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Reimagining Sustainable Organization

Perspectives on Arts,
Design, Leadership,
Knowledge and Project
Management

Birgit Helene Jevnaker
Johan Olaisen

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Reimagining Sustainable Organization

“This book offers students and managers a rich conceptual understanding and research-based insights into the opportunities of imagination and organization... an important, approachable contribution elaborating perspectives on research avenues, sustainable design, power and knowledge dynamics in projects, as well as the spread of management ideas for the future.”

—Rachel Cooper OBE, *Distinguished Professor of Design Management and Policy, Lancaster University, UK*

“This book offers multiple perspectives on the practices of sustainable organization. The authors highlight the dynamics of knowledge, arts, design thinking, and power to realize complex project work within and between organizations. Sustainable organizations are becoