamics change when shifting the focus as expressed in the voices of Team 2 at the end of the first research session: *'I have found it very useful to elevate our thoughts and lift our focus. It is clear to me that I am part of something bigger, I have known that the whole time, but I have needed to know what that is. It helps me structure things in my head. And it is less personal responsibility…. making things less dangerous, less resting on my shoulders. Trying on new things can be more fun when I am only one piece in the puzzle. Focusing on what we have in common. I will start to see the organisation as a whole… everything is connected. More aware of what I am a part of'.* Talking to the experience of wholeness: *'I have experienced a 'WE'-focus compared to other earlier situations where we should speak very much from our personal perspectives. There has been little talk of individual truths but focus on the team and our organisation. We have had things out there on the table and we have achieved more than any one alone. The systems ideas help seeing our organisation in a bigger context, myself as a piece and a part of something bigger.'*

(Team 2, first session).

In my experience, a team's ability to view itself in a larger context, in an eco-system or web of interdependent relationships, increases awareness and ability to respond to, and deal with, emergence. To shift position from the I to the WE, to organisation and even society, using a holonic shift, helps us to see change in a larger context. How we view something, and what questions we ask, will determine what we see and find. A holonic shift, enables us to step back and ask different questions from different positions.

We see the interdependence between subunits in a system and examine their systemic pattern of relationship (Rød & Fridjhon, 2015). This awareness can help individuals and teams to step out of their first position and see themselves and their connections in a wider context, like a second- and even third-order way of experiencing and learning. The ability to move between positions are, in my experience, useful and illuminating for teams, as they become aware of how perspectives, context and patterns impact the reality they co-create.
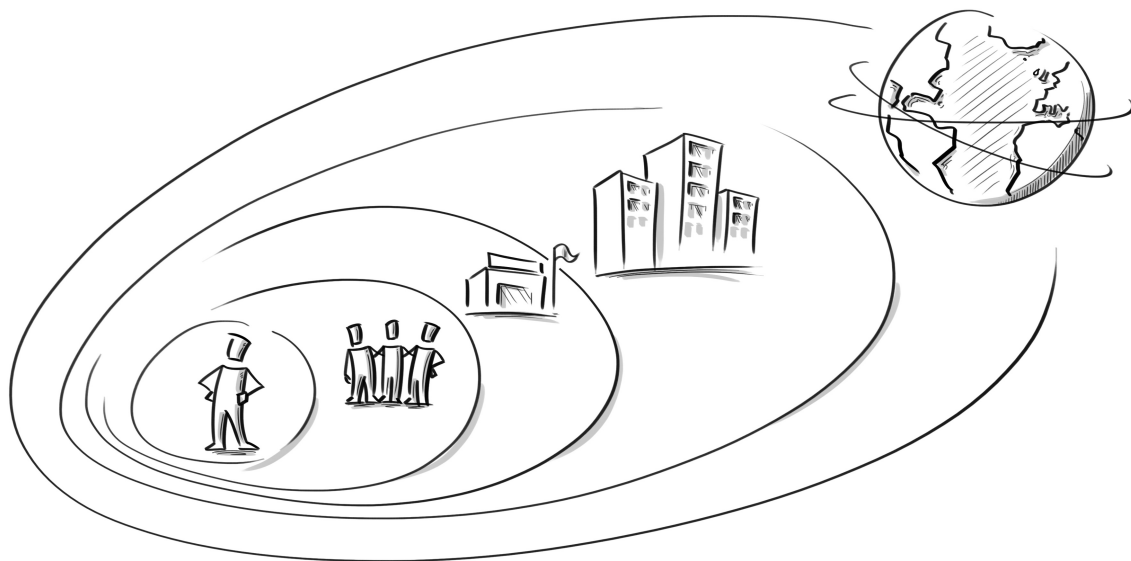
Figure 11 shows how an individual can see him/herself in a bigger context by making a holonic shift (Rød, 2015, p. 155)

While we have explored similarities between the ideas discussed above, you as the reader may ask: what are the differences? My response to that would be around intention and power.

While Stacey takes inequality of power in a system as a given, something we have to deal with (Stacey, 2001), Gergen, McNamee and others advocate a more including approach, looking at processes and responses with attention to relational ethics (Gergen, 2015); (McNamee & Hosking, 2012). Could it be that natural sciences accept the dynamics of nature as it is, and that we have to work with it, while social constructionism emphasises the humanity aspect and how we actually differ from nature? Maybe it speaks to the dichotomy in us, that we are of nature and we are human, which brings me to intentionality and conscious engaging in our interactions. What is needed to allow for a collaborative experience, accessing our potential and creativity?

To explore this question, I would like to introduce an approach I draw upon in my work and which I know, with my new vocabulary and understanding, can be placed in a social constructive paradigm, that of Relationship Systems Intelligence (RSI). It is a practical model for working with human systems (be it couples, families, teams, organisations or communities) in change. In this model, change is referred to as emergence. Conflicts are viewed as signals that something is not working and that change at some level is needed (Rød & Fridjhon, 2015). Key ideas from RSI which I have drawn upon in my research are:

'Relationship System Intelligence (RSI) – the ability to reinterpret an individual's own experience (and that of others), as an expression of the human relationship system. The experience is both personal and belongs to the system. When we apply this ability we can see, read, understand and act with a team, releasing and utilising its inherent insights and creativity. We shift the focus from the individuals in the human relationship system to the team system itself'.

Voices in Team 2 expressed it as: *'Consciousness that you are part of a wholeness and being generous both on an individual and group level'.* (Team 2, second session).

*'**Every member of a relationship system is a Voice of the System (VOS).** This principle is firmly grounded in the definition of RSI that invites the reinterpretation of the personal as an expression of the whole. In addition, it advocates the practice of deep democracy: the belief that the only way to navigate team and organisational realities is to hear all the voices, even the unpopular ones.'* (Rød & Fridjhon, 2015, p. 18). In practice, this means exploring ways of hearing more voices than the usual dominant ones, trusting the added value these bring. In my experience, this reveals much information about the current team dynamic and culture and stimulates conversation necessary regarding the use of power and language. A challenge is engaging the more silent team members to ensure that a range of feelings, reflections and opinions are heard. I have found that participants' hesitance to engage fully can be due to insecurity as a result of power issues, lack of ownership, interest and commitment, or personality style. However, if some voices are marginalised or withheld, the understanding and expression of the team's experience is incomplete, and this will impact upon the co-creation of joint change processes. As expressed by voices in Team 1 when reflecting on the research process: *'Change remains difficult, but I realise that working with forces for and against is very important in change processes. Voices must be heard, and one really has to listen to catch what are the hidden messages from both supporters and opposers. These are elements it is easy for forget when everything should happen in a hurry, and we are expected to line up and fall into step with everyone else'.* (Team 1, post research survey).

When more voices are expressed, the team naturally begins to trust their own ability to co-create their common ground and address their challenges, and the next idea is activated:

'*Relationship systems are naturally intelligent, generative and creative.* ´*By listening to all the voices of the system (VOS), the team's collective intelligence is shaped, and an array of possibilities emerges, carrying potential and seeds for future opportunities. .... This principle helps team members lean into the system's own capabilities and creativity. It even allows us to view change and disturbance of any kind as an ally, trusting the team entity's resourcefulness to find its own answers*'. (Rød & Fridjhon, 2015, pp. 20-21). This approach enables the team members to hear and respond to each other's thoughts, feelings and positions without having to take a stance of agreeing or disagreeing. It involves an element of acceptance and respect for differences and produces possibilities for alignment on a higher level. The focus becomes: what is brought up here in the space, what is co-created between us?
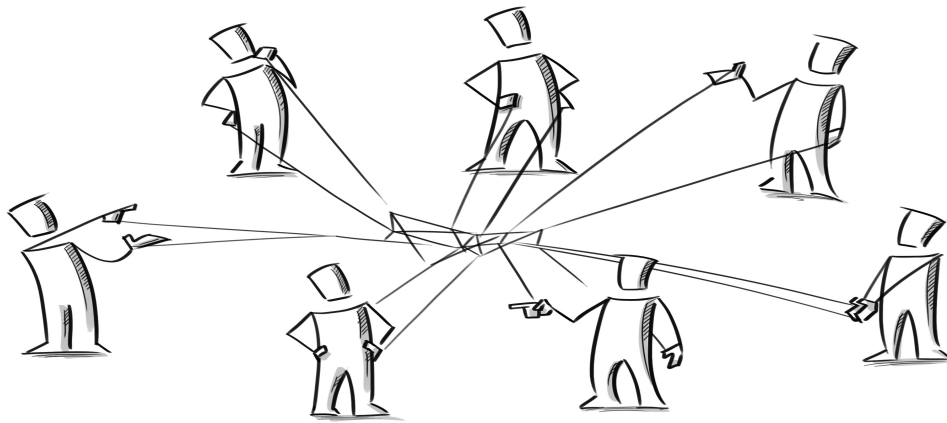
Figure 12 shows how the team members shift focus from individual to the relationship while owning their part in it (expressed as holding the strings) (Rød, 2015, p. 91)

The focus is on *the relationship* between the members of the team, rather than on the individual team members (Rød & Fridjhon, 2015). The attention is directed to what is created in the space between the team members as expressed in the figure below. The focus is moved from individual needs and agendas to the relationship. Furthermore, the perspective of each team member is essential as it contributes to the bigger picture, providing a basis for more understanding and alignment. This principle encourages the stimulation of a team's collective intelligence, which can be expressed as 1+1=3. Instead of binary argumentation regarding the route ahead, or being dictated to by a strong leader, I have repeatedly experienced teams that have found the approach valuable for understanding who they are, and where they are heading, while appreciating each other's differences and contributions.

The next key idea is:

'Relationship entity/team entity – the powerful relationship that exists between people in a human relationship system. This relationship entity (also known as the third entity or team entity) has its own personality with distinctive characteristics and qualities. The concept is fundamental to the creation of intelligent teams and is best expressed as the intangible 'WE-ness' of a relationship or a team' (Rød & Fridjhon, 2015, p. xv).

The Third Entity is an invisible entity that emerges between the co-existence of other interdependent entities. It can be understood as the intangible WE-ness of the relationships that co-exist between people. Shotter refers to Gregory Bateson's description of the intangible existence of the relationship using the idea of double descriptions. What I find interesting and applicable is what emerges from this approach: '*information from two or more different sources can create between them a uniquely new relational dimension*' (Bateson, 1979, p. 46); (Shotter, 2011, p. 46). He makes the comparison between two monocular views, which together give a binocular view. This double view, Bateson argues, '*IS the relationship*' (Bateson, 1979, p. 146); (Shotter, 2011, p. 46). Similarly, Gergen argues for a shift to the relationship (Gergen, 2015), and McNamee and Hosking talk about relational constructionist; putting the relationship and what is creating through it, at the centre (McNamee & Hosking, 2012).

Bringing all these ideas and thoughts together, I am intrigued by how we might allow for the existence of paradoxes and explore what emerges from the intricate and complex relationships between team members, teams and organisations in their self-organising nature.

One alternative may be that of organisational DNA. DNA is a molecule that contains the instructions an organism needs to develop, live and reproduce. These instructions are found inside every cell and are passed down from parents to their children (LiveScience, 2019). Although a term from science it is also found in organisations, describing what holds people and teams together (as binding tissue). Emphasis becomes on trust, and that is not created through control but through appreciation. DNA is an increasingly popular concept used in organisational development. However, the approach to this field of organisational work differs. The Norwegian leadership scholar, Tom Karp, points to a need for self-organisation, arguing that poor records of change have led to an increased emphasis on organic growth. He argues that a strong organisational DNA is a key factor for successful change (Karp, 2006). My research showed DNA emerging in the team interaction, describing it as something holding the organisation together, empowering employees and allowing for self-organising teams to emerge. On the basis of my research findings, I would agree with Karp and I believe that, in the landscape of change, a common purpose or organisational DNA is one way to help sustain a web of relationship, while appreciating the autonomy and creativity of a unit. As expressed in words of voices in Team 1: *'If we had had less focus on the sectors we are part of, and more on the connecting tissue, what binds us together, we could have put our attention to what is needed next to include the next part. Identifying how to connect us together, rather than what separates us.'* (Team 1, fifth session).

I would describe the DNA as an inner drive replacing outer motivational factors such as vision and values, providing inner direction and guidance when working in the organisation, and that the idea of nurturing the DNA is a way of creating motivation and belonging (as with binding tissue in an organism) creating energy in teams and organisations. The risk can be sameness and conforming to groupthink, not allowing for other voices to be heard. Let us hear the voices from Team 2 on the topic.

Team 2 – DNA and Interdependence

Team 2 was preoccupied with being in relation, but the research revealed there was less psychological safety in the team than they had anticipated. And they were not as similar as they had assumed. This desire to be homogenous seemed to be a barrier to honesty, leading to a holding back for some, a fear of failing from others. Having listened to the voices of the team in the first sessions, I had been struck by the way in which they talked about the organisational DNA acting as the binding tissue holding the organisation together. I also reflected how this DNA discussion created an energy, alignment and pride in the team which they carried with them for the rest of the sessions, and I mirrored this back to them. The DNA conversation started when we used the Wheel of Systemic Ideas exploring the topic in-depth by using spokes in the wheel, from which a breakdown emerged.

Through their own choice, the DNA discussion was brought up again using another spoke, the independence and interdependence. Voices in Team 2 said: *'We need independence to carry out tasks, where everyone can feel drive and motivation, without it, responsibility might crumble. And we need interdependence to have a common platform for development.*

I need the community AND I need to work on my own. We are different as people and have different people.' It struck me that if they had interdependence and ownership on a deeper level, it would be easier for everyone to get on with their jobs, while still seeing the bigger picture and having a sense of belonging. The issue of safety and relationship came up again:

Moving around on the spoke constellation they reflected: '*We need to look at our organisational DNA and where we are. Everyone has their office that pulls us towards independence. We need to be aware and have an open dialogue towards interdependence to keep the value basis alive. DNA should be more towards interdependence than independence, in order to have people join us and create ownership. Ownership should be towards interdependence, but in our daily work we need to be more on independence for task orientation. Interdependence is a safe harbour, and we can go out and do our work before we go back to the harbour. We are less of a homogenous group now......'.* From working with the team, it seemed to me that the energy of the process was in the WE-ness, not in singular formal and informal leaders, command and control.

It struck me that the team was struggling to combine the need to belong and feel safe, with an acceptance of their different working styles and personality. The DNA conversations created a shift by offering a connectedness, an appreciation of the interdependence made possible through the WE-ness. And most importantly, that WE-ness allowed for and encouraged differences, as expressed by team members when looking back on the process. Responses in Team 2 included: '*I am more aware that we have different focus areas and tasks, and how we contribute differently and are not independent of each other. I notice that several of the team members have started working on things they want to improve.*

> *I see more of the strengths of the others on the team, and how our different strengths make us more 'complete' in an organisation going through change. I think we have become more aware of the importance of being a good team, pulling together in the same direction; how we have to adjust ourselves in order to be a good team – through knowing each other and each other's reflections much better'. (*Team 2, post process survey)

Significant for me in the above is the power and creativity of the relationship itself, and what is possible when shifting from individual agendas to a wholeness, from I-ness to WE-ness. Time and time again, I have seen teams accelerate in their being and doing when they came together in the WE-ness. While individual experiences are the building blocks in the perceptions of our realities, I hold that these, to a certain extent, need to accept and allow for a conscious and intentional space where the co-creation of our relationship, with all its potential, can emerge. There is learning here, as expressed by voices in Team 1 during the fifth session: *'For later processes, it is useful to remember the frames we need to stick to and work within, not to change the world. That returns our need to see the bigger picture. Innovation is not only about creating new things but assembling things in new ways. Important to recognise the process and appreciate our experience of it.' (*Team 1, fifth session).

Organisational change has moved from processes we engage in from time to time in order to become more effective, to a continuous flow of emerging signals we need to navigate to stay alive.

To echo the words of Margareth Wheatley: '*I believe that our greatest hope for moving past ineffective change processes that plague us is to ally ourselves with life. If we can understand how life changes, we will dance more gracefully in this dynamic universe.*' (Wheatley, 1999, p. xi).

3.5 Systemic Ideas to Bring into my Research

Where do these deliberations and perspectives around systems and systemic thinking leave us? I see the inspirations of natural sciences continue, through the complexity theories and CAS, intersecting with social constructionism. In Capra's Theory of Living Systems, these ideas merge together (Capra, 2017), and, in Stacey's model of Complex Response Processes, the focus moves from systems to responsive processes, which social constructionist scholars would term dialogical or relational. How can we draw upon these ideas from the natural sciences (in the universe and nature) and social constructionism (on a human level), to develop collaboration and interactions, making it an integrative systemic approach to change?

Based on my literature research, eight interconnected ideas have emerged that I would like to apply in organisational change contexts. As we have seen in the above, discussion systems and systemic mean different things depending on the schools of thought, but they merge in some eight key concepts that I have included in the Wheel of Systemic Ideas. These are:

Contexts:

Two friends of mine were having a discussion about Syrian male refugees in Norway.

Hannah said she found them very easy and forthcoming, while Erik claimed they were rude and quite forceful in their manner. Hers was a positive experience, his quite the opposite, and the discussion was intense. As I stepped outside the room for a moment to reflect, I realised that this was all a matter of contexts. Returning to the table, I proposed that Hanna experienced Syrian men in the context of her role as a social worker. Here, she met them as humble fathers willing to do anything to save their families. Erik met them in a different context, in his work on the Classified Ads section of a newspaper. In the latter, the Syrian men were businessmen wanting to place ads to sell their services, sometimes forcefully looking for a deal and used to bartering from their own culture. In both instances, the intention for the Syrian men, presumably, was to take care of their families. So, same intention, but the different contexts produced different responses and created different impacts and impressions.

Bringing this notion into change and emergence means that we can forget best practice (Wheatley, 1999), as there is no normative, optimal way to carry out change or deal with emergence. The implications are that we cannot predict what will happen next, nor can we follow prescriptive linear processes. What is best for one organisation in one context, will not necessarily work for another.

Non-linear:

My grown-up daughter and I had a rare argument. We were preparing for a family party at the weekend. It was her idea and she was full of energy. I was more reluctant, knowing what it meant in terms of preparations and work, spending time and energy I did not really have.

To please her, I still went along with the idea and bought into her aspirations of cleaning the house and baking two cakes (amid all the other preparations she was engaged in, as she was leaving to live in France the following Monday). The day before the party, it was obvious that my daughter was not able to do all that she had intended. I kept my mouth shut as good as I could, but my frustrated energy still seeped out. After having baked one cake and cleaned the house myself, a drop of frustration left my lips, which caused a major explosion as a response at the other end. We went to bed with our argument unresolved, and the day after I turned to her brother to help us with some serious conflict resolution.

What I took from that conversation, and my reflections afterwards, was how linear I was in my approach. My daughter had said she was going to do something, and I was holding her rigidly accountable. Accountability with clenched teeth! If you say you are going to do something, you had better deliver. I was not proud of myself as I realised that I, who worked with teams to enable collaborations and communication, had not once considered regrouping or readjusting our expectations and collaboration at home. Not once had I stopped to see that this was too much, and she was not able to do it all. Not once had I, knowing from experience that her intentions are often more ambitious than realistic, adjusted my expectations. Not once had I sat down with her and asked what help she needed. Again, I saw the modernistic conditioning in my own reflection.

My thoughts then turned to how this showed up in teams and organisations. The mismatch of working styles, some linear, some more circular or associative.

I could easily see the conflicts that could arise from this, as managers tried to force all employees into linear performance patterns, with measurement en route and accountability at the end, often piling on more linear tasks, marginalising the non-linear mind-sets and negatively impacting motivation.

The Norwegian Complexity Theory researchers, Bjørner B Christensen and Stig O Johannessen, suggest that organisations need to move from linear leadership paradigms where managers set goals and targets, designing strategies and plans for the implementations of these, to accepting the non-linear nature of things. They suggest that (Christensen & Johannessen, 2005), management allows for open processes where there is room for the spontaneous emergence of ideas and patterns. And, where one is receptive to ideas created as a result of non-linear equations, curious about the existence of unknown factors impacting the organisations. In terms of change, this could include making holonic shifts to expand the horizon to see who else may be affected by our actions or impacting us. It could mean looking at consequences of local action and decisions on a larger scale, maybe minimising risk, curbing negative impacts or engaging in conversation with new potential partners and ideas. Questioning then becomes key, as expressed by voices in Team 1 after the process: *'I have become better at challenging the 'obvious' by exploring what are the underlying assumptions behind why 'things are as they are'. In that way, I may have become a more 'bothersome' employee. A respect and understanding that coming to terms with things take time, and there is a lot of learning in listening to the perspectives of other professions than your own.'*

(Team 1, post research survey).

Wholeness:

An example from my practice: a client organisation had a new CEO who questioned our fees. He felt the leadership training programme we delivered was too expensive, and he was uncertain of its usefulness. He wanted to examine our fees to try and understand our pricing structure and hourly rates, which in his opinion did not make rational sense. My initial, inner response was one of immediate annoyance, followed by demotivation. The programme evaluations showed a very high degree of satisfaction with the programme. My colleague and I worked hard with long days up to fourteen hours. I felt undervalued and unappreciated. The only two factors in his equation were price and time, omitting competence, quality, relationship-building and the value of partnering. I looked for a comparison and thought of an orchestra. Do you, as a producer of a performance, focus on the hourly rate of each of the musicians, maybe leaving out an instrument to save money? Would you be more focused on the music that is emerging from the interaction of all the instruments? Or what would you do?

It was very useful for me to have the visceral experience of demotivation when the CEO wanted to deconstruct our fees to rebuild it in his own way, leaving out intangible factors that ensured the success of the whole program. Knowing he was under a lot of pressure from the owners to cut costs mitigated some of my feelings, appreciating we operated from different contexts.

Christensen and Johannessen argue that tomorrow's leaders need to learn to live with uncertainty and the unpredictable. (Christensen & Johannessen, 2005). They argue that plans and reports can be both meaningful and meaningless. The meaning is not dependent on the activity itself, but on what is created between people in the moment.

Modernism, on the other hand, favours the breaking up of wholeness into small units for analysis, while systems theory emphasises the importance of the wholeness. Linear equations tend to limit the number of factors and gives us the illusion that we can control the factors. Non-linear relations, and the wholeness encompassing it, force us to think in different ways, like this metaphor can explain:

Imagine you are holding a mirror. You drop it accidently and it breaks into many small pieces. Meticulously, you piece it back together using glue, to make sure it sticks. Relieved that you were able to put it back together in one piece, you lift the mirror to look at your own image. What do you see? Your face? Or the fragmentation of your face disjointed through the pieces of glass? Are you still able to see the wholeness?

In my experience, few people are able to hold a bigger picture, and most discussions end up on a detailed level. Because that is what is known; what is comfortable; or, maybe, because that is the thinking we are used to. Using the spoke of interdependence and independence, a team member in Team 2 expressed: *'Everything is connected, all minor things belong to the bigger picture, trying to see everything. In our daily work this means that everything that happens influences us all, we all pull in the same direction, even if we do different things, that is why the involvement is important, as cogs in the wheel. Every day I feel alone, but if I raise my eyes, I feel connected.'* (Team 2, fifth session).

Using the spoke of wholeness and fragmentation brought the ideas into a business context, which created some tension as expressed by voices in Team 3*:*

'My business is based on what the customers want, so it becomes fragmented and we need to move fast. One could want for a more wholeness thinking, but we need to use our time to keep any eye on the competition…. Wholeness is more reactive, while fragmentation is more proactive and agile…. We are thinking wholeness all the time, it is just about finding out who will do it.' (Team 3, third session). This exchange landed an appreciation, in that there is a time for wholeness and one for fragmentation, an inner 'aha' experience of the context dependency I keep referring to.

Interdependence:

To illustrate this idea, I am bringing in a reflection from a meeting I participated in during my research period: as the Norwegian police force was undergoing their comprehensive reform programme reducing twenty-four police districts to twelve, and turning every stone in the process, police officers were left feeling uncertain and demotivated. Having spent time with one of the project groups for several months as part of my research, I observed the focus on individual agendas at higher levels in the hierarchy, and the impact this had on the members in the project team. I shared my observations with the team, and one team member sprang to his feet exclaiming: '*That is it! We lack a feeling of 'WE-ness'. Every director is all about himself, building his own kingdom, and that is draining us*'. He continued:' *We need to build the 'WE' and that we are on this journey together*'. Implicit in his words, in my opinion, was to create the relatedness. To move from separation and individuation to patterns of relationship and networks, and to surface the interconnectedness to an abstract level of 'WE-ness' giving the people involved a stronger sense of both identity and purpose, necessary to drive change or navigate the waves of emergence.

In today's organisations, teams are often dispersed across geographical, cultural and temporal distance, adding strain on their ability to collaborate. Organisations become satellites with clusters of expertise, with little or no face-to-face time. Conflicts are more prevalent in these virtual teams because of the limited possibility for relational interaction (Stowell & Cooray, 2017). This resonates with my own experience, where I often find that teams may also lack a common platform for culture and language, despite being part of the same organisation. I find this to be interesting and relevant in this context, because it adds to the necessity for creating more space for becoming aware of the patterns of relationship between us. Especially in times of change, it can be difficult to see wholeness, not just the parts, and connect the dots. This created realisations and smaller shifts as expressed by team voices in Team 2: *'I am a small piece in a big world, which is wonderful. And we need interdependence to have a common platform for development. I need the community AND I need to work on my own.'* (Team 2, second session).

Self-organisation:

We are seeing several shifts in modern organisations. When using the self-organising and structure and control spoke, it led to a discussion in Team 3. It showed the pull in the organisation between structure and control needed to be certified, of which support functions were responsible on the one hand, and the self-organising nature of sales and customer relations on the other hand. *Voices in Team 3 reflecting their dialogue: 'I think we need to be self-organising because we never know where we will be in the future, and what is ahead of us. So, if we could have this iterative business process and introduce structure & control to ensure we do things correctly. Too much self-organising is that we do too much, spread out, lacking in focus.*

In the leader team, we discuss rules, risks and problems, which makes the leader team too focused on structure and control, leading to some of the dynamics we have discussed. The leader team also has a responsibility to be nimble …. Things have forced us to be structure and control, but we need to move towards more self-organising.' (Team 3, fifth session).

Christensen and Johannessen argue that organisations are complex self-organising processes between people, which cannot be designed or controlled. (Christensen & Johannessen, 2005). We know from nature that, when a cell has reached a certain size, it will split into two. How can this be relevant for organisations and teams? At what point do they cease to become functional? At what point does the entropy of the system set in, and why?

The Theory of Autopoiesis documents that each cell, each living unit, has its own intelligence. Increasingly, in organisations I work with, I can see an acceptance of the work that comes out of teams and working groups. The question is, what happens if this goes completely against the grain or ideas of management? There is also a downside to the self-organising, as expressed by a voice in Team 2: *'My role requires that I am self-organising because I need to move and be flexible. If everything is self-organising I may miss out on things, be a bit all over the place. I would only do what suited me, would have more autonomy; what I prioritise, luxury for a moment, but it could not last.'.* (Team 2, fifth session).

Paradoxes:

Heraclitus, the Greek philosopher and mathematician, argued that disagreement is natural, and that reality is a merger between opposites (Magee, 2010).

Modernistic thinking seems to favour binary arguments, searching for the 'right' answer, the 'best' solution, often drawing on well-established scientific research and documented practices. I can appreciate that the latter is a way to reduce uncertainty; however, it marginalises other positions in the process.

Wherever we look there are paradoxes. The ¨I' and the 'WE' – which will serve us best? Wholeness or fragmentation – what is the most useful perspective? Normative or context dependent – what is right for us? Seeing a system from the inside or the outside, system or systemic – what is best? We face paradoxes all the time, and in our Western culture we seem to feel the urge to take them down and deal with them, to find the right answer. Working in India in 2013, I tried hard to follow cultural etiquette, to show respect and observe local practices. The more I tried, the harder it became. My husband, on the other hand, went with the flow without a need to do it right, seemingly enjoying the paradoxes. My frustrations grew every time I thought I had cracked it, only to discover that there was always another way. Eventually I gave up, and tried to embrace paradoxes the best I could, causing me less stress and tension, allowing me to be more open-minded to what may come, and not try to control or predict situations and outcomes.

What is the value of paradoxes? In my view, an appreciation of what is possible. It means not shutting doors but being able to react or respond in a less dogmatic manner. Accepting agreements and conflicting views, that diverging goals and differing values exist in the organisation at any one time, and being able to frame it through some overall sense of purpose or belonging (Christensen & Johannessen, 2005).

For leaders, and change processes, holding paradoxes alive is to accept the tenets of autopoietic systems; for systems to be both the stable and the unstable, open and the closed, permanent and receptive (Capra, 2017).

Paradoxes can be perceived in different ways, as shown in team 2 when exploring the paradox-binary spoke: Voices of Team 2 sharing and reflecting: '*I find it challenging to live in paradox, however I am finding that the paradoxes complement each other and can be useful and okay to be in. Normative is this way or that way, whereas paradox means there is room for everything, and we need both, ability to see each other's resources and contributions. To me a paradox could be an irony, or contradiction, but it is really just many perspectives on the same issue. The reason it is complex is that there are many factors that might hit each other head on, or intersect and influence each other, and then the truth is somewhere in there.*'

(Team 2, fifth session).

Feedback Loops:

In my experience, feedback loops in organisations are channelled through formal performance evaluations such as 360 leader surveys; employee satisfaction surveys; and, customer satisfaction measurement, to mention some. When discussing change processes that did not work well, one-way communication and lack of dialogue was cited as a reason in Team 3. However, they recognised that the same dynamic may be playing out in their own organisation: '*But from the leader team and to the organisation it becomes a lot of one-way…. some areas are one-way, and it has to be that way. In other areas, there are more networks and feedback loops and these people want to be led in a different way.*' I then asked*:*

'If you were only to engage yourself with feedback loops in this organisation, what would you do and focus on?' The voices in the team responded: *'We would have to break up some of the structures, and some of the segmented areas would disappear. If we were to take it all the way, it would mean that everyone would have an opinion on everything, which I think would be difficult. At the same time, maybe more ideas should come from those close to it. But the frames are given. We bring in ideas from our people. Many of the ideas are not workable, and we know this from experience, and we cannot afford to follow every idea.'* (Team 3, third session).

Following the above discussion on one way and feedback loop, I was struck by how different they viewed the interpretation of the ideas and the values attached to it, as in what is good/bad, the right way and the not-so-right way. By having the open exchanges around this, they were able to accept the many perspectives on the topics and feel comfortable with it. Their interpretations and the values attached were based on their own experiences that they brought to the team; their individual domains and contexts; their life worlds. Only through these exchanges could they glimpse into each other's worlds and realities. And this experience created shifts.

During change processes, creating feedback loops – ways to pick up responses and reaction – are vital in my opinion. This involves making holonic shifts, seeking out responses among an array of stakeholders and paying attention to non-linear impacts. Based on the information coming into the system, actions and directions can be adjusted there and then, rather than waiting until the end of the process to assess its relevance and success.

Exploring the one-way and feedback loop spoke in Team 2, the meaning of each was discussed and their responses were: *'What is a feedback loop? We also get to respond to the response, allowing new things to come in, and that is where the loop is. The loop becomes a dialogue.'* (Team 2, third session).

Six months later, the voices in Team 2 had more to say about feedback *'…recognise that we have a need for feedback. How to stimulate the search for feedback? The two latter means we have a learning approach, not a failure approach, I need to trust your feedback and know to receive it well. One makes oneself vulnerable. Trust that we care for each other, maybe be more relaxed around it. Just like one talks about difficult things in a partnership, we also do this in this team, and I don't want us to stop that.'* (Team 2, fifth session).

Emergence:

Whether we like it or not, change is normal. Everything is in a constant state of emergence. The energy ebbs and flows, sometimes in the shape of small transitions and, other times, as large transformations. Sometimes the change is incremental and unnoticeable, other times dramatic and far-reaching. It can be devastating or an improvement. Emergence can also be about gradual improvement that can be co-created as voiced by Team 3: *'We always need to look at how we can improve, if I want to make changes there must be an opportunity to do so. Keep an open door for adjustments…. Be open because the world is not standing still, and we need to have an open mindset, but that is not in conflict with stability. I would like to see more development, but we also need to consolidate, cannot focus on emergence all the time'.*

(Team 3, seventh session).

In my view, organisations need leaders and teams who can learn how to live with the unpredictable. This means letting go of linear, rigid processes, and welcoming more flexible, dynamic approaches. It means accepting that we cannot predict outcomes but do our best to read signals in environment proactively, adapting to what is happening. And, emergence can pose some challenges as expressed by Team 2: '*To me, emergence would have made me less connected to this team and belonging is important to me, it would be less of that if I was to stand in emergence. I struggle to see myself here, everything would be floating with a lack of direction and connection. At the same time, it is exciting to see how we could develop if we let out our creativity more. To me it would have felt unsafe. I see a boat in a storm; that you would be completely at the mercy of what showed up.*' (Team 2, fourth session). While evolvement was considered important, as captured here by a policeman in Team 1:'*An organisation which does not evolve will die*', then adding his own twist: '*or, in the case of the police, will be out of sync with the word and the society it is here to serve'.* (Team 1, second session).

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Now that I have described the eight ideas that make up the Wheel of Systemic Ideas, you as the reader may be pondering several questions, such as: Why these eight ideas and not different ones? Who has the power to define the ideas and what they mean? What is the impact of using these ideas?

When studying the literature, these were the ideas that struck me as most significant, as I have referred to in the discussion in this chapter, and which I found could best challenge modernistic thinking.

In the work with the teams, we sometimes found some of the ideas to be overlapping, depending on the team's objectives, change context and previous conversations. Other times, they opened new avenues, and I have given examples of the significance of these moments. An idea that could create a shift in one team, could go nowhere in another.

In terms of meaning, I encouraged the teams to explore the meaning in the words as they saw them, not through a definition provided by me. The team members would share their subjective interpretations of the ideas in the spoke of the Wheel, relating them to their world, giving examples of situations and responses. An example was Team 3 working on fragmentation and wholeness. Some may find fragmentation a harsh word, as if something is breaking into pieces. In Team 3, fragmentation was considered important and necessary to focus in on the smaller segments in sales, Wholeness they meant, which could be held by functions such as legal, finance and operations. Through the conversations, the team explored who held what positions in the team, and how they together contributed to a whole. I found that it increased the team members' understanding of, and appreciation for, each other's roles and contributions.

3.5. A Reflexive Moment – the Shifts in Me

Two months into my second year at the PDSP, I was starting to experience an inner feeling of discombobulation. It was as if parts of my body detached themselves from their moorings and started to float around in the oceans of my inside. My skin and the contours of my body were the only perimeters preventing the parts from sliding of the edge of my being, and into an eternal universe. Almost like humans once believed that ships fell of the edge of the earth.

I was feeling vulnerable, low and detached. The doctoral studies had launched me on a journey where I came to question what I once took to be true. It shook up my belief and value system. What I saw as right or wrong, true or false, was neither. Everything was floating around, and I was uncertain how to handle this new state. I was having a visceral experience of change, the very topic of my thesis. I felt confused and frustrated. I was losing my bearings, the ground beneath my feet. It reminded me of once, as a little girl, I had drifted away on an inflatable mattress from the shore, while no one was watching me. Panicking, I had tried to find solid ground under my feet, only to sense the depth of the ocean. Lying there and screaming for help a young woman had come to my aid, pulling me ashore. The experience had left me shaken and scared for a long time. But who would rescue me now?

In the context of the doctorate, I was about to submit my work for Progression Point 1, and central to the paper was the history of change and a personal account of my relationship with the topic that had shaped my lens. I could physically sense the evolvement of the journey this doctorate had initiated in me. I had no idea where the floating pieces inside of me might find harbour. It dawned on me that this time I had to find my own path and trust it.

Key to this process was my own ageing, and the beliefs I held around that. Ageing is such a visible sign that the process of change is natural and inevitable. It is experienced at many levels, in different contexts and from many perspectives. Change as viewed from the outside, and my changing process as experienced from within.

A view held in Western society seems to be that older people cease to be relevant, they struggle to find work and their contributions are unfortunately not often appreciated. So, facing this change was scary, shaking my foundations and identity.

Over the next months I retraced the steps of my childhood, choices I had made, roles I continued to occupy, behavioural strategies I had adopted along the way, and boundaries I had never been able to put in place. I came to revisit memories and experiences that had shaped me as a human, which I felt I had analysed, processed and integrated years ago. But these developmental influences came to light in a new way, carrying fresh insights about impacts, and lasting impressions that had imprinted on the very structure of who I had become.

While having this vivid and physical experience of change in myself, I was reading the Theory of Autopoiesis, which helped me to describe and understand the ongoing process within me on a cellular level. Developed by the Chilean biologists, Humberto Maturana and Francisco Varela, the theory identifies a cell as the smallest unit in a living system. It explains how a cell self-generates within boundary of its own making, while at the same time being open to its surroundings (Capra, 2017). The patterns of organisation that make up the cell, i.e. its identity, remain the same but the structures change. A cell couples to its environment through reoccurring interactions, and each of these triggers a structural change to the cell. These become cyclical changes of self-renewal. Each coupling will be different, and the cell will respond differently each time. As we have learnt in biology class, cells come together to form larger clusters, and we, as humans, are complex cell structures undergoing the same process as the single cell described above.

This means that who I was, and how I reacted five years ago, was different to who I was last month or even will be next week, and why the same episodes in my previous life had new and different impacts on me. Our memories are fluid reflections of our experiences, shaping our worldviews and realities, moment by moment. New conversations can bring about new awareness, moving something deeply inside of us. Each time we make meaning of a memory, an awareness or an experience in a new way, we unfold and expand our sensory range. The theory thus shows how every cell, or cluster of cells, is a living, learning system able to regenerate itself.

The Theory of Autopoiesis impacted me on a personal level as I was having a first-hand physical and emotional experience of the theory in action, a journey of regenerating myself, with intense alertness and presence. It explained that I could continue to learn by revisiting my life, simultaneously embracing new perspectives while responding differently, because I was in the process of becoming someone else. While this was happening in my personal system, I found the same experience expressed through the words of a First Nation tribe leader cited in the Canadian Museum of History, Ottawa: 'As *you grow up, you learn different things at different stages. It stays with you all the rest of your life. You can learn something out of each story each time it is retold because if you are growing as a person, you are ready for new truth each time. You learn something new from a legend each time, just as you learn something new from a painting each time*' (Bell & Southcott, 2017).

As I ploughed through one system theory after another – Quantum, Chaos, Complexity and Theory of Living Systems – I felt the material resonating within me, experiencing the paradox of 'yes/and' in my heart, body and mind.

And I felt relief. Relief at not having to land the correct decision, worrying that it may be the wrong one. Relief at not having to argue one point over another, to myself or anyone else. Relief at not having to show my proficiency by knowing and presenting the right way, or one truth to my clients. But, most of all, relief to give myself and others permission to be curious about the multitude of possible positions, the space to explore more of these, and the acceptance that the processes were continuous with no clear beginnings, ends or defined boundaries.

My process also meant letting go of, or reframing, old structures within me and my environment. I went through every single cupboard, closet and drawer in our house. Pictures of long-gone ancestors, so-called valuable ornaments, old work files, everything was examined and considered for its current purpose or contribution to my life. As items were cleared out, thrown away, sold or offered for free, the energy lifted both within me and in our home. The level of entropy was significantly reduced, and I was able to see my work and my life with new eyes and renewed strength. By entropy I mean the energy that hangs around, maybe redundant, and that cannot be used.

My inner shift brought about a new awareness as I started noticing how easily we as humans use language that reflects the binary, and engage ourselves in discourses of either/or, right/wrong, good/bad, black/white. Even when engaging my clients in reflective conversations, the tendency is to evaluate and judge our experiences and to sort them into manageable categories to help us make sense of the world. So, while enjoying this new-found freedom described above, a different feeling, one of exhaustion, was creeping in.

The emerging acceptance within me, from reading systems theories of contexts and paradoxes, was battling with my ingrained beliefs resulting from more than fifty years of conditioning into a Western ideology and worldview. Cartesianism, a paradigm in history that still permeates our societies and our very beings, to such an extent that neither I, nor my contemporaries, can distinguish it as a type of conditioning, nor can we detect its origins.

At least I could start to re-orientate myself, my research and my work. Or, to quote Nora Bateson, daughter of Gregory Bateson: '*I used to think it was like this, but now I am thinking it may be like this. A way of saying I learnt something*' (An Ecology of Mind, 2011).

As the reader, you have now been introduced to the ideas in the Wheel of Systemic Ideas, most of which might be familiar to you. Next, we will look at the context I will apply them in – that of change. What do you imagine is possible? What are you curious about?

PART II

APPLYING THE MODEL

Setting context for the application of the

Wheel of Systemic Ideas by exploring the

theories of change past and present, analysing

and discussing the findings and

conclusions drawn from applying the model in

three different change contexts.

4. Chapter 4: Change - Past, Present and Future

The Voice of Change

I am impressed by how many books have been written, theories developed and understanding sought about me. I feel like this elusive shadow that everyone claims to have heard and felt the presence of, but no one has actually seen. Hence, the many descriptions of me and versions of events, as if people are grasping for words to capture the essence of something. What really fascinates me is the certainty with which people perpetuate their positions, as if they alone are holders of the truth.

Of course, I have been around for ever, but the Greeks may have been among the first attempting to describe me. Heraclitus (ca 540-480 B.C) and Democritus (ca 460-370 B.C.) proposed that everything in our world, as we experience and sense it, is constantly changing (Irgens, 2016). Plato's idea of eternal truth was wood to the fire (pardon the pun) for the religious movements which spent hundreds of years trying to tie people to a religious post for the sake of controlling society.

As a response to the power grip and dogmatic thoughts held by the church, scientists gradually raised their voices in an effort to explain nature and human life beyond the religious mode of sense-making. One of them, René Descartes, even had an -ism named after him: Cartesianism, which has taken a severe beating in the last hundred years, although the essence of his constructs seem to be alive in many professions, societies, and organisations, through what is

called modernism, to which, of course, there was another response; post-modernism. And so the story goes: responses to responses to responses.

But I am a constant – always here, and I will continue to be here. You can't avoid me, and you will probably never fully understand me. I am the most natural thing in your life, in the world. No matter what you call me. Truth is, the only answer is acceptance.

Yours faithfully again,

C. Change

This chapter sets context and positions for change. In doing so I explore the historical origins of the field and describe positions from literature. When setting out on the research I examined literature to identify and understand positions on change and changing, past and present. By drawing upon influences and influencers from the past, I could better understand the present and what may lie ahead in the future. In this chapter, I look at the history and main influencers of change, as I believe this is relevant to understanding what constructions we have around change in our society at present. As we will see, change can be set in a historical and philosophical context at a macro level, which I include because it has bearing on how change is viewed and approached by the teams in the research. By exploring context of, barriers, and drivers for change on a conceptual level, it is easier to understand the situations of the three teams.

I also explore the link between past paradigms and models of current practice, such as efficiency and production focus, and lastly look at what systemic approaches to change can offer. As I mentioned in chapter 1, I have also turned to Norwegian academics to explore some areas of literature in a search for more accessible explanations (due to language and cultural contexts). I will introduce some of these voices here on the topic of change.

4.1 Postions on Change

At the outset of my research, I encountered my first challenge, manifested in the word *change*. The synonyms are diverse, with different nuances giving life to various meanings and interpretations applicable in this day and age. Citing Collins Dictionary, the meanings of *change* can be:

'*As a verb*

- *to make or become different; alter*

- *(transitive)… to replace with or exchange for another ⇒ to change one's name*

- *to transform or convert or be transformed or converted*

- *(intransitive)..to pass from one phase to the following one*

As a noun

- *the act or fact of changing or being changed*

- *a variation, deviation, or modification*

- *the substitution of one thing for another; exchange*

- *anything that is or may be substituted for something else'*

(Dictionary, 2016)

I find that the word *'change'* describes a more static form or condition, or a 'phase by phase'
approach to change as described by the Norwegian leadership academics, Jan Thorsvik and
Dag Ingvar Jacobsen. They look to time and state (condition or circumstances) as variables to
define change, change having occurred when an organisation shows differences at different
points in time. The differences in state can be related to the organisation of tasks, roles,
structure, culture, demography, or processes concerning production, communication,
decision-making and learning (Jacobsen & Thorsvik, 2014); (Jacobsen, 2017).

In my view, the word *'change'* does not reflect the continuous and liquid dynamic of the
processes in, between and around us. I would suggest other words to describe and normalise
the evolutionary continuum such as:

- *Evolution – 'a gradual development, especially to a more complex form; a pattern
  formed by a series of movements or something similar; evolution is a process of gradual
  change that takes place over many generations...'*

- *Emergence-* 'the *emergence of something is the process or event of its coming into
  existence'*

- *Development- 'the act or process of growing, progressing, or developing'*

(Dictionary, 2016)

Each word carries its own implicit meaning and embedded dynamic, depending on the context
in which they are used and the individual experiences of those involved. Wittgenstein captures
it well when he says: *'Perhaps the most inexpressible (what I find mysterious and am not able
to express) is the background against which whatever I could express has its meaning'*
(Wittgenstein, 1980a); (Shotter, 2011).

In my work, I find that change is still the most commonly used word, describing one position and perception. And maybe new words, a new language and logic is emerging, to describe the world we are moving into. For now, let us keep both thoughts in our head as we create bridges allowing us to step between positions.

4.2 Looking Back

Barnett Pearce, in an unpublished paper, traces the human need for certainty and knowledge which will save us from the unknown, also referred to as Cartesian anxiety, and why this paved the way for the position of, and belief in, science and scientific methods (Pearce, 2002). The phrase Cartesian anxiety was coined by the American philosopher, Richard Bernstein, (Bernstein, 1983), and refers to the human need to eliminate uncertainty and find the truth, as well as the reluctance to listen to multiple, even contradictory, voices. To this end, science has been a tool to unearth and analyse components and underlying principles, trying to establish truths, linear connections and causal relationship.

Isaac Newton's mechanical laws, which he developed and applied to explain and investigate the motion of many physical objects and systems, such as comparing the universe to a carefully balanced piece of machinery, have had a direct impact on the industrial revolution and how organisations are still being run, many hundred years later. The American mechanical engineer, Fredrick Taylor, came to further cement these ideas in his thoughts on management, first published in the book Scientific Management in 1911 (Hatch, 2001). In order to achieve higher production rates, processes were divided into smaller parts, analysed and tuned, removing ineffective elements.

Thus, one achieved smooth-running, linear processes enabling the factory or production site to churn out goods at a faster rate. The human elements became but a part in the process, to be replaced if ineffective.

The work of Descartes, Newton and other scientists contributed to what is known as the Enlightenment period in the Western world. As a response to the dominant authority of the church, this emerging movement created new fertile ground for the birth of science as we know it. It produced an appreciation of the individual's ability to think and be rational, bringing significant changes in the locus of power and how decisions were made (McNamee & Hosking, 2012); (Gergen, 2015). With it, new discourses were created, which became someone's truth, or even a truth of the whole Western civilization. *'A discourse can be thought of as any taken-for-granted way of talking and acting more generally that instantiates that which we assume (or take for granted exists).'* (McNamee & Hosking, 2012, p. 54). This emphasis, on the individual's ability for rational thinking and independent decision-making, is recognisable in modernism today, carrying implications on everything from language and research to leadership and change. McNamee and Hosking use 'subject-object' to describe the: ' *Hierarchical, detached, knowing, and controlling way of relating'.* (McNamee & Hosking, 2012, p. xiv). They go on to argue that, in the modernistic worldview, we see and treat ourselves, and those around us, as objects. I recognise this position in the way change has been, and is still being, implemented; cascading top down processes at a fast pace, in a run for efficiency – fast!

It is considered that the scientific and measurable approach of modernism had its golden age between 1950 and 1970 (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011), although its origins stretch further back.

Central to modernistic scientific method is the normative, measurable and linear approaches which can be planned, observed and controlled. In my view these ideas are still very much alive in organisations today, as part of normative change programmes, large-scale reforms, market-driven initiatives in the public sector, such as New Public Management. As expressed in the voices of Team 1, going through a Reform programme: *'We don't talk enough about what structure is needed, how to build our new organisation; type of leaders, services, etc. We are just left with boxes. The implementation comes when the planning is over. People have expectations of D-day, that they will arrive at a rigged and ready organisation, and that will not be the case. At the top organisational level of this process, they seem to be working in silos, not able to anticipate possible consequences and impacts of their decisions on us. And they do not do risk analysis. We then need to solve it on our local level, and this creates frustrations.'.* (Team 1, second session).

Fifteen months later, Team 1 described the impact the Reform programme, the change process, was having on them: *'Work packages continue. Will we make it in time? People are building their units and sections. People are focusing on boxes, not on the how. It is heavy, we are not agile enough. People should have been better at looking ahead and planning a bit more. There is still chaos, lack of routines. No one has worked with the culture, no plan for it. No attention to building culture'.* (Team 1, sixth session).

Common to modernistic, inspired change programmes are the step-by-step prescriptive approaches, sometimes lacking in contextual appreciation, but clear on targets and mechanisms for measurement.

This view of systems thinking is to break a whole into smaller pieces for analysis, combined with an outside, objective observation and monitoring of the system, be it a process or an organisation. In my experience, this remains the dominant discourse in organisations today, as mirrored in the description of Team 1's experience above.

I find that people working with change are not aware of the larger ideological and philosophical contexts they operate within.

Appreciating more of the philosophical traditions that have influenced modern Western society and their impact still manifested through modernism, has given me a broader context to understanding the dynamics of change in organisations. In my interaction with teams and organisations, I find that the Cartesian scientific approach is still viewed as the right and only way, many hundreds of years later. It is interesting that one chapter in the history of man and science is so deep-rooted and carries such far-reaching tentacles. It is almost as if we cannot free ourselves from this discourse to reflect on the impact it has had on us, and in a reflexive manner; how this discourse continues to shape us. It is, then, worth asking: what are the implications of this, on how we engage with each other? Are we prone to monologue that perpetuates the one-way communication, convincing each other of the 'right' answer, like members (MPs) shouting at each other across the floor of a parliament? What are we missing out on by not engaging dialogically? Einstein was known to have said that we cannot solve our problems with the same thinking we used to create them (source unknown). Given the complexity organisations face at present, maybe it is time to try something different, more congruent to the current situation. But, before I explore what that might entail, I will introduce some key influencers upon the field of organisational change.

4.3 Key Influencers upon the Field of Organisational Change

Although change has always been inseparable from human life, it was not until the 1950s that it became classified within a professional, business context in its own right, known as Organisational Development. This new profession aimed to help leaders move from intention to reality when creating organisational change. This could include creating more effective organisation, increasing employee involvement, and improving working conditions. With this new area of study and application, a series of new tools and methods were also developed. (Bolman & Deal, 2014).

One of the founding fathers of organisational change and development was Kurt Lewin, the German- American social psychologist. His work explored how behavioural change could be used to resolve social conflict in organisations and wider society. To this end, he stressed that those involved must be free to make their own decisions, using a neutral facilitator to learn about their own responses. Key to the change process was the use of Action Research and the three-phase model of change, *Unfreeze-Change -Refreeze* (Burnes, 2009). Through his work in the 1930s and 40s, Lewin brought forward the idea that emphasis should be put on the groups rather than the individuals (Bolman & Deal 2014). Lewin's *Force Field Analysis* model, with the three phases, became a classical approach to organisational change.

Phase	Reactions and dynamics
Phase 1: Unfreeze	People question the status quo and recognise the need for change
Phase 2: Change	New solutions are explored, defined and tried
Phase 3: Refreeze	The changes are integrated into organisational structures, procedures and culture

Table 4 shows the three phases of Kurt Lewin's model. The content is adapted from (Kaufman & Kaufman, 2009, p. 275) *and put into the table by me.*

The model is still being used in, and taught, in academia and other change programmes throughout the world. Reform programmes are built on this model, which treats change as episodic phases, rather than fluid processes. The model's implicit dynamic is that change is planned and something a team or organisation goes into, through and out of. Although relevant in the past, the model does not harmonise with the pace of change in present-day organisations. However, in my view, Lewin's approach and democratic principles, promoting the participation and engagement of workers, remain as relevant now as they were back then.

Parallel to the increased use of technology and pressure for improved efficiency, the needs of the workers were raised (Irgens, 2016). Eric Trist and his colleagues at The Tavistock Institute laid the foundations of the Socio Technical Systems model, bridging between non-human and human systems, and what this meant for working conditions and productivity, examining the areas in which the, often diverging, needs overlapped. Their research in the mining industry in 1949 concluded that it was the working group, and not individuals, that was key. The working group was better at finding their approach to the work, not an external leader.

To really understand how value was created, one needed to shift the focus from single jobs to appreciating the set of tasks (Karp, 2014).

It is my understanding that the arrival of modernism, derived from a Cartesian mindset, increased the value placed on the observation and measurement of research objects. This mindset carried through to organisational change and people being affected by it. The work and research of Rensis Likert (1903-1981), at the University of Michigan, paved the way for measurement and assessment of organisational performances through questionnaires filled in by individuals in the organisation (Bolman & Deal 2014). The accumulated results would then provide a picture of the state of the organisation, its management and performance. It was up to the management to act upon the results and take initiatives to address the problem areas. The focus in organisations turned to what could be measured, and therefore given value. I find that this approach is still common today, in employee satisfaction surveys, organisational culture surveys and 360-degree surveys (where immediate manager, peers and direct reports all give feedback on a manager's performance). The idea is to look for continuous improvement and planning processes to make work more productive.

According to the American leadership academic, John Kotter (Kotter, 2012); (Bolman & Deal, 2014), most change processes fail because they are too focused on data gathering, analysis, reporting procedures and presentations. Kotter's research findings are formulated into an eight-step approach. These steps are described in the right-hand column below, where I have mapped it together with Lewin's three phases, illustrating how they follow the same sequential and prescriptive process.

Lewin's three phases	Reactions and dynamics	Kotter's eight steps process
Phase 1: Unfreeze	People question status quo and recognise the need for change	1. Establishing a sense of urgency 2. Creating a guiding coalition 3. Developing a vision and strategy
Phase 2: Change	New solutions are explored, defined and tried	4. Communicating the change vision 5. Empowering broad-based action 6. Generating short-term wins
Phase 3: Refreeze	The changes are integrated into organisational structures, procedures and culture	7. Consolidating gains and producing more change 8. Anchoring new approaches in the culture

Table 5 shows the combination of Lewin's and Kotter's models (Rød 2018).

While still adhering to a linear eight-step process, Kotter calls for a new awareness in leadership. He states that leadership means daring to break rules and think untraditionally, while engaging the emotions of those involved (Kotter, 2012). Johannessen discusses the shortcomings of Kotter's approach, when he explains that its success depends on the organisation's ability to share the vision and values defined by a charismatic leader: '*success in business is dependent on leaders directing the change, creating agreements on their vision and defined values, stating goals to move against and organising the empowering of people.*' (Johannessen, 2009, p. 161). I would argue that Kotter's model remains linear and normative, and fits in with top-down approaches, with one strong leadership at the helm setting direction and strategy, endorsing normative behaviour in support of the change.

I think this speaks to a dilemma experienced by many: to follow a linear plan and see the organisation as a system from an observer position, while at the same time trying to engage people. But is this possible to balance, given what we know about the nature of systems as organisms and emergence of our realities? Can we stand outside and tell people to engage with the change? I would argue that we need to live it from the inside through our interactions and relations, while paying attention to the context and frames around us.

To place my research in a cultural context, let us turn briefly to Scandinavia today: the Norwegian organisational development pioneer, Einar Thorsrud, brought Kurt Lewin's ideas, on a collaborative approach and Socio Technical Systems, into the political arena, thereby laying the foundations of a team approach the main ideas of which are still alive in Scandinavia today (Fivesdal, et al., 2004). The research centred around self-governing working groups with a set of psychological work requirements set to influence working conditions and processes, emphasising workplace democracy, flat hierarchies, trust and high levels of involvement and decision-making. Professor Tom Karp, at the University of Oslo, is concerned that this model is under threat from what he calls Anglo-Saxon ideas on hard HR, clusters of power, more rigid hierarchical structures and 'command and control' steering mechanisms (Karp, 2018). He argues that both dominance and collaboration may be part of biological make-up but is inefficient over time. I support Karp's view, and would add that hierarchical and linear processes with reduced employee engagement negatively impact upon motivation, which again reduces productivity.

4.4 Contexts and Strategies for Change

To highlight the evolvement of the topic of change, I want to introduce the British leadership academic, Berhard Burnes, and the idea of emergent change. Burnes claims that emergent change has taken over for the planned change approaches we have discussed above (Burnes, 2009). He bases this on the assumption that change does not take place as a linear process or an isolated event. Rather it is *'continuous, open-ended, cumulative and unpredictable process of aligning and re-aligning an organisation to its changing environment.'* (Orlikowski, 1996); (Falconer, 2002); (Burnes, 2009, p. 372). But, according to Burnes, the Emergent approach has a strong focus on individuals, power and politics. '*With its emphasis on power and politics and its apparent acceptance that 'might is right', the Emergent approach seems to have fitted in well with the spirit of the last 25 years*' (Burnes, 2009, p. 375). In my view, this contribution to the field of change processes still centres around strong individual leadership styles, as we saw in John Kotter's popular model.

While engaging employees in an increasing trend in change processes, the view of change as episodic, often brought on for economic, seems to remain. The Economic strategy for change is, as the name implies, driven by economic gains, developed and implemented by a leadership group at the top of the organisation. Following a linear process, it is a formalised approach with a top-down focus and differs from organisational strategies which see change as a continuous process aiming to involve the organisation following a circular approach. This involves reflection and experimenting, which are known to be central to learning organisations. Here, the aim is to learn, adapt and innovate, and the process is bottom-up (Jacobsen, 2017).

Much of the challenge, in my view, remains around the locus of power in organisations and who initiates the change. I refer to Scandinavian leadership academics to illustrate my point: Organisations exist in ecosystems where survival depends on the ability to balance the pressure and needs of external and internal stakeholders. It is normally left to the leadership of the organisation to ensure the maintenance of this balance, by paying attention to changes in the environment such as technological, financial, legislative, political, social, demographic and cultural conditions. (Jacobsen & Thorsvik, 2014). The Swedish leadership strategist, Gøran Roos, states that the leadership needs to ensure the organisation is proactive and can anticipate changes, as any reticence or lack of alignment on their part will impact upon how the process unfolds in, and impacts on, the organisation. Other impacting factors are: not enough time for preparation combined with an eagerness to push the process fast; lack of experience and knowledge of change and strategy processes, which often leads to miscalculations; tunnel vision failing to see the bigger picture and how the process will impact the ecosystem of internal and external stakeholders (Roos, et al., 1997). Roos also argues that groups are not always the best solution to handling insecurity and difficult decisions. It is how the group interacts that will determine their ability to take responsibility and examine alternative solutions (Roos, et al., 1997).

As we can see from the above discussion, approaches to change still rely on change processes driven by strong individual leadership. I have previously argued that our lens, and how we view the world, impact upon what we pay attention to, and how we understand and experience something. The same is the case for change.

If we want to influence, and even alter, the way we approach and be with change and changing, it helps to understand the thinking the participants in the process come from, in order to build bridges across different perceptions of reality.

The American organisational consultants, Lee G. Bolman and Terrence E. Deal, have developed four frames for understanding an organisation. While this model still holds an objectified view of organisations and change, it is informative of dominating discourses in organisations, revealing where the power resides. Briefly summarised these are:

- The Human Resource frame focusing on human beings and the relational aspects.

- The Structural frame which concerns itself with the strategies, plans, objectives, technology, organisational structures and charts, roles, responsibilities and other functional aspects of the organisation.

- The Political frame reflects the thug of power and influence between stakeholders with differing agendas.

- The Symbolic Frame emphasising the importance of culture, symbols and organisational spirit, necessary to succeed. (Bolman & Deal, 2014).

The model describes the possible agendas driving the attitudes, choices and responses of those involved in the change process, impacting how they approach and experience it. By combining the four frames with Kotter's eight-step model on change, as done below, we see more prescriptive approaches to change, containing strategy and tactics to be deployed at different stages in the linear unfolding of events.

While useful to understand what this is, still the dominant discourse driving change, in my view this reinforces an objectifying view of organisations, teams and individuals, contrary to a social constructionist approach.

Kotter's eight steps	Structural frame	HR frame	Political frame	Symbolic frame
Establishing a sense of urgency		Involve the whole organisation. Ask for input	Networking with key stakeholders, use power base	Tell a convincing story
Creating a guiding coalition	Develop strategies for collaboration	Run team building with leader team	Staff the team leading the change with credible and influential members	Give the team leading the change a clear leader in charge
Developing a vision and strategy	Develop plan for implementation		Map out the political landscape, create action plans	Develop a vision with future aspirations through rooted in the history of the organisation
Communicating the change vision	Create structures that support the change process	Arrange meetings to convey direction and invite feedback	Create arenas, build alliances and neutralise opposition	Visible leadership, create '*let us pull together*' ceremonies and events
Empowering broad-based action	Remove or create structures and procedures that support the old ways	Ensure training, resources and support		Conduct 'public executions' of '*opponents (counter revolutionary*) to the change

Generating short-term wins	Plan for short term wins		Invest resources and use power base to ensure early wins	Celebrate and convey early signs of success
Consolidating gains and producing more change	Ensure that people stick to the plan			Arrange *'hang in there'* sessions
Anchoring new approaches in the culture	Adapt the structure to suit the new	Build a 'culture' team to create a broad buy in in the development of organisational culture		Grieve the past, celebrate the *'revolutionary heroes'* and share the story of the road travelled

(Bolman & Deal, 2003, pp. 386-387)

Table 6 shows a combination of Kotter's eight phase model combines with Bolman and Deal's four frames.

When examining some of the current literature on change, I was struck by how normative and linear the approaches remain, despite the complexity and challenges of the current fast-changing surroundings impacting our realities. I am left with the notion that change is something forced upon some people by someone else (leaders), because something has or will happen, impacting the organisation. Often radical in nature with a clear process and linear timeline, including a starting and ending point, the change is seen as an isolated episode through which an organisation needs to mobilise all its forces and move through with momentum.

Reading through my research a few things strike me. One is the way humans are viewed as objects to be separated, boxed in, measured and controlled. No wonder there may be resistance, as employees are pushed through these phases towards an unknown future. The text I have most struggled with is Bolman and Deal's adaptation of Kotter's eight steps. I find the language used directive and commanding, bearing witness to a top-down, authoritative leadership style, at times resembling that of warfare, using terms such as '*public executions of counter revolutionaries*', '*Tell a convincing story*' and '*Grieve the past, celebrate the 'revolutionary heroes'* focusing on individual contributions. (Bolman & Deal, 2003, pp. 386-387). The literature I have researched on the topic of change describes linear processes with different phases one moves through, where change can be observed as a phenomena often described before or after the event (Roos, et al., 1997); (Martinsen, 2002); (Jacobsen & Thorsvik, 2014); (Bolman & Deal, 2014); (Klev & Levin, 2016); (Irgens, 2016); (Hennestad & Revang, 2017); (Jacobsen, 2017),

As we can see, from several of the theories on change discussed above, change is often divided into radical or incremental. The former is often a drastic, and sometimes dramatic, response to outside influences, while the latter is a gradual evolvement of the current organisation. A change process can be planned and driven in a top-down hierarchical manner, but it can also be a natural evolution and adaptation (Jacobsen & Thorsvik, 2014). The teams in the research came to view change differently, as part of the research process: *'We also have a better understanding that change is important, that it is something we need to do a little bit of all the time, as an ordinary task not as something out of the ordinary'.* (Team 2, post research survey). Pointing to the different speeds and ways change is embraced is illustrated by voices in Team 1:

'A challenge was that we developed our willingness for change quicker than the rest of the organisation. Hence, it sometimes felt challenging to come home to my own organisation and experience that people just wanted to sit still.' (Team 1, Post Research Survey).

With my thesis, and the Wheel of Systemic Ideas, it is my intention that teams will question the underlying paradigms governing existing approaches to change. By that I mean what is driving change, the way it is implemented, by whom to whom, and according to what logic. I would argue that a stronger focus on patterns of connections and relationship, understanding the wholeness of the ecosystem, and being curious as to the impact of systemic ideas could pave the way for more proactive, engaged approaches, rather than dramatic and radical changes that dominates today`s organisations. In my view, we need to turn the whole concept and perception of change around, from something forced upon us that has to be endured, to something we actively engage with and co-create together.

4.5 Experiences of Change

Mindell, once a student of Carl Jung, helps us to understand the dynamics of change, referring to signals as indications of emergence as we move from one state to another (Mindell, 2000). Signals are pockets of information coming into the system. This becomes relevant in change contexts as we start to notice signals at all levels; individual, in teams, organisations and society. When a change is introduced, it impacts the system on many levels, causing a series of reactions, like pebbles thrown into the water. Traditional change theory would use the events leading up to a change to create urgency (the first phase of both Lewin's and Kotter's models), the change itself framed as episodic, with a start and end point, dealing with the reactions in a normative manner, while discounting the ongoing shaping of our realities.

Social constructionism, on the other hand, stresses the impact of the change from the inside, how it is experienced and continues to shape us long after the attractor moment is gone.

In the landscape of organisational theory, addressing and overcoming barriers and resistance to change is broadly addressed (Bolman & Deal, 2014); (Jacobsen & Thorsvik, 2014); (Klev & Levin, 2016); (Irgens, 2016); (Jacobsen, 2017); (Hennestad & Revang, 2017).   Some of the reoccurring factors behind the resistance are: lack of faith/belief in the necessity of the change; lack of confidence in the implementation of the change; fear of losing financial status or power (such as salary, job security, being replaced); extra effort and work during the change process; fear of failing; a threat to existing values and ideals, and resistance to inference (as in, not wanting to be controlled by others) (Martinsen, 2002). Adding to that, fear of the unknown; and, the breaking of psychological contracts (what we expect from each other and have morally committed to) (Jacobsen & Thorsvik, 2014); (Jacobsen, 2017).

Looking at the above factors, it strikes me that they mostly have to do with emotions and relational aspects such as fear; lack of faith, trust and confidence; loss of identify, belonging, control, status, values and ideals; threats to current position and power. This is clearly expressed by the voices in Team 1: *'The managers don't understand and fail to communicate to their people. The complexity is so deep that it is hard to convey. Afraid of not being competent enough. Sit still and say nothing. Afraid of losing my position, will speak my mind later when I am safe'.*   (Team 1, fourth session).

If we look at the same resistance using a human system thinking, a WE-ness, as a lens, what could be co-created, and what potential released?

My findings showed that there is most energy and potency in the collective position. Engaging with Team 2, I was struck by the differences in energy and how they spoke about change from an individual and a collective perspective, as described in the example below:

Team 2 – Best and Worse Experiences of Change

In the first session, we reflected around the team members' best and worst experience of change, in order to create a reflective space and activate their memories. We already had a team agreement in place to create a safe container, and the team members next shared their experiences, contributing to a common ground and understanding. After having identified the best and worst experiences, I asked them to comment on what were the similarities and differences between the experiences. What struck me in their replies was the energy and dynamic in the experienced change, depending on whether it was individual or collective:

The responses expressed in Team 2: '*In terms of similarities; change equals insecurity and growing pains. Change contains both positive and negative experiences, also creates energy, fear affirms life and creates engagement. Focus is more on group level, and togetherness seems to be more alive in best-experienced processes, leading to a more positive group dynamic. Positive experiences have a more outward focus, while negative ones are more inward and closed, more individually- focused. A lot of this is related to how we experience our own value. In negative circumstances, we experience insecurity, frustration, loss of control and a feeling of not being good enough, while positive experiences produce learning and insight.*

The differences we noted were that the worst change experiences happened on an individual level, whereas the best change experiences generated feelings at a group or collective level. The dynamics occurring during the best experiences were described more positively, and often included motions. Another piece we picked up was powerlessness vs participation. Both dynamics seemed to be self-reinforcing, and we respond both consciously and unconsciously.'

Given these insights, I asked them, how could they respond to/interact with the dynamics occurring? The responses voiced in Team 2: '*We respond more collectively to the positive dynamics. Having said that, we also respond collectively to negative dynamics. We respond to the positive dynamics occurring by cultivating them even more. So, it is maintained, or maintains itself. So, whatever state is self-reinforcing, it is also negative. With unity, bringing in our experience and tools for change. Looking to increase our knowledge and develop ourselves while taking care of each other. Increased awareness and ensuring solid change processes. We need to create more room to share frustrations as well as victories, positive experiences of each other, etc. Consciousness that you are part of a wholeness (as in, systems thinking), and being generous, both on an individual and group level. Respond more collectively with positive dynamics. Being generous means accepting mistakes, separate person and tasks, accept differences, look at things with an open and positive mind. Think Chaos theory and look at the bigger picture without getting hung up on the smaller stuff. '*

I then asked what could they create with, and from, the dynamics occurring? The responding voices showed new awareness of how to be with change: '*Community, unity, re-orientation, tools for change, increased knowledge, self-development, taking care of, increased awareness, new learning. We can learn from this to create a place where people can thrive.*

What we want to create are better processes. Change is about improving. No, it can be making the best out of a bad situation. I often think that, regardless of how planned the process may be, things will happen. In communication, things will emerge that was not planned. There could be a response that was not anticipated, that you have to deal with there and then. In this place, you gain experience. Sometimes things are very successful, other times not, so we gain new knowledge in our encounter with new experiences. By going through these processes, you dare more, have more guts.'   (Team 2, second session).

In my view, the above example shows what is possible when we put our attention on the co-creation. It can be further explained by Weick who proposes, through the Theory of Enactment, that people co-construct their realities by how they re-enact abstract phenomena. The way we talk about something, make sense of and behave in relation to a phenomenon, is what makes it real to us. Weick argues that organisations depend on employees' sensemaking to exist and evolve, making them dynamic systems. This puts people in the centre of organisational development (Klev & Levin, 2016). Following this argument, I would suggest that an exploration of ideas, and the meaning these carry for those involved, is crucial during change. Weick goes on to argue that organisations are in a constant state of change, coming into existence again and again. He suggests that we stop talking about organisations as entities: '*stamp out nouns, organizing rather than organizations*' (Weick, 1979); (Weick, 1995); (Hennestad & Revang, 2017). He thereby points to the dynamic of ongoing evolvement of the organisations, to which I also subscribe, taking a distance to the idea of organisations as entities to be viewed from an observer position.

4.6 Production and Relations – the Pull of the Binary

In my experience, an appreciation for relations is needed to be dialogical. By that, I mean that in order to co-construct our realities, a fundamental respect and understanding of the positions and experiences of others is necessary. It involves reflection and the creation of trust. In my practice in organisations, I often find a preference for production in general, but also when it comes to change. Relations and trust-building seem to remain fluffy words that are talked about, but often sacrificed on the altar of production. I would argue that a language reflecting an outcome-based (Marshall, 1999) and linear thinking, is more valued in most product-orientated societies, and does not match the ongoing dynamics and pattern of responsiveness that emerges in our interactions.

As I was reading theory and engaging in the research at the same time, I noticed the interacting elements of production and relations as an emerging dynamic in the teams I worked with. I wanted to explore this further, and it became the first breakdown. I named it the production-relation. Alvesson and Karreman refer to the moments when you come across or notice the process moving in a different direction as breakdown (Alvesson & Karreman, 2011). A breakdown stirs something in you. It could be difficult to grasp, so you leave it for now, or its potential interest may entice you to look further. The next step, they say, is to carry out more theoretical or empirical studies, looking for signs which can stand up to further scrutiny, or not, finally resulting in the solving, or not, of the mystery (Alvesson & Karreman, 2011).

When working with Team 1, I became aware of the language they used to describe the change process, indicating to me a production orientation.

In the example with Team 1 below, I describe how the first breakdown emerged, what followed, and the shifts and awareness created from it.

Team 1: Exploring Production and Relations

The first breakdown, which I have come to coin the production-relation paradigm, struck me in December 2016, shortly into my research with Team 1. The monthly team meetings, in which I was present as part of the research, started with a check-in, where team members shared detailed analyses of their individual work streams. The meetings quickly became report out sessions, and I was unsure of the value they had in bringing the change project forward. They had asked for reflection time in the initial team agreement (see chapter 2), but, at the same time, some found the reflection time inefficient and unproductive.

This spurred my interest in asking them about their preferences, and how they felt about the reflection sessions forming part of my research. During the final months of 2016, I invited Team 1 to take part in an email survey which I called '*Virtual Coffee with Anne*'. The purpose was to gain an understanding of how they experienced the monthly reflection sessions. I asked four questions regarding their experience of the change journey and invited the participants to reply via email. The last question, below, was about the reflection sessions:

- What benefit have you drawn from the monthly reflection session on:
- A personal level
- In the project team

- As a leader and employee in the Norwegian police

The answers showed that one-third did not gain any value from the reflection sessions, expressed through responses like: '*These sessions have not given me much. They don't work for me; it becomes too abstract. The sessions take too much time, so we don't have time for the rest of the agenda.*'

Another third said they had found the reflection time useful up until that point and felt it had done a lot for the development of trust in the team. However, they felt at this point that the reflection had become a part of their check-in time and practice and was therefore no longer needed as a structured and formal part of their monthly meetings. The last third said they really appreciated the sessions, expressed through responses like: '*I have become more aware of the 'we' rather than my individual perspective. Better at listening and more curious of others. The joint reflection opens up for new ideas and thoughts, which creates learning. Builds understanding and trust, we have become a better team because of it.*'

My initial response was one of sadness that the reflection had not created any perceived value to four of the participants. However, I quickly recovered, noting that this was actually an expression of a dynamic I encounter regularly: a resistance to the 'soft' stuff, and a desire to produce, deliver and 'get things done'. The researcher in me became curious, and during a later session I engaged them in a reflection on how to bridge and balance production and relation. I also pondered the cause of the resistance to reflection, thinking it may be associated with our modernistic conditioning, personalities, lack of language (and even experience) in expressing one's self, lack of trust, or not being able to see the value of the

relational aspect developed in reflective practice.

In the next session, I shared the findings of the survey 'virtual coffee with Anne' with the team, which seemed to have helped everyone to look back and reflect on the process so far. They all paid very close attention to the answers as I went through the PowerPoint presentation on my PC, and it struck me that this sharing actually created a deeper sense of safety in the team. Judging from the concentration in the room, how they huddled around the screen, and the conversation that followed afterwards, I think the sharing of the survey created a shift in the team. It mirrored the team's experience of the process. The reflections helped create an understanding of the paradigms they come from, and the dominating discourses they were part of on a daily basis, often without conscious awareness. The value of reflection was established, and production was not the only topic on the table.

When I introduced the production-relationship constellation a year later, I was surprised to find that the team now valued relations more than production. To initiate a dialogue, I introduced the polarity constellation (Campbell & Groenbaek, 2006) with production on the one side and relation on the other, with gradients in the middle. I suggested definitions at either end to get the conversation started, opening up for their individual interpretations. The definitions on the floor were:

Production to include linear plans for target setting, to complete tasks and achieve goals, the monitoring and measuring of quantifiable data to control the progress.

Relations to include non-linear relationship, interconnected patterns of relationship, interdependent collaboration, sense of belonging (WE-ness, one team), trust, and psychological safety, which enables a learning culture.

As with previous constellation work, the participants placed themselves according to their preference and an exploratory dialogue followed.

I asked: *'Where is the focus in the change process (in your opinion)?'* Two people placed themselves in relations, one in the middle and the other in production. The deepening of the answers reflected some shifts as to where attention had been placed since the survey a year earlier: *'Focus on work packages being cascaded top to bottom. Lack of focus on people and feelings. I have placed myself more on relations because we have put emphasis on relations to engage people, and people have been noticing this lately. We have focused on production, but we have been able to collaborate. The overall objectives have been to build relationships that are not there. We need to build the DNA of our police district'.*

I then asked: *'Where should the focus be for the change process to succeed (in your opinion)?'* The whole team shifted to Relations, and then explained why: *'We need to appreciate our differences; these have been a hindrance and should have been addressed from the top. The ambition of the production is harnessed when relations are in place. I become more efficient in my job when I have relations in place. I would have preferred to remain on production but move to relations, because I would have liked to have had more of a say, and that could have been more likely when relations are in place. Dealing with our differences from the start could have allowed for a smoother process.'*

It was a surprise to me, when I asked, that relational focus seemed to trump production focus, but that was not what I had experienced earlier while observing conversations and interactions. Could it be the result of the eighteen-month-long research process, the surfacing of an underlying recognition that had been present all along? Or something else? It struck me that the team had been unaware of the value of relations, or discounted its importance

because it did not fit in with the regime of efficiency; and, in this team, they did not have a language for it, only one for production. It struck me that the manner in which the Reform programme was carried out left little room for focusing on, or building, relations; a common identity; or, other culturally- binding elements. Everything was formed in linear work processes cascaded from top to bottom, throughout all the police districts in the country. This swift operation left everyone in limbo land, fighting their own corners. The necessity and importance of safety became apparent, otherwise the only focus seemed to be on their own survival.

In my view, we gain safety through relations, as echoed in the words of the team: *'Has been focus on production in the start, setting the frames and preparing the ground, and that was necessary. Now it is time to focus more on relations in this part of process. I think we have not focused enough on creating a culture from the start, and a sufficient dialogue between the six key areas. There is little to no dialogue. We could have gained more from the relations if we had focused more on that from the start. If we had made people feel safe enough to really contribute with their expertise, we could have harnessed much more of the potential in our district. But, because we don't have that safety in place, people limit themselves and close up.'*

(Team 1, fifth session).

I see Western economic models as based on production and consumption. The focus on linear efficiency, control and production is echoed and implemented through modernistic styles of management. The French sociologist, Michel Maffesoli, uses the term *productivism* to describe rational and mechanistic approaches that, he argues, permeate Western societies and stem from a Christian rational heritage (Maffesoli, 1996); (Maffesoli, 2002); (Riikonen & Sara, 2006). The word productivism refers to *´the discourses and practices that rely on the logic, vocabulary and values of economy, administration and production'* (Riikonen & Sara, 2006, p. 18).

In my view, the term *productivism* captures the essence of the value associated with working hard to complete tasks, which is recognisable from Calvinistic work ethics. We are being productive in that we produce something. The German philosopher, Martin Heidegger, writes, in my view intricately, about being and time. He uses the term *technology* as a framework, or lens, to relate to the world around us. Nature and humans become resources for technical operations, means to an end, instrumental for achieving something. '*Leaders and planners, along with the rest of us, are mere human resources to be arranged, rearranged, and disposed of*' (Blitz, 2014). My understanding is that Heidegger is concerned that we delude ourselves that we have control, and do not see the detrimental effects that a technological paradigm has on humanity, leaving out the being so vital for the experience of human life.

The distinction between production and relation is relevant in a thesis on change because it touches on the deeper motivation behind most initiated change processes, as discussed in the previous sections. The production aspect becomes the driver for change processes in organisations. I would argue, then, that the relational dimension is vital in organisational

change processes, and by giving it more significance, we increase our ability to engage ourselves in more adequate approaches to change, where we can understand and co-construct our responses. In my findings, most traditional theories on leadership have created a separation between the relational aspects on the one hand, and the production and results-driven aspects on the other.

Studies carried out at the Universities of Ohio and Michigan in the US during the 1940s and 1950s identified two types of leadership styles: task-focused, and employee-focused. The binary separation of these two styles remains influential on leadership theories (Kaufman & Kaufman, 2009). We may ask ourselves why that is, given that there have been many recent contributions to the evolvement of this field. The answer to that, in my experience and opinion, is that these two dimensions continue to create a simplified separation that is easy to relate to, while supporting the existing hegemony of power within organisations. Although a leader's, or team's, ability to build and sustain the relational aspects of its interaction is seen as increasingly important and emphasised, the task-based, production focus remains most important. It is the latter that, through the monitoring and measuring of quantifiable data, enables leaders and owners to control the progress and perceived success of the organisation. Numbers appear to remain the currency we rely on for target-setting strategic adjustments, achievement and feedback. It therefore also becomes the guiding principle for hiring, conditioning and remuneration of leaders.

Even though teams and organisations, to some extent, acknowledge the presence of emotions, feelings, experiences and interpretations, numbers and counting continue to be the 'world language' that perpetuates our governing financial models and economic systems.

I find it noteworthy that the task-oriented, objectifying paradigm is so deeply embedded in our language, shaping an objective 'truth' that we stealthily pass on to the next generation, without question. Mindell offers a way to understand how we create meaning around something, by drawing on an example from science and maths. He uses the act of counting to help us better understand what choices we implicitly make through the way we look at, and engage with, something. He proposes that what we choose, or don't choose to count, and how we do it, depends on who we are and what is important to us. *'Counting involves choice. It involves the psychology of the observer'* (Mindell, 2000, p. 36). He argues that counting depends on our culture; how we perceive things, what we consider valuable, and our relationship to the things around us. In my view, this demonstrates how counting is also a social construction and if we are to collaborate, we need to understand what counts for you and what counts for me. This can be applied to all experiences and phenomena, and it is important that we question our taken-for-granted truths and perceptions often conditioned in us from an early age.

I find it valuable to relate Mindell's example above to change, and the language we use to describe it. In a modernistic view, change is an event or experience we go through, engage with, described in objectified, measured terms, and treated in an episodic way. Organisations lean on a productionist language, where tasks are the currency; the means to an end. This is further exemplified by the British professor of learning and leadership, Judi Marshall, whose research encompasses gender and leadership (Marshall, 1999).

She introduces the term 'process and people-centred' as opposed to 'outcome-based' and refers to task and relationship as the two commonly identified categories of work, task being more valued in most Western, product-orientated societies. Marshall defines 'task' as helping to, or achieving, a clear task objective (Marshall, 1999).

Feminist theory, and the work of American researcher on Relational Theory, Joyce K. Fletcher, can help us understand how gender constructions seem to shape what is favoured in the workplace and how this is reflected in choice of language. She argues that adult growth and achievement is centred around qualities like individuation, separation, and independence (Fletcher, 1998); (Marshall, 1999). In my view, these are elements recognisable from the quantifiable task dimension, the list made complete by adding fragmentation, analysis and control. I find it interesting that Fletcher's research shows that relational practices were not valued or considered 'real work' within the organisational environment she researched, '*which favoured qualities such as autonomy, self-promotion, individual heroics, tangible outcomes and short-term results*' (Fletcher, 1998, p. 167); (Marshall, 1999). Fletcher even points to a lack of language for the relational dimension, thus marginalising its value and significance even further. Fletcher's research findings echo my own experience of working in organisations, where the dominant discourse appears to be that of linear processes, deduction and analysis of smaller units, performance measured through numbers, with financial results providing the ultimate verdict. If the language to speak about an experience from the inside is marginalised, the dimensions are excluded.

Marshall goes on to argue that research in many ways is a political process (Marshall, 1999), so creating knowledge becomes political business.

I find this interesting in terms of what knowledge and language is emphasised in organisations and valued more than other elements. It seems we are recreating discourses that sustain the power and importance of 'hard' stuff, and that, if we engage with the 'softer stuff' – our experiences – we lose our credibility and position in the political landscape of an organisation.

Since I embarked on my doctoral journey in September 2015, I have written blogs and delivered speeches in many different countries, sharing my thoughts and reflections on the influences of the modernistic paradigm on organisations today, the dynamics of change, and our interactions. In my experience, many people know their philosophy, have read up on systems work, are experienced with change processes, and are very familiar with the discourses from quantitative-based management styles. However, few of those I have met seem to make the connection between the above. It is as if being inside the organisational systems, and the paradigms these are based on, makes us blind. As if we are not curious to the origins of thoughts that we daily feel the effect of, that govern how we think, what we value and how we go about our lives. As if we are being held hostages to a truth that we have taken for granted and never questioned, not realising that it has been created by some people before us, in a different context, time and age, and that it is up to us to challenge these discourses. My studies and my field research indicate that in order to engage with other approaches to change, the relational aspect needs to be in balance with the focus on production, completion of tasks and achievement of goals. This is supported by my findings and exemplified by the voices in Team 2: *'We have to be able to communicate across differences. Dialogue is about feeling safety and knowing that the others see all parts of me and accepting these; we all have aspects that we like or don't like about each other; see the whole person and still want to be in relation.*

I need to know that you know who and how I am, what you can expect from me, and I wish the same from you. But how do we do this? By talking more, working more together, seeing more of each other. I see more in the world than emotions, but I feel safer when we have talked about relations and emotions, and I hope you can accept that. To us who are preoccupied with relations it is about a feeling of being safe, but for those who prefer production it could be more about being effective. To me it is about being accepted, if I do something stupid= I am stupid, I know you don't think that, but....'

(Team 2 fourth session).

The weaving of relations goes hand in hand with systemic ideas such as interdependence and patterns on non-linearity, appreciating paradoxes and how we all contribute to the whole.

4.7 A Systemic Position of Change

Systemic thinking and change walk hand in hand due to the emergent processes embedded in the former. My research into change uses a systemic approach in applying systemic ideas to change processes in teams. I would like to end this chapter by bridging systemic thinking and change, by bringing back the systemic voices previously introduced in chapter 3.

Everything living is in relationship with every other living thing through visible and nonvisible patterns of interconnectedness; we are interdependent without awareness. Gregory Bateson says that a reaction in a living system (an animal, a tree, a person) cannot be predicted. It can also take a long time before we experience the response, if ever.

Chaos theory catches this dynamic and shows how unintended responses to an action create feedback loops that can appear chaotic. We need to pay attention to what happens, is uttered, and the nature of the response. To be dialogical is to be in relation to that and those around you, and it is in the responding to each other that we co-construct our realities. Central to social constructionism is, therefore, the notion of language and how we use it to describe our experiences, and how we understand each other in this continuous co-creation.

I have earlier referred to Shotter's term '*joint action*' (Shotter, 2011, p. 58), referring to how one person's act is shaped by the act of another person, or an event. As I understand this, it becomes moments of flow and merging consciousness, where attention is not put on who says or does what. When applying our dialogical being to the uncertainty of change, Shotter says that this is '*a dialogically structured kind of uncertainty*' (Shotter, 2011, p. 37) occurring when acting in '*circumstances not of their own choosing*' (Shotter, 2011, p. 38), which, according to Shotter, can produce a certain type of anxiety. Each new experience will add something, creating an impact and a response in us. Being dialogical, then, also implies that our experience of change shapes us and creates a response in us. In my view, this fear needs to be appreciated and I have found, through my practice, that it can be engaged with. An example of this is Team 2 who, when they shared their experience of change, talked about the energy that was present in the 'we' when engaging with change together.

In my view the Theory of Autopoiesis describes this process beautifully. It is easy to think that those around us are static figures in our lives, but they, as we, are changing and reshaping their selves continuously. The person we say goodbye to at the office on Friday evening is not the same person we meet on Monday morning after the weekend.

Something, however minor, will have impacted us, how we are, what we do and how we respond. And it is this constant flow of our evolvement I would like to normalise and suggest we engage with, having a dialogue with our continuous processes of emergence. In order to understand and be with what is emerging between us and in relation to our surroundings, time for sharing and reflection is key.

Whereas the dominant approach to change has been based on the modernistic ideas holding the power of the discourse, defining what change is and showing it should be implemented, Gergen shows us how social constructionism offers a different way of being with change. He proposes that social constructionism offers a co-creation of living, experiencing emergence, reflecting and making sense in order to co-create what is next. This shifts the power base from a few to the many, who can be involved and influence how we engage with change. He argues that social constructionist approaches open up for possibility and innovation, that we listen in new ways, ask different questions, involve and co-create.

Stacey argues that the interacting, self-organising entities can be compared to people responding to each other and calls it a complex responsive process. He says these processes produce both continuity and newness at the same time, and that is where I see its relevance in terms of understanding and relating to change. Stacey's thinking intersects with that of social constructionism, in the belief that humans co-create their social lives, and that this is co-creating us at the same time. Change then becomes the creating of something that gives rise to something else, reproducing current patterns and themes or potentially transforming these (Stacey, 2015).

This underscores my previous point, about how we can bring intentionality to change processes. We can be conscious about how we engage with change and how we choose to respond to emergence.

Stacey proposes that we are not to think about the system from an outside position but from within the interaction, which Shotter calls the withness position. Stacey argues that the separation of the individual and social is counterproductive when thinking of learning. He then goes on to criticise Gergen, whom he says places the relationship above the individual. Stacey also argues that Shotter, through his emphasis on a third agency with a life and demands of its own, also puts the relational above the individual (Stacey, 2001).

In my view, Stacey is being too critical. I think the contexts in which the points from Gergen and Shotter were made are significant. Coming from a therapeutic, not complexity theory position, these ideas were responses to long-standing, dominant, modernistic thinking, putting individual first, both in organisations and research practices. Gergen does emphasise the social relationship as a way to make sense of our world, and what we take to be true (Gergen, 2015). To me it is a 'yes and' with respect to value put on individual and relationship, not a choice we have to make through 'either or' thinking.

What I see as the commonality between these approaches is the appreciation of relational and systemic ideas centring around the human processes, allowing for the emergence and co-creation. This is a key contributor to thinking differently about change. Stacey then confirms the resemblance of social constructionism and complex responsive processes in that:

'*The future is under perpetual construction in the detail of interaction between entities*' (Stacey, 2001, p. 59). If we, as humans, are these entities, we will, through our relational activity and pattern of responses, create something new, the quality of which depends on the quality of our interactions. In both approaches, the energy to shift emerges from inside the patterns of relationship, not through an instruction from the outside. To put it in other words, the force and the potential is inside the human system, and that is what makes the quality of it relevant.

I want to bring in another systemic voice when it comes to change, that of the British leadership scholar, Patricia Shaw. The reason for introducing her at this point is her organisational change using complexity approaches. She refers to the communicative action as a way to '*stay in movement of communicating, learning and organising*….' (Shaw, 2002, p. 20). Shaw argues that we struggle to think from within the experience we are having as participants, and that we as humans find it hard to think paradoxically. I believe she is referring to the grip the observer position has on us. Shaw points out the relational interaction and emergence possible in change processes through changing conversations; that people engage in courses of action relevant and sensible to their circumstances and context, not as externalised visions and goals. She aspires to free-flowing, open space, dialogical processes (Shaw, 2002).

Reading Shaw creates some reflections in me that I would like to share with you: first, is there a tension between the complexity approach and that of social constructionism in what happens next? While I support the idea of free-flowing processes, I know that many organisations, at this point in history, would not have the patience for processes without an

agenda or desired direction. Where does purpose come in? And common goals? And the understanding of the 'why' we are doing this? Gergen also points ahead to what may come, what he calls '*imaginary moments*' (Gergen, 2015, p. 141), where participants start to envision what is possible and, in that process, shift to collaboration. It can be understood as a shifting of positions from against to aligned towards a common purpose for us. This is significant in how we be with each other in that response in change.

One of the responses that has struck me on both my research journey, and in my practice, is the need for frames. In Team 1 they said that the production focus was good in the start, and then later on they had time for relations. Firstly, this echoes a 'relations are nice later' approach that I struggle with. Secondly, and more importantly, it speaks to the inner fear many have and to which linear and normative processes creates frames and boundaries providing a sense of safety. This constitutes another paradox, which in my view underscores the need for building bridges between paradigms and not to pull the rug from underneath peoples' feet creating panic during change. Dialogical processes allowing for emergence require, in my view, special attention to relational ethics and transparency about implicit and explicit power dynamics. In my experience participants normally ask: *Why are we doing this? What will happen next? How will the output be used?* These questions mirror a 'being done to' approach that can be countered by re-engaging the participants in answering these questions themselves.

The reader could also argue that the model; Wheel of Systemic Ideas is a normative frame in itself. I would agree that it is a a starting point for a dialogical practice which participants can use for their own interpretation around topics, events, experiences and responses.

The paradigms discussed above are ways of viewing the world, and in my view, important to reflect upon and even challenges. The Wheel of Systemic Ideas is a tool to talk about change in different ways, letting go of the binding to a particular orientation. By avoiding the binary right or wrong, it is possible to explore the whole scale and what polarities we can be drawn to in different situations.

Regardless of how I look at the topic of change, team interactions and the application of the Wheel of Systemic Ideas, I cannot avoid language. Many social constructionist draw on the work of Wittgenstein and his theory of language games where language is replaced with the metaphor of games (Wittgenstein, 1980a); (Shotter, 2011); (McNamee & Hosking, 2012); (Gergen, 2015). To describe the implications of this concept Gergen says: ' *Words acquire their meaning proposes Wittgenstein, through the way they are used'* (Gergen, 2015, p. 9). Speaking about the role of language McNamee and Hosking say: '*Language is assumed to present reality*' (McNamee & Hosking, 2012, p. 33). In my view this is significant because it implies that the one who has the power to influence or dominate the language and the discourses we engage in, can 'define' reality in the views of others. Especially, if reality is viewed as something objectively true. Linking this to power and change, and the power to initiate change, a modernist view would be to have power over someone. McNamee and Hosking describe 'power over' someone or something in that the 'I' becomes central (the subject) and others become objects the 'I' can exert 'power over', and 'power to' (McNamee & Hosking, 2012). In social constructionist thinking 'power to'; implies influence and co-construction. This can be exemplified in chaos approaches to change where the generative power lies within, in the connecting and relation of parts to unfold.

McNamee and Hosking propose that relational processes are: '*the locus of both stability and change; they close down and open up possibilities* ' (McNamee & Hosking, 2012, p. 37). When I read these words, I think of a breathing organism, like a jellyfish, that contracts and brings together, and extract and opens up. Looking to complexity theory and dissipative systems, this can be understood in the movement of energy; as something ends something else begins.

4.8 A Reflexive Moment: Change Comes Knocking

From the early philosophers through to the theories of the past century, and up to present day, change has always been present as an inevitable part of life. What strikes me is the human need to find the 'right' way of doing things, hence we seem left with a binary 'right – wrong' thinking about the approaches we engage in and apply. However, given the complexity of the future ahead of us, I think we need to be better at learning to live in uncertainty and chaos and making change agility a natural practice. There is no right or wrong way, there are paradoxes and contexts which we need to explore and relate to, in that we are living change. It appears to me as a power struggle between discourses emerging from a tension around how to be with the unknown.

As I write the words above, I can feel the sentiments of mankind through the centuries echo into the board rooms and teams of the 21st century. We are still preoccupied with limiting uncertainty and controlling our environments, but our means and methods may be more sophisticated at first glance.

In his 4D model of cultural dimensions, Hofstede borrows the term Uncertainty Avoidance from American sociologist James G March (Hofstede, 2005, p. 165) as a description how humans handle uncertainty. It expresses the degree to which the members of a society feel uncomfortable with uncertainty and ambiguity. Hofstede says: '*Ways of handling uncertainty, however, are part and parcel of any human institution in any country. All humans have to face the fact that we do not know what will happen tomorrow; the future is uncertain, but we have to live with it anyway'.* The fundamental issue here is how we deal with the fact that the future can never be known; should we try to control it or allow it to emerge? I wonder to what extent Cartesian approaches and Newtonian science, reflected in modernism today, is used to limit uncertainty and almost protect us against, not only the uncertain future, but also each other?

I am indeed a part of these paradigms which discourses have made imprints on me from an early age, all through my education and professional life. As I have started to question the validity and purposefulness of such paradigms in today's contexts, these approaches seem increasingly insufficient in a world where emergence is everywhere, and the ability to shift and move needs to be parts of an organisation's DNA if it is to prolong its life expectancy. For someone who was brought up on, and force-fed, the drive for setting and achieving goals and results, this journey is transformational. While I am researching change, I am also an instrument of change. I observe the process while being part of it. I am changing too. Within me new insights are brimming, and I am longing to share and to apply my new learnings in my professional practice.

And then it happens. The call from the organisation that is willing to build bridges between discourses; to let go of the normative and admit fear of uncertainty; to engage with paradoxes

and contexts; to let the process unfold through dialogue and exploration. '*We have started a journey of transformational change and we are scared! Can you help us?*' The voice on the other end started to share the team's efforts to tackle new ways of working. How they were taking on complexity, but that 'not knowing', and the loss of control, had some employees running for cover. We talked about the journey the team had embarked on, that feeling scared and uncertain was normal. How daunting it could be to let go of the task focus and allow time for the dialogical space and the unfolding of processes. How much time it took and how frustrated people were becoming, and what ideas, if any, can they hold on to as assurance or support rope, in the face of uncertainty? As I hung up, having set a date for the first meetings, I felt a surge of joy and relief. I was not alone in this; the research could now be applied in other contexts and fora and help teams navigate emergent change as a collaborative experience for those involved, releasing their potential and creativity, enabling dialogue and learning.

Where is all this taking us? At the end of the day I feel we are all trying to say the same thing; we exist in patterns of interconnectivity because we are all interdependent. Relationships is the blood that nurtures us, and energy and life ebb and flow like the rhythm of our hearts.

We are weaving together the elements in the thesis to shape a pattern of connectedness. In the next chapter I share what I have noticed in the research process. As the reader of my thesis, what are you curious about at this point? What are your reflections around change?

5. Chapter 5: A Discussion of the Findings

So far, we have looked at the context for my thesis on change, my method of research, discussed systems and systemic ideas and explored the evolution of change as a field of practice. In this chapter I will further discuss the research findings through hearing collections of voices from the three teams, pointing to what shifts were created in the three teams while using the Wheel of Systemic Ideas, including break downs which altered the course of the research.

There are many ways of presenting the findings in the research material, positions to look through and lenses to be explored. I have shared many examples throughout the thesis and now I would like to share a narrative from the Voice of Change, capturing the story of the three teams and their journey, using the metaphor of crossing a river.

The Voice of Change – telling the story of the three teams that were going to cross a river

As change, I show up in many disguises, ranging from big, national reforms to minor organic changes in human relationships, and everything in the middle. People feel differently about me and my presence; everything from chaos, lack of motivation, anger, things not working, innovation, to fresh ideas, challenging and curiosity. I feel like the genie in the bottle. You rub hard and I show up as a force that is imposed upon people. You rub again and next I am a butterfly gently being passed from one set of fingertips to the next, maybe while people are

focusing on something else. From political, structured top down approaches to places where belonging and relationship is at the centre, I am there.

By now you, the reader, would be familiar with the three teams in the research. As you know they had completely different contexts, agendas and approaches. Team 1 and Team 2 at opposite sides of a scale, yet they had so much in common; human beings doing their best. Team 3 was just getting to know each other and building a common platform so they could lead others. They were most concerned with finding their purpose, my importance as change faded in and out. With Team 1, I was in vogue all the time dominating all interactions; through the pressure of performance and work packages. Team 2 was paying more attention to each other, their internal dynamics and relations. To them structure and completion of tasks was secondary. They fell in love with Chaos Theory as said '*Things may look chaotic, but when you pan out there is a pattern there. Not getting caught in the details helps me handle things in a better way. It helps me do my best because I know I am part of something bigger, and if I mess up it is not the end of the world'.* To understand the teams better, their similarities and differences, let me share a story:

Some people like to think of me, change, as a river to be crossed. Each river, like every change, has an energy of its own. To make it to the other side you need not only understand the dynamic of the river, but also the people you are travelling with. Crossing the river may require an inspection of the banks to find the easiest place. You may have to wait out a bit for the river to calm down, but this will take patience and time you may not have at your disposal, time usually being of the essence. There might be people living by the river, having made it their home and settled there.

They are not going anywhere, and they respect and appreciate the river the way one does when living in connection to nature. Being local experts, they will have a lot of knowledge to share if you have time to listen.

Using the metaphor of the river I, Changing Change, would like to share the story about the three teams with you. The first team to arrive had been told to cross the river at one particular point no matter what. It was part of a large contingency where everyone needed to traverse the river using the maps (aka work packages) handed out. In the unfolding process some found that the map did not fit the territory. As they waded into the water masses, they soon found that the river was a lot wider and more treacherous than expected, taking more effort to cross. Some people chose to go ashore elsewhere cutting the journey short, or abandoning it altogether, while others were taken by the currents. The bond that had been created between the team members at the outset grew in strength, however there was confusion about who had left, been lost or was still around. As people kept coming up for air, they looked at each other encouragingly, happy to feel the connection before continuing their wade across. Arriving at the opposite side, wet and tired, they spoke highly of each other and the journey they had been on together, before they went their separate ways.

The second team knew they had to cross some rivers, but they were uncertain which ones and how. Having worked together for a long time, they had a strong sense of belonging, but less sense of direction. Or even following a direction. They spent considerable time at the river edge debating where to cross, attempting one route before trying another. The energy seemed dispersed and it was difficult to understand what actually stopped them from crossing. The time was spent around the riverside campfire talking about their relationship

and collaboration, it seemed they could not align on a direction before they felt sufficiently safe in each other's company. Some team members simply refused to budge before they felt accept and trust for who they were and what they did. A team that had had a glossy view of themselves as a homogenous group, now came to appreciate their own diversity, opening up for disagreements. This loosening of the normative bonds tying them together shifted their attention to what they had in common. The fresh awareness of their strong binding tissue, their DNA, sent waves of energy through the team. Being different did not equal separation, diversity could be combined with belonging. So they got up, dusted themselves off and set across the river together in the search of new pastures, always keeping an eye on each other to make sure everyone arrived safely at the other side.

The third team did not really know each other when they met on the riverside. One of the team members had been waiting there for a long time and knew the area like the back of his hand. Some arrived in pairs, but most alone. As they stood there, the energy felt dispersed, some looking out on the river assessing it, others searching for the rest of the entourage who would soon follow. Covertly they seemed to be eyeing each other up, wondering who the others really were. A lot of one on one conversations were going on, which created some uncertainty for the direction of the journey ahead. They knew it was both expected and necessary that they crossed the river and provided guidance for those following behind. However, they were concerned that their own lack of purpose and direction may cause confusion. They appreciated that they needed to get to know each other as part of the journey, but the conversations at the outset were slow and hesitant. They were uncertain what role to take and how to relate to each other. All of this was going on as they started to cross the river.

The initial enthusiasm was gradually grinded down by the continuous discussion on which direction to take, and how they should collaborate. Fortunately, the river held a reasonable temperature, so there was no urgency getting to the other side. The people following behind were very competent, so if necessary, they would be able to cross the river without guidance from the team. There was a continuous flow of debris in the river which took some of the team members attention away from the actual crossing. As team members kept talking and crossing intermittently, the member with the most local knowledge went off on his own, after all he knew the territory well. They eventually arrived at the other side, seemingly more trusting and at ease with each other, a few wearier, yet accepting of the circumstances. There was still a considerable journey ahead with more rivers to cross. Plenty of time to polish their collaboration skills, find their purpose and starting to think about the others following behind.

Does any of these stories ring a bell?

Kind regards

C. Change

5.1 Facing the Analysis

Writing an analysis of the findings was difficult to me. As researcher we are asked to show how we arrived at our conclusion. But how do you show the subtle processes in and between people, when you are not inside their personal experience?

Even for those having the experience it can be hard to grasp and express. They may not understand what is happening, maybe they can't capture their responses in words, and maybe they are not aware that something is changing, and a difference created. In retrospect they may sense that a shift happened impacting on how they collaborate without being able to pinpoint when or explain why.

When arriving at the analysis, it was as if I had lost all my confidence and thrown away everything I knew worked in my practice. This was because I, in the past had not found a scientific, evidence-orientated way of showing what shifts and differences my work with teams had produced. How do you show case an air of relief going through a room; a participant leaning into colleague in a way they never would have dared before? How do you describe to an outsider the lights going on in people's eyes as they have a revelation, or the tenderness with which vulnerability is received and held? How do you explain someone about the energetic slap of a rejection? Or the tangible disappointment when hearing a colleague's interpretations of events? What words do you use to give evidence of how someone finally stands up, their lips trembling, and has it out with a colleague because the space feel safe? How do you communicate the vibrant energy in a room when participants engage in enthusiastic conversation about the insides and workings of their topic of passion? Words and descriptions feel insufficient, explanations and linear accounts inadequate. Analysis of similarities and differences does not capture the essence of the shifts. And how do you reflect a co-constructed dialogical experience without referring to descriptive dialog using each word, breath and movement? But the work, the research and my practice, is not worth anything to anyone, outside the teams, if I cannot convey it in a manner that make sense to others.

Simon writes:' *I have noticed in my teachings of systemic practice and in supervising systemic masters and doctoral research that smart and experienced systemic practitioners often feel they must now jettison all they have been taught, all that they have learned on the job as if it is irrelevant to the doing of the research*' (Simon, 2018, p. 54). When I read this I wanted to cry, I felt she described me and my experience. Through her words I felt recognised for the value of the work I had been doing for the last thirty years, although it could not always be explained by theoretical models, it was work that created a real difference again and again.

As systemic practitioners we can help people become more eloquent in the expression of their experiences, thoughts and feelings. We therefore need to hear the voices of the people having the experiences and capture these through the use of systemic research methods such autoethnography, narratives and reflexive dialogues which I discussed on chapter 2. Through reflective practice and reflexivity, I have endeavored to create the space for the team members put words to their experiences, but as I have discussed before this is not a practice that comes easy to everyone. I have therefore had to rely on the voices expressed during the interactions and the post process survey captured as Voices of the System. Adding to that my own reflexive account.
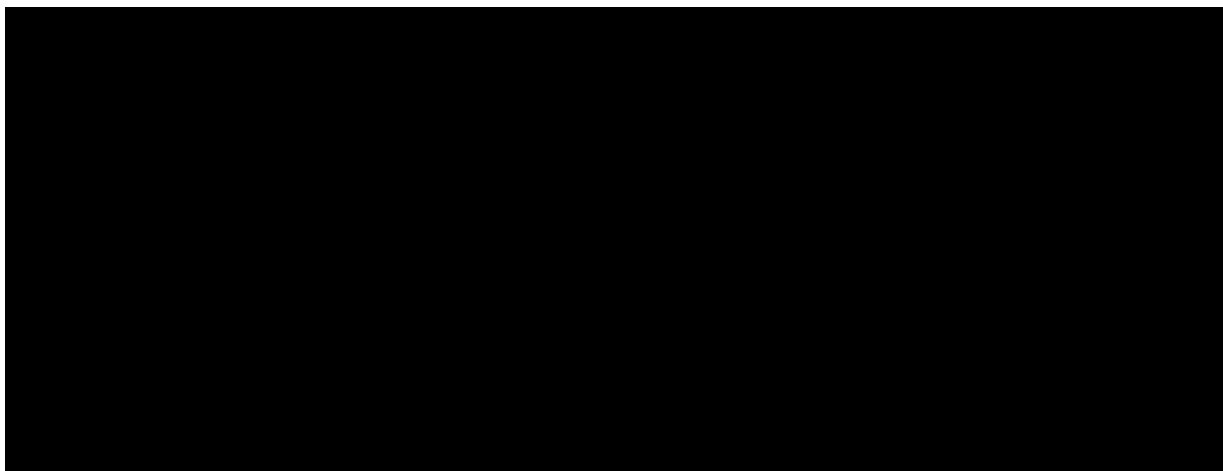
The teams and their needs were very different, and to make the research journey with integrity, beneficial to all parties and in a framework of relational ethics, I tried to meet each team, where they were on their change journey, every time we met. As a consequence, each of the three processes unfolded very differently. They were focused on their journey of change, the use of the Wheel seemed secondary to them, but we used it to deepen the topics of change; stretching and pulling their assumptions and positions, creating new awareness and insights. The figure 13 below shows how the process unfolded for all three teams.
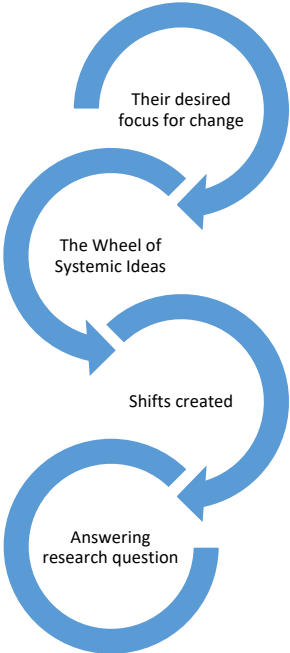
Figure 13 *shows where the Wheel of Systemic Ideas is situated in the research process (Rød 2019).*

Assessing the relevance of the systemic practice research includes holding an inside, with-ness position and hearing the Voices of the System. Simon argues that as systemic practitioners engaged in research, we appreciate that knowledge is connected to the circumstances in which it was produced (Simon, 2018). I have shared the team contexts and experiences, endeavoring to explore what can be inferred from the material in terms of similarities, differences and shifts created while knowing that each journey is unique. By similarities we mean something that occurred in all the three teams when making use of the model. Significant differences are found in both their research context and the unfolding of their research journey.

5.2 Similarities and Differences in Change Contexts; a Discussion

When exploring what happened I examined the context of the change, because meaning-making is situational. By understanding where the teams were situated in terms of time, place, culture and paradigm I could draw meaning of the material drawn from the research with each team. I based my findings from learning about the experiences through the voices of team members involved, in their 'with-ness' positions. In this thesis I have already given many examples to illustrate breakdowns and shifts in the teams, and I will share some more this chapter.

I first introduced to Team 1 in chapter 1. It was a change project team in the Norwegian Police, responsible for implementing the Reform programme in one of twelve new police districts. It was a political decision that turned both the structure and the content of the Norwegian Police on its head, involving more than 17 000 employees directly, and many more indirectly.

It was primarily a structural reform and what American organisational development scholars, Bolman and Deal, would describe as structural; concerning itself with strategies, plans, objectives, technology, organisational structures and charts, roles, responsibilities and other functional aspects of the organisation (Bolman & Deal, 2003). The Police Reform programme followed Lewin's three phases approach. It was a planned change in a hierarchical top-down normative and cascading process. There was considerable involvement at local level, firstly through work groups and later in the implementation. Using Aristotle's categorisation, I would suggest that this change involved all of the four elements; change place as in location; change in qualities or characteristics; change in size and lastly change purpose (Irgens, 2016). You may ask why I refer to Aristoteles again here, given the many recent scholars on change which I introduced in chapter 4. The reason is that I find his four categories a refreshingly simplistic way of looking at change, that may make it less frightening and more accessible to us.

Returning to Team 1. The impact of the linear New Public Management inspired approach of the Reform programme, resulted in a productionist task focus which strongly impacted the dynamics, communication and interactions in the team. The team members knew they were there to do a job and deliver on a set of expectations, once mission was completed, they would dissolve as a team and go back to their regular jobs. Members of the change project team was appointed through a process of application, and temporary leave given fully or partly from their permanent positions. They were all in a situation where they straddled being on the change project team, with being physically placed in their geographical home base and environment. They were spearheading a change many on their home turf were resistant to, often leaving the project members in an uncomfortable position. This led to feelings of loneliness, isolation and 'going it alone' for many.

They therefore valued the monthly project meetings to catch up and be with fellow project team members in similar situations. These meetings became a place for inspiration and refueling as expressed from voices of Team 1: *Appreciate the honesty in this group, and the openness. Our meetings are very useful to me giving me perspectives on what we do. This is a safe place to be which allows for openness. I enjoy and learn a lot from these reflection sessions and take it into other fora.'*

(Team 1, fifth session).

Prior to my engagement with Team 1 I was invited to the kick-off for the new police district including 60+ participants. I was there to observe and to gain as much background understanding as possible, enabling me to follow the Project Change team over the 24 months that the Reform programme would take. The information flow was one way, with long lists of 'must remember' and 'must do's'. In a police district with 1600 employees, the process heralded not only a change in structure, but also a shift in culture. The police had in various reports been criticised for its top down, command and control leadership culture. During the meeting presentations were given listing advice. It struck me, when listening to these speakers, that the literature on change they referred to seemed to focus only on what can happen/happens with individuals on a personal level on the one hand, with financial, political and legal frames on the other; including project plans and goals, reporting and monitoring in accordance with Bolman and Deal's structural frame (Bolman & Deal, 2014). But they lacked input on how to lead processes for contribution and collaboration, co-creating good solutions drawing upon the potential and energy in the relationship systems. I sensed a vacuum; how to gently guide people through the process, establishing their frames of influence and building a collective so that energy and engagement could derived from working together and pulling

in the same direction. From this I created the I-WE-FRAMES dimension which shared with Team 1 later in the process. It pinpoints the two foci of the process, adding my contribution in the middle, the missing piece of the need for WE which emerged in their process.
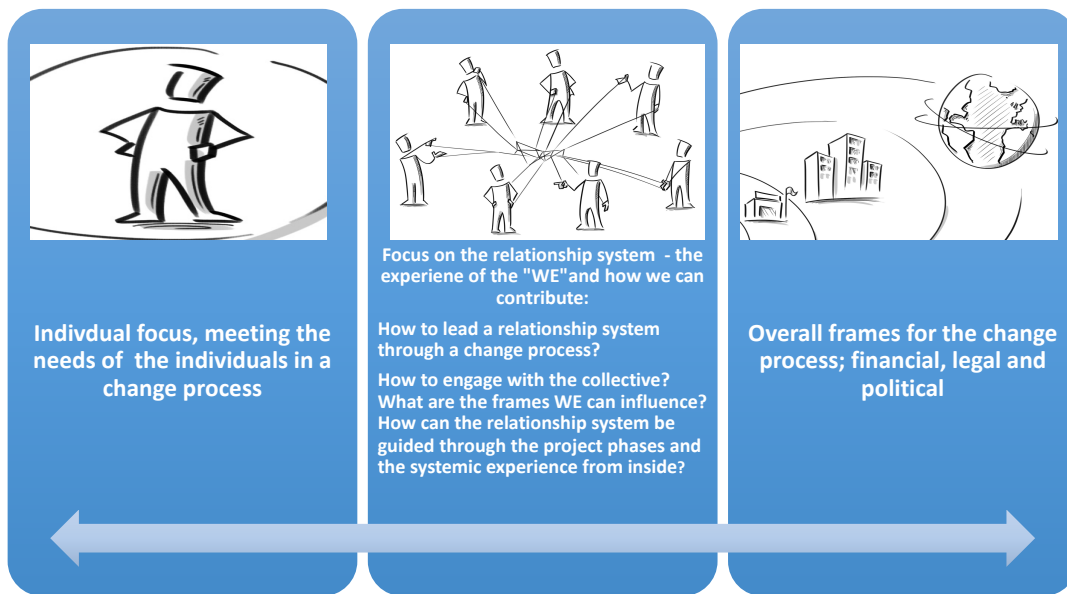

Indivdual focus, meeting the needs of the individuals in a change process	**Focus on the relationship system - the experiene of the "WE"and how we can contribute:** **How to lead a relationship system through a change process?** **How to engage with the collective? What are the frames WE can influence? How can the relationship system be guided through the project phases and the systemic experience from inside?**	**Overall frames for the change process; financial, legal and political**

Figure 14 *shows I-WE-FRAMES dimension, with the individuals on the one hand, with frames on the other, with the potential of the collective WE in the middle.* (Rød, 2016).

Team 1 was different from the other two teams in that it was a project team that would cease to exist once the project was completed. The other two teams I followed were intact teams leading their respective organisations and continued this after the research process. Team 2, also known from chapter 1, was the leader team of a privately-owned organisation, with a portfolio of social care services serving both private and public sector (child protection unit, schools and other institutions) with 35 employees. Their motivation for change was finding more legs to stand on and growth was essential to staying alive (Jacobsen, 2017).

To achieve this the team had, prior to the research process commenced, identified three areas to work on; recruitment, market and internal communication. This change could be described as organic and incremental with special attention om communication with the organisation at large and external stakeholders. Drawing on Aristoteles categorisation, I would suggest that this change involved only two elements; change in qualities and characteristics, mainly change in size (Irgens, 2016). The nine team members knew each other fairly well, most had worked together since the start. As the process unfolded, the communication and relations within the team became the focal point of the 15-month long process. The team was stronger on relations than structures and it took two sessions before they began addressing the action points, they had identified at the end of their first sessions. The team was comfortable with systemic ideas, as it had been part of the professional training for most of them.

As described on in chapter 1, Team 3 was the leader team of a privately-owned and independent Scandinavian bank counting 100 employees, mostly financial and legal experts in their field. It was a fairly new team meaning they were new to the role of being part of a leader team, and to each other as individuals. Only one team member had been in the organisation since the start. Team 3 consisted of nine people with different backgrounds and competences, professional cultures and organisational experiences. Each relying on their professional background and skill set to provide value to the team and the organisation. Two senior team members were responsible for their own separate sales offering and portfolios, while the remaining six team members took care of support functions such as legal, logistics, processes, IT and HR. The number of employees each team member in turn managed was different, and their experience as leaders and of being part of a leader team varied.

The CEO spent a lot of time one on one conversations with each individual team member. It was explained to me that this was due to the level of specialty each role and function carried. Their desired change was to develop their team and explore how to best fulfil their role and purpose as the leader team in the organisation. As the process unfolded most of the time was spent on building foundations for this new team, evolving from a team with very different background and experiences to becoming a more cohesive and aligned team. In Aristotele's terms that would be change in qualities and characteristics, whereas the underlying theme throughout the purpose was determining their raison d'être (Irgens, 2016). Without clarity on the purpose leading the organisation became more of a challenge.

As we can infer from the above discussion the three teams differed in many ways including: change contexts, the size of the organisations; the team composition; professional backgrounds; purpose of the team; how well they knew each other, experiences with change; agendas and objectives for the process. Could applying the Wheel of Systemic Ideas impact how they navigated emergent change and changing, as a collaborative experience for those involved, releasing their potential and creativity, enabling dialogue and learning? Next, I will share more examples from teams, describing shifts that open up for being together, and with change, in new ways.

5.3 The Applying of the Wheel of Systemic Ideas

Team 1

My reflections and learnings through the journey with Team 1 were many and at different levels.

The Reform programme was designed around ideas recognisable from New Public Management; separation into parts, linear roll- outs and measurements. The downside was that people failed to see the bigger picture, they kept fighting for own agendas, again and again impacting moral in a negative manner. Working groups were created and engaged at local level to secure bottom up input. It was my impression that these processes seemed to be horizontal and including, but as I found out later, many of their conclusions were disregarded by to management in the turf war.

Their experiences mirrored large scale top down public reform programmes, and their frustrations were many: While talking about the programme in our first session, one team member complained that people only represented themselves, fighting own agendas, without being able to see the bigger picture. I asked: '*What will it take for them to have a sense of belonging?* The same team member answered: '*There is no unity at top level, lacking in arenas for dialogue, no routines.*'. Another added: '*Different people have different agendas when they join a project like this, so it is hard to find a common platform.*'. (Team 1, first session).

Members of Team 1 also expressed concern about the top management's unwillingness to receive/listen to input and concerns. They said they had to scream to be heard, then sometimes they were heard and sometimes not. This could have been addressed through better feedback loops, not just cascading. One team member said that we have to learn to collaborate in a different way, to lead in a different way. It struck me that maybe the leadership culture may be a blockage in itself. We used the Wheel to explore how the Reform had and could have been implemented, several saying they were taking learning from this process that they would use in their own teams moving forward.

Although many of the spokes provided useful discussion, the value of WE-ness emerged through Wholeness, Feedback Loops and Interdependence as the example below show.

Team 1 - Exploring the Wholeness and Fragmentation Spoke

Lack of experience and understanding of the bigger picture (wholeness) was a reoccurring issue. There were no joint arenas where people impacted by this Reform programme, could digest and discuss, engage and involve. Instead they are left to wait and wait at the receiving end in a long chain of command. Command and control, hierarchical and linear processes which did not seem to work given the complexity of the process. We explored this dynamic through the wholeness and fragmentation spoke shown in this example:

Using the constellation from Polarity Theory, I asked the team members to place themselves according to where they thought the focus of the reform process has been. One placed herself left of the centre towards wholeness, while the rest choose fragmentation. I then asked: '*Why have you placed yourself where you have?*' The team voices shared their feelings and thoughts: '*We have not succeeded in having a bigger picture and common direction. We have had the fights on the local arenas. As being responsible for communication I have endeavored to think bigger picture and it all is coming together. I think the focus has been on one function at the time. If we had been able to think bigger picture earlier on, we would not be in a position where 80 positions had to be cut now.*' It was time to explore the potential in the other positions on the spoke and I asked: '*Lets imagine that you had been focusing on wholeness, please move over to that position, what would you have said and done then?*'

The answers showed a need for transparency and wholeness, reflected in a different culture: The team voices shared their feelings and thoughts: *'Easier to create understanding and acceptance for what we are doing and the choices we make, when we can communicate it in an open manner and people know where we are going…. making the ideas clearer and more relevant to people. As it is now people don't connect the dots and don't understand that what they are actually doing is part of the reform process. This also relates to culture. The ambitions are too ambitious, so we end up focusing on and fighting for our own sector. The culture is production driven, fragmented objectives and budgets, that forces us into silos.'* Seeing the totality of the Reform programme seemed to be a struggle throughout the process, as expressed by this team member: *'I would wish that all our 1600 employee could place themselves on wholeness- and fragmentation. That would be very useful for them.'*

(Team 1, fifth session).

Although the process with Team 1 involved some enlightened and striking moments, looking back the major shift created had more to do with how to be in, and with change. Our interactions, reflections and the applications of the Wheel of Systemic Ideas, all contributed to the gradual building of a new awareness in a subtle manner.

Team 2

I found that with Team 2 the Wheel of Systemic Ideas could be used to understand what positions people in a team held on any situation or topic, and more about their attitudes, thoughts, values and responses.

By revealing and questioning the different positions, the team was able to move from the 'either or' of the binary, to the expansion of perceptions and assumptions, and to the co-creation of a joint reality. With this team it was useful explore and understand how people feel, and the many gradients in between positions. The Wheel became a relational tool building a web of understanding and sense making of what the team was facing as a whole, given the positions of each team member. As described in chapter 3, DNA became the topic that led to a breakdown in Team 2 and I would like to share the unfolding of their process in this example:

Team 2- Exploring Vulnerability and DNA

Team 2 experienced several breakdowns taking the research in the direction the team seemed to need, but we had not planned. The team had identified the objectives of the change processes, and despite agreeing on task and action plans nothing happened. We used the Immunity to Change X-ray to explore what was hindering them from achieving their focus areas:

ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

TEAM 2, 13th June 2017

VISIBLE COMMITMENTS/GOAL	WHAT DO WE DO/DON`T DO INSTEAD	HIDDEN COMPETING COMMITMENTS	UNDERLYING/ UNCONSCIOUS ASSUMPTION	TESTING OUR ASSUMPTIONS	ACTIONS
Develp concrete goals to grow the organisation Create an action plan to achieve goals	We generalise, instead of being specific, to ensure a degree of success We prioritise the daily running of the business, instead of getting an overview and see how to innovate the organisation Fragemention - we do our seperate things We don`t take responsibility  We don`t follow through sufficiently on tasks we have taken on	We don´t perceive it as relevant to be specific We lack belief in our goals We don`t have enough time We have different ways of working/approach to work Too many rituals and cermonies to grain energy	Putting ideas into a system/ innovation is too demanding, requires a surplus of energy Everything that is ahead of us can be postphoned We don`t have the right marketing/ sales competene in-house We lack focus on /undestanding of our goals	For some Until we experience a slowing down in the business	Need to look at what we mean by innovation and maximize our potantial We need to have the guts

Table 7 shows the Immunity to Change X-ray for Team 2.

The ITC X-ray showed that routine tasks were always prioritised by the team because the bigger changes require an adaptive mind-set which in turn demands more conscious focus and attention. Interestingly, the exercise also created awareness around individual feeling and experiences as expressed by these voices in Team 2 when reflecting on the group work: '*Afraid of coming up with new ideas and discussing them with others. We don't follow through. I will fail (as in others have better ideas than me). My ideas are stupid.*' Several insights emerged in the team following this exercise, which created awareness around what helped or blocked efforts to complete tasks and creating more structure. Voices of reflection at the end of the session included: '*Some of you set such high standards for what we are going to do so we don't get around to it. Different approaches to work, solutions and prioritisation prevents us from setting time aside to be innovative. People also refrain from taking on responsibility to get things done, and we don't follow up. I.e. we did not follow up the previous session with Anne Rød. There doesn't seem to be a structure to how we work.*

We work according to Chaos Theory; it seems accidental but looking back it makes sense. Our norms are values based and that drives us.'

On the back of the change exercise mistakes and safety came up for the first time and reflections included: *'Open dialogue daring to share our 'mistakes'. Follow up, evaluate and reflect, identifying success criteria. Dare to fail and to share this so we can learn from our mistakes'.* The ITC exercise explored their resistance to change and from that emerged discussion on DNA, vulnerability and belonging, further explored through the Wheel of Systemic Ideas later. As we have seen above, Team 2 discovered through the x-ray, that fear, as experienced by some, prevented them from taking on tasks.

It struck me that in order to try something new, many people need to feel safe, and for that they need relations. The stronger the web of relations, by that I mean the quality of the bond and the number of connection points woven between the members in the team, the higher the safety. It does not mean that everyone has to be friends or agree, but they need to know that they want what is best for each other, the team and the organisation as a whole.

The DNA discussion became so valuable to the team that it came to dominate most of their discussions going forward. Whereas the DNA could provide a strong, shared platform, it can also function as a subtle selection mechanism, *t*he discussion was fueled and led to the uncovering of another lingering insecurity; that of evaluation. The Voices of the Team in the reflection shared: *'Based on what was just said, and my own 'aha' moment on how one-way this has actually been, what is actually our DNA? Given the responsibility of the job and what we are responsible for in our own name, there are limits to what we can accept.*

Yes, but those who do not fit in can have a negative experience of that. We are an evaluating group, constantly evaluating, it is an evaluating place to be. We evaluate how we are, how we do our jobs, in social settings; I experiences myself as evaluating everyone and I think I am being evaluated. What do you mean by evaluation? I mean how we fit in, our preferences, socially, skills, competence and how we do our job. I recognise the social; how is she today-is she ill, slept enough, moving, something at home. Maybe it is more of a review than evaluation, not right or wrong but more like are we on the right track, do we work in the same way, are we aligned, what are your strengths, and weaknesses, where are we similar or different? I don't think we talk behind other's back, but we have an evaluating way of being. I think this is interesting when connecting it to what we talked about earlier; interdependence, we are relationally connected all the time, alignment. I don't recognise what you are saying- it feels alien to me. Evaluation is negative, whereas alignment is more about the organisation and involvement. So, it is more about checking in and alignment.' The discussion was one where one team member dared to be vulnerable, talk about some difficult. It was stepping through a dream door, a big shift. (Team 2, fourth session).

There were several shifts in consciousness and awareness in Team 2 when seeing themselves, each other and change through a systemic lens, as expressed by these voices: '*I am struck again and again at how complex the world this; I refer to how easily I can place myself in a constellation only to be surprised by someone in the same place meaning something different, and how effortlessly I can move myself, I find that very interesting, something to reflect more on. It has increased my awareness, as always. I enjoy these sessions and they give us room to talk about things and gives me focus.*

It has made things clearer to me, and it is both challenging and developing. We seem more aligned. We have an active relationship to our answers, no 'I don't know. More openness in the team; maybe we feel we can be more honest, and it could also be that we have more of a common language to describe things' (Team 2, fifth session). One team member said that the position you take initially during the constellations depends on your role, but perceptions changes as the process unfolds. I enjoyed seeing how they responded to each other and how easily they moved positions without attachment, willing to explore more.

I noticed how Team 2 really came to know each other in a way that built safety. This enabled the acceptance and appreciation of differences in approach, responsibilities and personalities. They went from 'my way' vs 'your way' to a common 'our way' fueled by a DNA which became their compass for navigating the changes they were facing. They would carry out their roles in different ways with different approaches, but the DNA was a connecting point that kept them aligned on the bigger goal, also enabling them to see a bigger picture. The X-ray helped the participants explore some of the underlying and unconscious blockages to change, building awareness and co-creating solutions.

Team 3

I found that most of the shifts in Team 3 during our research process, were subtle. They emerged directly and indirectly through the work with the Wheel of Systemic Ideas. The change process was incrementally initiated from within the team, but also as a response to expectations from the organisation of highly competent professionals.

The discussion on the purpose of the team captured the dynamic and main question of the team. Why are we a team? The topic of collaboration was reoccurring:

Team 3 – Collaboration and Interdependence

Team 3 had cited increased levels of collaboration as one of their objectives, but they seemed to be going in circles recycling the same conversations in each session. What was preventing them from pursuing these commitments to a level of satisfaction and what did this mean in terms of change? We used Immunity to Change X-ray (Keegan & Lahey, 2009) to explore what prevented, or even blocked this desired change at present. During that session the team engaged in conversations about what was keeping them from taking the steps to gradually make the changes they wanted to see implemented in terms of improved team dynamics. Drawing upon their change objective of collaboration, we used two spokes from the Wheel of Systems Ideas to explore this topic further as it reoccurred in several sessions. We started out by placing collaboration, common goal and direction in the middle of the spoke: Independence and interdependence.

I then asked: '*Place yourself in the position that describes where you normally come from? Then discuss in your position what kind of behaviour we associate with this position in our working day'.* The team members spread out with five towards independence and two in the middle area, and one preferring interdependence. Here are some voices of the team as responded and shared: '*When you stand down here (at independence), you don't need to work together with, or take into consideration, anyone else in the team to do your job.*

In my role (as CEO) I am totally dependent on you, I need to see the bigger picture, so I need to have a good dialogue and listen to you to understand the situation. Sometimes you are not dependent at all, other times completely dependent. In my daily work I am more dependent on the whole organisation to do my job, not so much this team, but I need support from some of the functions in this team such as compliance, risk and HR. My function requires I should be a totally independent, but I need to have good collaboration with everyone to understand how I can carry out my function, so to do my work'.

I asked*: 'One of the things you wanted from this process was to identity the purpose of this team, and there were as many answers as there were people on the team. So what does this constellation mean for you as a team when you have so many on independence and so few on interdependence? What does that mean for your collaboration?'* The Voices of the Team responded and shared between them: '*If this constellation implies how we collaborate in the leader team, it says we do not collaborate much at all. If the leader team exists to create a positive synergy this might not be happening. On the other hand, there are a lot of positive synergies in the collaborations around in the organisation between individuals.'*

I asked*,* addressing the CEO: *'Why do you have a leader team if everyone does their job independent of one another?* The CEO answered: *'I feel there are a few overriding strategic questions we need to discuss here, and even if we make decision in smaller groups within this team, it is important that other parts of the organisation know about this, even if it is not a concrete decision taken in this leader team.*

And we also have issues where I think everyone wants to be part of making the decisions; this could be practical issues that concerns everyone, some large projects that involves everyone. But I also think .. value and goals that are of overall meaning/importance to us.'

I asked*: '…in terms of common direction, goal and strategy? Where would you place yourself and what words would you add?* The team members shifted their positions and seven moved to interdependence while one remained standing on independence. I asked*: 'In your daily work most of you work interdependent of each other except from two of you, but you had a common goal and strategy. I am just curious if common goal and strategy should be more present in your daily work, looking at what it means for each of you?'*

The team voices responded and shared: '*I feel it is more overriding. I can't do a change project on my own. We, who are support functions have to latch on to the overriding projects. We can't align on common tasks all the time, our work is too complex to do that….. What should we have in common? But we need to have over riding common goals and directions such as the DNA proposition we discussed. I don't agree with the person who said earlier that your affair is independent of everyone else's…… We carry a lot of what we need to do together (rules and regulations) but of course there are things within each business areas that is specific to that area. But if would be very difficult if every business area says' we will do like this completely independent of others' then I don't think we will ever get things aligned'.*

(Team 3, second session).

This first constellation revealed many of the differences in the team. They were very contextual in their answers, and seemingly quite defensive at times. They wanted to be independent, their functions and roles stipulating independence thinking, and would only reach out on a need basis. There seemed to be a hesitance in wanting to create the conditions necessary for good collaborations. Their weekly meetings focused only on production, maybe causing the reoccurring topic of collaboration and other implications during our research sessions. Within the team itself there was a 'one to one' task driven dynamic which impacted leadership, led to fragmentation and power issues. My perception from the start was that a division existed between business areas on the one hand, and support and infrastructure on the other. In my view there was an underlying tension between the two fractions, with the CEO trying to bridge it and facilitate better collaboration and more unity within the team. Using the Wheel with Team 3 brought up many different issues, but on the surface, I could not see that the new discussions and awareness created any new responses. On the other hand, I noticed that just as the conversations where opening up and about to herald some new insights, some team members would move to explanatory defensiveness. This came to a head when we explored psychological safety in Team 3, creating a break down that opened up for more openness.

Team 3 and Psychological Safety

Following the constellation on production and relations, we segued to psychological safety. Psychological safety is, in my view, a pre-condition for innovation enabling a learning culture.

Sharing Amy Edmondson definition on psychological safety (Edmondson, 1999), I asked the team to what degree do you as an individual feel psychologically safe in this team, on a scale from 1-5 where 5 is highest using the constellation line on the floor. The team distribution themselves across the whole scale, most placing themselves between 1 and 3. It emerged that many of the team members had held back not feeling sufficient level of psychological safety.

The Voices of the Team responded and shared:*' It is obvious that many don't feel reasonably comfortable and everyone is not totally comfortable to say and share things. From my perspective I feel it, but not on the team and how things are received. Sometimes the discussions in the group does not open up for the contribution of everyone, so one does refrains from say anything. The climate in the team does not allow for it. Sometimes things are brought up that we have not had time to prepare for, and do not know enough about. You have to be prepared and think through things prior to our meetings because it requires specialist knowledge, and/or it is too complicated, and I need to check the details behind an issue….I don't want to bring things up because they are boring or difficult, so I will fix it myself rather than everyone responding to it…I am new and don't know sufficient up to speed on issues and I am not ready to respond…. We all have such specialised knowledge that discussing it in the team does not work, so we don't function as a team on certain matters…. To get the good discussions, topics must be presented properly. We have to be honest and say we need more time to think about the topic, rather than getting upset. Please say it there and then rather than afterwards…... Make it clear where we are in the decision-making process.'*

Image 7 shows constellation exploring psychological safety in Team 3.

The Voices of the Team responded and shared: '*In my view, there are no real discussion in the team. It can occur before or after, but not in the meeting. Many of the one on one conversations pertain to individual areas and not is strategically linked and concerns everyone. Yes, but the way you present it leaves no room for discussion. You make whatever decisions you want to, but don't say I was part of it because I am part of the team. No real discussions, everything goes via leader. Don't want to ask questions – afraid of being a party pooper'.*

I asked: *You are going to work on action plans and imagine you are at a 5 where psychological safety is very high? What will be in place so that you can be at a 5? How do you need to relate to each other and run your meetings?* Team voices responded and shared: '*We need to open up the discussions at an early stage, be clear on what is on the agenda, invite for reflection. Take responsibility and dare say I have to consider/reflect on this. Need to say where we are in the process when discussing a topic, both those presenting and receiving.*

Let us know that things are coming up. Frame the conversations and be clear on what we need from others. I am not only in the leader team to represent my function, but I would also like to contribute in other questions. Give out information early so we can prepare, and what I need to start thinking about. Accept that we are different personalities, with different roles and work across. Brainstorm; what will it take to arrive at a decision. It is not dangerous to put things on the table- it works even if it feels awkward.' (Team 3, third session).

The discussion on psychological safety was a break-through in the team communication which cleared the air and changed how meetings were run. It highlighted the effect of the current decision-making processes, the impact of the one on one conversations how the meetings were run and how team members prepared and took their responsibility or not, to express their views. It was later described by the voices in Team 3 in the post research survey: *'We had just had an 'incident' the week before where someone raised an extremely important strategic issue and presented it as a decision, rather than as a discussion point. The discussion cleared the air a lot and has also made us more accurate in the specification of the agenda summons to meetings what the purpose of different points is (information, discussion, decision). It has meant a lot to us.'* (Team 3, post research survey).

My reasoning is that in order to create psychological safety need to relations. The stronger the web of relations, by that I mean the quality and number of connection points woven between the members in the team, the higher the trust and hence psychological safety. During the discussion on psychological safety some examples from their meetings were brought up and allowed them to explore decision-making processes in the team. In my view, psychological safety needs to be in place to create good, and development and innovation is also change.

I my view, it was during the application of the Wheel of Systems Ideas that we had some of the real shifts. I did find that after some initial hesitance, and especially when moving to the opposite position, that there was room for increased awareness and people opened up. Reflecting on the process, voices in Team 3 shared: *'It has been really important to us to discuss issues and clear the air, this has lifted us. We have now started rotating 'chairmanship in the meetings, which has resulted in improved and more nuanced meetings'.* (Team 3, Post process survey). The embodiment of the ideas experienced through the physical movement on the spokes of the Wheel, helped the exploration of the ideas background as echoed here The Voices of the Team: '*I think more generally that the exercises in which we have placed ourselves on the floor of various issues have been important, not only in understanding how everyone thinks, but also how everyone perceives him/herself. The most important thing for me has been that I have gained a better understanding of how the various members of the leader team works, both as individual, but also as members of the team. This means that I can be more responsive and understanding to everyone's needs and motivations, which improves my ability to lead the team to achieve our common goals'.* (Team 3, post process survey).

5.4 Discussion

My research question was: **To what extent can systemic ideas and approaches help teams navigate emergent change and changing, as a collaborative experience for those involved, releasing their potential and creativity, enabling dialogue and learning?**

How can we make sense of the material and what meaning can we draw from it that is of significance for the research questions? To understand the relevance of the systemic ideas in how teams would be with change and changing, I was looking for shifts in attitude, understanding and responses that would influence how the teams engaged with change. Remaining true to Mystery as Method as an overriding methodology, I allowed the research process with the three teams to unfold, and in the course of this became aware of patterns surrounding the application of the Wheel of Systemic Ideas. I want to make my own distinction here: Firstly, a breakdown is an insight that alters the course of the research process leading us down a different path than originally intended. This possibility emerges because we as researchers are in a dialogical relationship with the topic and the participants, and by paying attention to the responses these can become entry points which we step through and pursue the unfolding of. Implicit in this is that a breakdown also creates shifts.

Secondly, in the analysis I also looked for smaller, more subtle striking moments. These can be minor utterances, and include words such as; struck, insights, shifts, learnings, difference, understanding, realisation, 'aha' moment, eye-opener, different/difference.

The places where something happens that creates something new in the team, a shift in dynamics or an afterthought. Expressed differently by different thinkers, I call them 'shifts'; the differences that makes the difference in the teams.

Four distinct break downs occurred during the research process, while working interactively with the Wheel of Systemic Ideas. These demonstrate the context sensitive unfolding dynamic of the research process. As we can glean from the above discussions of the team processes, there were different breakdowns in the teams, some more subtle and others more explicit. What was very impactful in one team, did not resonate at all in another. Production and relations, and psychological safety were meaningful in all three teams. Team 1 started out focusing on production, but relational aspect became much more important during the process (as we saw in chapter 4). Immunity to Change created real shift in Team 1 and 2, less so in Team 3. This could have been due to the charge in the topics chosen, and what was perceived to be important. This underscores the importance of context and premises for the change process, arguing that the change processes need to be a tailored appreciation of the circumstances, objectives and participants of each process. One size does not fit all.

I found that for Team 2, having the conversation around DNA using several spokes led to conversations around vulnerability, differences, bringing to the table issues that would not be addressed elsewhere. Team 1 build relations and trust into the group, and Team 3 explored own experiences and assumptions, bringing to the table issues that would not be addressed at other times. Table 8 sums up some of the main shift tracked in the findings:

Team 1 Shifts	Team 2 shifts	Team 3 shifts:
• The value of reflections • Increased awareness of being in and with change • Production and relational preferences • Attempting to see the wholeness and the power of engagement and the WE-ness	• Need for safety and daring to be vulnerable • Accepting and appreciating their differences • Leaning into the wholeness • Strength of their interdependence • The connected WE-ness made possible through the strong DNA • Readiness for change	• Being in and with change • Improved collaboration and alignment on purpose • Improved communication and acceptance of differences • Increased awareness of internal dynamics

Table 8 shows the overview of the major shifts noticed in the three teams.

It is difficult to create comparisons between the three teams, nor is it the purpose of the research analysis. The question is what the Wheel of Systemic Ideas meant for each team and what unfolded from using it. By making the connection between shifts created in the team and the systemic ideas, pinpointing these and the impact it has on the team, I could explore the usefulness of the Wheel of Systemic Ideas. Through the examples I have shared, and by hearing from the Voices of the (Team) System, we can infer that the application of the Wheel worked because the teams worked on objectives they had identified, relating these to everyday change issues that were real and relevant to the them. Through a framework, including the team agreements, the dialogical approach created a sense of safety where the team members started having exploratory and engaging conversations.

The embodiment of the ideas, and moving around to different positions, encouraged curiosity and learning. There were no right or wrong answers, only exploration and discussions. The Wheel provided a structure in which conversations could be created. By examining the spokes of each systemic idea one at the time, we developed exploratory dialogues between team members in terms of paradigms, assumptions, attitudes and responses. Through the distribution of the team constellated on the spokes, team members started to see patterns of preferences and mind-sets emerging in the team, and through the ensuing dialogue these could be questioned, connected and understood.

By paying attention to the onto and episte of the team members, taking the experience of others seriously; curiosity and vulnerability were increased. Team members could start to wonder and even ask; why do we think what we think and assume what we do? Responses were explored in a dialogical manner increasing awareness and understanding of the thoughts and actions between team members. The constellations, using the spokes, became a clean slate on which the team better understood each other, and following from that, a gateway to having new and different conversations, including an exploration of what needed to change and what we can co-create together. Identifying and valuing the different positions on the spoke and how these contribute to the co-operation and wholeness of the team, also paved the way for new approaches to collaboration. The dynamics described above were interwoven processes, and patterns emerged through the dialogues created.

5.5 Connecting Some Dots

In many thesises, the research findings are compared to existing literature, and new contributions can emerge. As the reader, you may now be waiting for the point where I will connect what I noticed during my research, to the literature I have discussed as part of chapters 2, 3 and 4. I have chosen a different path, using examples from the research to leave a trail that sometimes intersects with literature, other times standing on its own merit. As I have said previously, my intention is to build upon what already exists to contribute different ways of approaching and being with change. We can use literature and theory to make sense of what we notice, like connecting the dots; past, present and future. That is what I will do in this section.

Significant for all three teams was the awareness around change. In terms of 'with-ness' experiences from inside, the three teams were very different. In Team 1 the demands from the outside world was paramount and the relational dimension seemed secondary. In Team 2 belonging and relations were of the essence, with an underlying assumption that they all needed to be the same, maybe because of the sector they worked in. In Team 3 the process seemed to focus more in the emerging working relationship between the team members, and the outside world became secondary. Once more trust, transparency and appreciation of differences in their roles, functions and contributions were in place, they were able to turn their attention to the rest of the organisation.

Mystery as Method as the overall methodology allowed for the unfolding of a non-linear research process enabling break downs which altered the route creating small and large shifts in the teams. Rather remaining rigid to the original timeline, we applied what McNamee and

Hosking call relationally responsibility in the process (McNamee & Hosking, 2012). This means being attentive to the process of relating and the different realities as experiences by each team member. This type of relational ethics requires '*something beyond a dominance of one set of values and beliefs over others*' (McNamee & Hosking, 2012, p. 106). Engaging with the team in the research then meant not adhering to the most dominant discourses, or collude with it in any way, paying attention to hearing all the Voices of the Team or Team Voices, and daring to question and query to further explore assumptions governing responses impacting the team. I used 'breakdowns' and 'striking moments', as markers to track shifts in the teams that created an awareness that produced something different in teams. It was not necessarily captured in a moment's realisation, but a process that allowed some new awareness to emerge impacting the teams gradually.

Change takes place within different paradigms, and it is useful to understand the context of the paradigm to make sense of the approach to change. A paradigm has a history, developed in relation to different context and agendas and carry with them differently implications and assumptions (McNamee & Hosking, 2012). They argue that different paradigms carry different locus of power; what counts as knowledge and how change is viewed and lived. I also understand a paradigm as an operating system, and in a social constructionist paradigm, the experiences count as knowledge, therefore systemic practice help generate and make sense of perceptions and experiences important to understand each other and build together. The more voices we hear from, the richer our co-constructed reality will be, enabling us to engage more flexibly with change. The less dialogue we have, the poorer will our collective intelligence become, making us more vulnerable in the face of change.

I have argued that learning is precedent for development, and by creating learning organisation we can approach and navigate change differently. Gergen, McNamee and Hoskings explore what counts and knowledge and how it is generate through and in our interactions. I bring in Stacey to support this argument, who states that knowledge is not a thing that only exist in a human head that can be transported into another head. Rather it is, he says; '*an active process of relating*' (Stacey, 2001, p. 4) and that our mind emerges and develops in relationships. He proposes that: '*knowledge is participative self-organising processes patterning themselves in coherent ways*' (Stacey, 2001, p. 5). This means it is a social process of interpretation, trying out, engaging and responding and I believe that the same applies to change. It cannot be rolled out into an organisation in a linear format but needs also to be seen as a social process of sense making, to be shared and reshaped by the people involved.

Stacey argues that '*the patterns of relation becomes communicational themes that organises the experience of being together and this experience is itself organisational themes*' (Stacey, 2015, p. 213). He then ties in these communicative themes to relations of power. This can be exemplified in all three teams: In Team 1 the complaining about the reform was one theme, another the focus on tasks, in my view demonstrating the dynamics and exerted power of the programme on the people on the team. On the other hand, their togetherness as a team, also became a theme supporting the emergence and patterning of their relationship. With Team 2, vulnerability and differences was an emerging pattern with an underlying questioning of what was good or bad. It was a repetitive pattern which was resolved and allowed for transformation towards the end of the process.

Finally, with Team 3 the reoccurring communication themes were; one on one conversations; the dynamic between sales and support functions, and the purpose of the team. I found these patterns were repetitive throughout the process, but difficult to address.

Organisational environments can be harsh to live and work in. As I have argued previously, I find that dialogical processes are often marginalised as unproductive and time consuming and I would also be concerned that Shotter's concepts may feel too abstract. How can I, in my practice, find the language that can introduce and interpret the difference of about-ness and with-ness thinking into organisations, helping people explore how they experience an experience? Making them aware of the weaving of their flow of responses, viewing the patterns emerging with curiosity, exploring what they can infer from this. Can the systemic ideas encourage dialogical processes where people become aware of how their responses pattern the relationships between them?

As I have shared earlier, I struggled to gain the space and willingness to engage the teams in reflexivity and reflective processes. In an interview Ralph Stacey encourages humans in organisations to take the experiences they are having seriously. He says: '*We need to think about what we are doing, otherwise we are trapped in what we have always done, and the consequences of this…*' (Stacey, 2015). Can the Wheel of Systemic Ideas help us reconsider why we do what we do, challenging the ideology of dominant discourses?

I would argue yes because, using the Wheel of Systemic Ideas helped explore the preconceptions and attitudes to change. While navigating the change sufficient psychological safety was needed and time for reflection important.

As I saw during the process, with team 2 and 3, the research sessions became an arena for addressing issues not dealt with other places, taking attention away from the actual change process. Although a seemingly well-functioning team at the outset, Team 2 used the systemic ideas introduced to deepen their relationship and gain new perspectives on change, and growth. They found that in order to achieve the desired growth, there were many components that needed to be in place, components that may not have been obvious at a first glance. The constellations using the spokes in the Wheel of Systemic Ideas were gateways through which the teams stepped to engage in different and new conversations around chosen topics relevant to their change processes. These conversations created shifts in awareness, engagement and the quality of interaction in the teams, impacting how they viewed and approached elements of change. Fruitful and open discussion emerged from the constellation, accepting the inherent diversity, respect and embracing it as a necessary dynamic.

As I am writing this and noticing the feelings (and some fears) expressed in the process, I am curious about how much of this anxiety could be dealt with through collaboration, involvement, and relations building to create trust. Rather than stating that fear is a normal part of any change process, I am eager to explore how we can create processes where fear is dealt, and engaged, with as a force of energy to the used constructively and collaboratively. Hearing about Team 2 previous experiences of change and the adverse effects these had had, it was interesting to experience the feeling of involvement and WE-ness emerging through the dialogues and decreasing of fear. Can we turn change processes on its head, and create the WE before at the start? I also took away the importance of having an anchor, something to be experienced as a constant giving stability and safety in a sea of emergence. Emergence is in its very nature organic, not mechanic.

When we created connection between peoples' hearts and minds and allow these to flourish, we open up for emergence of a different kind. Not a forced, linear process which is likely to create resistance at some level, but a fluid and organic development involving willing influencers. Or to put it in the words of Voices in Team 2: '*We have become more aware that we are an organisation in continuous change, something we also strive to be. I have become aware of how every-day situations and tasks get in the way of bigger and more exciting questions. At the same time, I have become more tolerant that at times the slower and gradual changes are the most successful. And the importance of culture over strategy (not that that is new). That classic business thinking should be combined with a more social and relational driven organisation to give the best results.*' (Team 2, post process survey).

5.6 A Reflexive Moment: Why Are We Afraid?

During the course of my research journey I have discussed the topic of change with many people. I have often heard that fear is the main obstacle to change. I am not sure I agree with that, so I decided to explore this further. In my readings I came across Norwegian biologist Dag O. Hessen who points to the relationship between humans and fear. He gives an example of news in the media that tend to focus on what is not working, giving an example of a headline stating that 20% of people fear 'xyz', whereas the 80% that does not fear 'xyz' are not mentioned at all (Hessen, 2017). Because of the focus on the fear, the reader or viewer, is left with a notion of a threat. Hessen refers to Daniel Kahneman when arguing that the negative news speaks to the part of our brain that is geared for survival. By spotting the threat immediately we have a bigger chance of getting out of a threating situation (Kahneman, 2011).

Hessen's proposal is that because of the way we are wired, we tend to look for the negative news that threatens our status quo even the negative only make up a minor percentage in the larger picture of things. In my experience the same can be the case with organisational change. It may offer opportunities that employees are not aware of, for the focus is on the threat, creating fear in the organisation.

The notion from biology, and complexity theories, of processes and nature, as irreversible, means we can never go back or recreate. We may try, but it will not be the same because the context will be different, alas circumstances keep changing. Applying this to change, the implication is that there is no point to try to recreate what was because it will never be again. We are swept forward, like it or not, on a wave of change. We can but bring our experiences with us and co-create our realities ahead of us.

When I came into the doctoral programme, I did not use the nuances of the systemic language as I do today. In some ways I was probably very typical of many practitioners in the organisational field. However, this journey has transformed me and my understanding. When I started this research journey I was biased in a contradictory and paradoxical way. I preferred to follow the linear approaches I had been conditioned into, resisting the seemingly chaotic unfolding of my research journey. At the same time, I held the systemic ideas as of higher value and relevance than those from modernism. Another paradox.

What I have learnt from my research is the context dependency of the ideas and their relevance. There are times when fragmentation is the most valid approach to a problem for some, and certain situations requires a linear plan, others not.

What my findings have shown is the value of daring to separate ourselves from our paradigms, becoming aware that these ideas are not us. It is about building bridges between our experiences to co-create what serves us as we move forward and navigate our future.

For some reason, I seemed to have been resistant to the notions of political activism that I have read about, only to discover that my thesis has emerged as a piece of just that. I am, and have always been, a political activist, and my contribution is to encourage people take part in creating organisational cultures that encourage employees to involve themselves and that way contribute to the future they wish for.

Dear reader, we are nearing the end of this thesis. May I ask you what you have taken from it so far? What responses are created in you as you read? What do you anticipate next?

6. Chapter 6: Conclusions

In the final chapter I will link the research questions to what I noticed in my research, consider alternative ways I could have approached the research, explore possible practical applications and make recommendation for further research in my field.

6.1 The Research Question

The thesis; Human Systems in Motion, explores *to what extent systemic ideas and approaches help teams navigate emergent change and changing, as a collaborative experience for those involved, releasing their potential and creativity, enabling dialogue and learning?*

Situated in a social constructionist paradigm my research draws upon systemic practice research methods, including participatory action research (PAR), reflexivity and autoethnography. The systemic approach is applied on several levels including;

- the empirically developed model the Wheel of Systemic Ideas which explores how systemic ideas can be used in a change context
- systemic practice research with three different teams during their change processes using the model itself

This thesis is a research into my professional practice as an organisational consultant on the topic of change. My thesis is anchored in a combination of theoretical underpinnings, it explores how these can be turned into a practical model to use in change.

On this journey I have created my own approach and path, researching something new while using a blend of methods, yet building on the foundations of existing theories and knowledge. The research has been a journey of twisting and turning to explore patterns of relationship, gaining new insights and creating increased awareness. Bateson compared this process to using a Rubik's cube. He said it was not an evolution of systems, but an evolution of ideas (An Ecology of Mind, 2011). So, as we twist and turn the cube, new patterns emerge giving different meanings in different contexts. I think that the acceptance and holding of paradoxes provides a fertile ground for the emergence of new ideas. My thesis can be viewed as a Rubik's cube adding new perspectives in the pursuit of new approaches to change. I find resonance in the words of Karl E Weick: *'The contribution of social science does not lie in validated knowledge, but rather in the suggestion of relationships and connection that had not previously been suspected, relationships that change actions and perspectives'* (Weick, 1989, p. 524); (Alvesson & Karreman, 2011, p. 59). Through the research I hope to have contributed to new ways of approaching and being with emergence and change.

6.2 Results and Applications

The Wheel of Systemic Ideas is a model to be applied in many contexts: It can be used to initiate conversations around change, changing and emergence, providing an initial understanding of our natural 'come from place' surfacing our hidden assumptions and belief systems brought about by our cultural, professional and experience-based conditioning. It can help us challenge the status quo, and what is taken to be a truth, a right or wrong, at the outset of, or during, any change process. Next, it can enable the explore of other positions allowing for the breaking up of the binary, bridging opposites, appreciating diversity through

which shifts in awareness and new insights can be created. The Wheel of Systemic Ideas is a tool for disrupting assumptions and conditioned knowledge, to create awareness of our existing discourses and explore new ones. It can open up for new dialogues and understanding, and maybe even foster a curiosity within the participants that was not there in the first place. The model can be used for reflection and learning, helping teams to explore what is taken for granted, expanding their perceptions and positions, maybe leading to an adjusted path of action or a new direction.

The research showed that shifts were created in the relationship within the team, awareness and responses. The way we interact and respond to each other is what creates meaning, and not taking the experiences people are having seriously can lead to fear and insecurity. During the unfolding of the research process four breakdowns (Alvesson & Karreman, 2011) took place, each contributing significantly to the change process and supporting the validity of the application of systemic ideas. An appreciation of the production relation dynamic; sufficient psychological safety (Edmondson, 1999); the exploration of barriers to change by using Immunity To Change (Keegan & Lahey, 2009); and a sense of DNA (Karp, 2006) as a binding tissue, are concepts that support and enable collaborative experience for those involved, releasing their potential and creativity, through social processes of dialogue and learning. From the research a pattern of contributory factors emerged which interact and influences each other. The findings in the breakdowns show, in my opinion, that value of weaving a net of relations to build safety. Here differences are not only accepted but appreciated, allowing for crucial and even difficult conversations, where reflection and reflexivity are key in exploring alternatives for evolvement and change.

In my research I put forward the notion that we can learn to see change as something natural, that emerges within and around us on a continuous basis. There are always consequences of our actions, but they can be so subtle or far reaching that they are not obvious to us before we are faced with them. We need to understand the contexts and levels we come from and which are in at any point in time. Firstly, our own 'ontos' shape us to who we are as individuals and what ideologies and belief systems we adhere to, developing the manuscripts of our lives. Secondly, and to me more importantly, that our lives take place on many levels and we need to appreciate these levels and how these impact us. By using holonic shifts we can navigate between the levels, going from 'I' to 'WE' as a team, as an organisation, as a society, and beyond, shaping and harnessing information and awareness that can be created in each. This is in my experience the hardest, as many people I work with cannot shift out of the 'I' position, but through our web of relationship we are all part of living systems.

The literature in chapter 3 discussed the origins and application of systemic ideas and systems. The context and literature on change discussed in chapter 4 showed that many change processes are still driven by modernistic thoughts and treated as linear processes organisations and people are pushed and pulled through. Given the complexity of our world, and the acceptance of change as a constant, we can consider new attitudes and approaches to change; moving from episodic transformations to acceptance and continuum. My research shows that for us to more aptly navigate change, we must not lose sight of the most forceful binding tissue we have; that of human relations.

The research findings demonstrated the value of the systemic ideas introduced, but I do not suggest that these should replace concepts inherent in a modernistic paradigm.

I propose that the ideas be equally valued with an appreciation for the range they offer. It is not one vs the other, a right or a wrong way. Rather, I am suggesting an awareness and exploration of what may be most useful given the context, people, skills, roles and expectations. My point is that we engaged dialogically in the shaping of the change processes, trying not to succumb to one dominant discourse.

The process using the Wheel of Systemic Ideas encourages the participants to be in relations to each other, the topic of change and the systemic ideas, relating the experience to their context, work situation, challenges, opportunities, roles and expectations. Through this they not only need to be relational with each other, exploring positions and reflecting around experience, application and learning, but also take in the outside world, and what this means in a broader perspective. The point was not to arrive at a truth, or one solution, but to enable exploratory dialogue, learning, and appreciation of differences, creating opportunities and collaboration.

The Wheel of Systemic Ideas is a conversation starter which allows us to build pathways connecting paradigms enabling us to create constructive conversations around the different positions and what they mean to us. I think bridging is particularly relevant when it comes to change because we are in position where the old paradigm is not sufficient, and we need new approaches. The Wheel using Theory of Polarity, helps people explore new position more easily thereby creating new awareness and understanding. The exploratory constellations of modernistic ideas with systemic ideas on the Wheel allow us to have those exploratory conversations questioning our assumptions, attitudes and action. But dialogue in itself is not sufficient. Being relational, dialogical or systemic is not enough.

It is about how we talk about things, what we discuss, how we do it, what we question/ challenge/query and what we do with it afterwards. And how we are with each other. Relations must get a place at the main table, it cannot be marginalised any longer. The importance of relations to provide safety, which again allow us to reflect openly

To enable change, navigating emergence and be with changing, we need to look to gradual improvement and innovation. This precipitate learning and reflection; the ability to question why we do what we do? How we do it? How we understand each other and what we can create together. This requires a level of psychological safety (Edmondson, 1999) which comes when people feel seen and heard through dialogical processes. To get that the team needs to build a feeling of WE-ness, achieved through the weaving of relational interconnectedness and safety. Here openness and vulnerability are encouraged so that the team can constructively reflect on their experiences and learnings, thereby create evolving change. This requires an approach and culture that allocate resources, time and attention to build relations which needs to be considered of equal value to production and the focus on efficiency.

The coherence and flow in my findings are represented in the figure below and answers my research question. In this thesis I have shown that the systemic ideas can contribute to promotion of dialogical spaces; building of relations and safety; open reflections and sharing of experience; assumptions questioned, and learnings created. This paves the way for collaboration, creativity, dialogue and learning needed to co-create and navigate emergent change and changing.
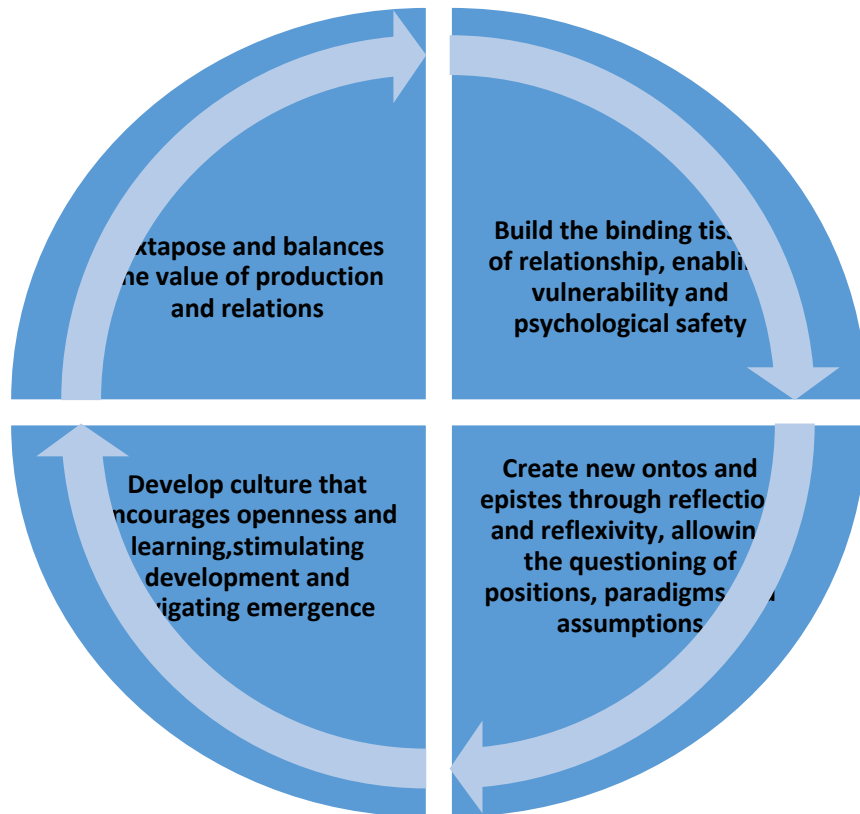
Figure 15 shows four interacting elements from the research, which are important to foster environments able to navigate change and emergence.

6.3 In Retrospect

When my formal research process is nearing the end, it is natural to think what I could have done differently. And these insights could not have come at an earlier stage because of the unfolding nature of life, and the research process. I would like to share some reflections around the research process, as an alternative to critiquing it.

In reading this thesis, you may think that I am introducing many names without discussing them sufficiently. You may even miss my thoughts on some of the scholars significant to you.

As I mentioned in chapter 2, my approach is slightly different, maybe even irreverent to the format of a thesis. I have chosen to use the literature review to create a scaffolding around my topic of research. That also implies that I have taken key concepts and ideas put forward by contributors that I consider relevant, and left out other parts of their work, while remaining respectful of the context they were evolved in. Hence my focus shifts from the academics that make up the scaffolding to the scaffolding itself and what was needed in order to make sense of the research topic situated within. It becomes a parallel of the shifting from individual agendas of modernism to the co-creating of the relationships and new realities available through a social constructionism mind-set, the contributors being the individual and the relationship, the scaffolding. I am focus on the relationship between the elements in the scaffolding itself and between the latter and my topic, and what it creates. My thesis foregrounds the empirical systemic practice research, backgrounding the literature review. My research emerges in the cross-section between many fields of practice and study, and I would not be able to cover all of these topics, I have concentrated on the systemic practice aspect and applying systemic ideas to change. I believe that the bringing together of these ideas into a spectrum and a wholeness, is a new contribution which practitioners in the field can apply in different contexts.

The research project was ambitious involving many people, and three teams, over almost 20 months, resulting in a lot of material. In hindsight maybe it was too high level, and it could have benefitted from more exploratory reflexive work with fewer participants. My response to that is that I was curious to explore if the systemic ideas presented in the Wheel could be applied to different change contexts in a cross-section of sectors. My findings confirm its relevance through the different responses and dialogical processes it created in the different

teams. Also, through the reflexive sessions and post process survey, I sought to understand the experiences of the individuals participating. Inspired by my own practice as an organisational facilitator I did think that working with three teams would give the research more rigour, a belief I still adhere to.

For people reading and examining systemic practice research, it is easy to default to established qualitative methods; looking for the confirmation of a hypothesis, an examination of a phenomena, interactions that form recognisable patterns, and results that can transferred or reproduced in other situations. Simon speaks to how systemic practitioner researcher may be more preoccupied with the usefulness of an approach and what it produces in terms of understanding and learning, rather than evaluating it on its own merit. She suggest that the researcher is part of the material '*speaking from within complex, shifting practices in a deeply reflective and subjective manner*' (Simon, 2018, p. 42). Because of the insider positions offered through systemic research practice such as participatory action research (PAR), dialogical inquiry and reflexive narratives, assessing the quality of systemic practice research can become a challenge. We need to use other criteria to consider its merits In appendix 1, I have sought to document how my research meets with eight criteria addressing rigour and cohesion of the research (Simon, 2018).

The life of the three teams I engaged with was very much a reflection of real life, with impinging constraints on them and the research process. Furthermore, the constant pressure on efficiency and productivity, made the teams evaluate the purpose and usefulness of our sessions. In my view, this sometimes made the connection between the (to me) striking moments and shifts in the teams, less obvious to them.

As a result, we were not able to reflect deeper on the impact of each shift. However, in the post process survey that many of the teams answered, the impact of the overall process was reflected on, and has been shared throughout the thesis.

Some may find the research many faceted and complex. I would argue that it has been a dialogical process unfolding as it progressed. With Mystery As Method (Alvesson & Karreman, 2011) as the overriding approach encouraging a curious, exploratory stance, I have followed what emerged in the interaction between the research topic, the teams and myself. As I noticed a hesitance towards the reflection in Team 1, I became curious and introduced the mini mail survey 'Virtual Coffee with Anne' which created responses in the team members around what counted as useful and productive and not. This led us down the path of the production-relations axis to explore further with all teams. Similarly, the interactions in the teams made me question the level of safety, and I found resonance with this topic in the literature through Psychological Safety (Edmondson, 1999) which again was applied to all teams and created a real shift in all. At the start of the process Team 2 had one set of change objectives which, through the work with the Wheel of Systemic Ideas, morphed into other, more resonant goals. With Team 3 I often had to set aside the researcher hat and address what was on their agenda that day which was preoccupying their mind. The paradox was to gather sufficient material to draw conclusions around the research at the same time as being dialogical with all the three teams according to their given context at any one time.

Because of the research approach focusing on what is created in the teams rather than in the individuals, the dialogical sequences are expressed in the Voices of the Team or Team Voices, juxtaposed to show the range between diversity and alignment.

The research itself, the accounts given, and the patterns of the findings should provide enough cohesion to give the research sufficient reliability and trustworthiness. In terms of validity, the research process and the use of the Wheel of Systemic Ideas, can be transferred to other teams. Keeping in mind that every process will look different and produce a different outcome. An example of that is the use of the spokes in the Wheel. Given that it has eights spokes, not all were explored in each team due to team context and relevance. I also found that one team might find one spoke very useful creating a gateway for further conversations, while the same spoke gave no meaning to another team. In applying the Wheel, it is therefore useful to engage the team members in both the selection of topic to be examined and which systemic ideas (spokes) to look work with.

Some participants struggled with the systemic ideas in the Wheel and found them unfamiliar. Not wanting to be normative in the interpretation I invited the participants to explore possible meanings of the words to them. The downside is that the language used for the ideas can become a barrier to the engagement with the Wheel and the process. However, it also provided an opportunity to have a 'warming up' conversations. At times I would offer some possible interpretations without attachment to help the process along. Some of the systemic ideas could overlap depending on how what values was attached to it by the participants. This sometimes created a confirmation that everything was interlinked, while other times it created an annoyance because the ideas had already been explored. I solved this by paying attention to what spokes where picked. If we, through one spoke, had spoken broadly about the application of an idea ideas, we might drop another. An example would be feedback loops and non-linearity, or wholeness and interdependence.

Others may say my research is not new but capturing what already exist. I would agree with that, neither was this my aim. The intention of my research was to explore and combine new ways of being with change and that necessitates building on what already is. I have combined systemic concepts, dialogical processes with complexity theory, constellations while using methodology nested in a systemic practice paradigm, to develop a model to be applied in change contexts. The research I have referred to in this thesis, documents and justifies the relevance and contribution of the Wheel of Systemic Ideas.

My thesis has emerged as a contribution to systemic practice research, dialogical processes in teams and organisations, and to the field of complexity approaches. It has many interacting elements acting as moving objects in the unfolding of the research, but still connected through a common purpose. It is emergent, context dependent, with paradoxes, non-linear processes, using feedback to look at something again. And although seemingly fragmented in places, it contributes to a bigger understanding of the research topic; providing a wholeness. It is systemic in that the different pieces act in relationship to each other, giving meaning and purpose.

6.4 Further Research in My Field of Organisational Practice

What strikes me as I read through the research results is the need for a new language and to fill this with mind-sets, skills and tools for being in, and with, change. Whether it is the CEO, departmental head, team lead, agile coach or project leader, they all need to be familiar with dialogical practice and systemic ideas. Accepting the non-linear and chaotic nature of change in complex systems and the impact this has on those concerned at whatever level they are at.

In my view, teams will be better equipped to evolve and navigate change when there is an appreciation of the eco -systems they interact with, and within, and the mutual influences between the parts. When they can understand the surroundings, contexts, needs and expectations and be nimble in moving positions. When they can try to see the bigger picture and focus in and out. When they can ensure that different voices are heard, accepted and even appreciated, and that relations are given space to be nurtured for the sake of psychological safety and the weaving of the energising WE-ness. Instead of finger pointing at others to take charge and work it out for them, they step forward, engage and contribute. Where there is a willingness to be in the uncomfortable and chaotic, and not knowing the answers, but engaging in dialogue to work it out. Influencing and having voices heard, implies taking ownership and responsibility for outcomes. It is place where accepting that being part of a change, and changing, is a personal journey, taking us beyond our comfort zones. There is an acceptance that change looks different, and chaos is normal, and we can use that as an opportunity to co-create our own realities.

One area I would be curious to research are frames. By that I mean what are the processes for working with change. I found that, especially in Team 1, the modernistic ideas provided a framework they were familiar with giving an experience of sufficient safety. That also includes designing a starting point to ensure relational ethics and safety is in place for everyone to be comfortable in contributing fully. I found that without any frames the conversations can go everywhere causing confusion, and some boundaries provide safety.

This may be contrary to some complexity approaches of free flowing open space (Shaw, 2002), but through the research I have gained respect for the need for some boundaries and framing of the situation for the people involved in the change. I would like to explore how these frames could provide some safety without being limiting, allowing the process to unfold.

More effort has to be put into building the teams that lead change. Through the engagement with the three teams I noticed that teams leading the change, are more resilient when they 'have their act together'. By that I mean a common understanding of who and where they are, taking time to calibrate the map and the territory. A high level of psychological safety in the team allows the questioning of decisions, daring to challenge assumptions and truths, rather than following doggedly in a direction they don't believe in for the sake of belonging to the team and a commitment to one's own survival. Not setting aside time for these exploratory and aligning conversations at the outset, and at points during the journey, can at worse send the team members of in different directions causing the dispersion of the rest of the organisation, and talents may be lost. At best, people will go along on a journey where they are more committed to safeguarding own positions than contributing their skills wholeheartedly to the progress of the team.

6.5 Responding to Responses

In summary, The Wheel of Systemic Ideas can be a tool to explore assumptions and governing paradigms, appreciating and respecting how others view and experience the world, create a common understanding on which a platform for collaboration can be based.

The model can contribute to complexity approaches to change, as both a starting point in understanding and appreciating the positions and paradigms present, but also to help guide the process. Using the Wheel provides a good opportunity for practicing how to be dialogical. We always act as a response to something. As humans we can endeavour to understand what the current change is a response to, the background for our own positions and explore our ability to be open to influence. Being open to, and willing to change positions and responses, is to me a hallmark of being dialogical.

Although this is a thesis about change in teams, I would like to share with you an example from two other living beings that highlights the value and power of responsiveness. Dear reader, please bear with me as I tell you the story of my two dogs:

> *Mayssa and Lily are two English Springer Spaniels, beautiful, happy beings. Mayssa is the older, still youthful, but she prefers sitting firmly on her doggie bum waiting for a cuddle. Lily, being only a year and a half, wants to play and have attention constantly. Watching them in the garden one day I noticed their interaction. Mayssa was relaxing in the sun enjoying a moment of quiet. At the other end of the garden Lily was eyeing her up, and proceeded to creep slowly towards her, like a lioness hunting on the savannah. Mayssa looked back at her stoically, not moving a limb. Lily was getting closer and eventually reached forward to nudge Mayssa with her nose. Mayssa just stared at Lily, almost bored. If I could project my human thoughts on her doggie brain, I imagine she would say: 'I will not be moved'. Relentless Lily attacked again, sending her bum in a sideways tackle throwing Mayssa out of balance. Mayssa sat back up regaining her posture, and this time Lily went for an upper cut with her left paw. How*

did Mayssa respond? Did she walk away? Did she snarl? Turn her back? Lie down? No, she lowered her front legs and invited Lily to play, as if she was thinking 'what the heck'. The movement was immediately reciprocated, and off they ran together. I was struck by Mayssa's willingness to shift positions and engage with Lily, despite her own desire to relax in the sun. To me it was a beautiful example of responsiveness and how it can lead to engagement. And I wonder if we as humans can have something to learn from Mayssa and Lily.

What do you think?

6.6 A Dialogue Between Changing Change and Myself

Where we live by the sea in Norway, I often walk the paths along the beaches, looking at the wildlife while enjoying the view and letting my dogs run free. As this thesis comes to an end, I am curious to hear what Changing Change has to say about what I have written. So, we sit down on a bench overlooking the fjord and reflect together.

Image 8 looking into the future (Rød 2019).

I ask, sipping my coffee: '*How did you enjoy the thesis?* Change snuffs: '*How did I enjoy it? The question is: Did you enjoy it?*' I move uncomfortably on the bench and insist: '*Yes I did. I learnt a lot. But I do wonder if it made you reflect on your role in all of this, the impact you have and the responses you create. Maybe you could be kinder at times, more considerate?*'

Change answers: '*It is not about me- it is about you. Remember the story of the three teams crossing the river? I am not familiar with the changes ahead of you; the next leg of your journey, how you feel about it; what is driving it, or who you are travelling with. But I am curious where your focus will be?*

I look out at the sea and ponder the words. Change continues: '*An old friend of mine, Socrates, once said something like; the secret to change is to focus all your energy not fighting the old, but on building the new'. 'Yes, because it is irreversible'* I add. '*That is one of my biggest take-aways. That and how a change we fear can turn out ok. Can I tell you a story?' I say.* Change nods.

I start:' *One day it was decided that two new houses would be built here by the shoreline possibly limiting our access to the fjord and obstructing our walks. We fought tooth and nail, taking the decision to the highest possible level in the county. But our complaints were rejected. And as we are waiting for the houses to be built, a new footpath has been created and with it this nice bench we are sitting now. I enjoy coffee here most mornings overlooking the harbor and the fjord. Maybe it is just perfect at this stage in my life. I would never have thought to ask for it or that I would welcome it. But I have….'*

Change sighs: '*Yes, we are all immigrants, we don't know what lies ahead of us.'*
'What do you mean immigrants?' I ask. Change continues: '*Let me share the words of a wise woman, American anthropologist Margareth Mead. She said "…adults are always immigrants to the present ….. emphasising the differences between what we have become accustomed to and what we must now and in the future adjust to. "´* (Preissle, 2011, p. 695).

I smile: '*I'll remember that, it puts my life and change into perspective'*. I look out on the fjord again and take another sip of my coffee. It looks like it will be a nice day.

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4. Image 4 shows Team 3 exploring one spoke- Feedback Loops and One Way- in The Wheel of Systemic Ideas, and the range that exist between the two (Rød, 2017).

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6. Table 6 shows a combination of Kotter's eight phase model combines with Bolman and Deal's four frames.

7. Table 7 shows the Immunity to Change X-ray for Team 2.

8. Table 8 shows the overview of the major shifts noticed in the three teams.

List of Films and ideoclips (and when downloaded)

Bateson, Nora, 2011. An Ecology of Mind. (Watched 7 and 8th November 2016).

Gergen, Kenneth, 2010 https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-AsKFFX9Ib0, (downloaded 20th February 2016).

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9. List of Appendix

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Relevant appendix can be obtained by contacting the author at anne@anne-rod.com.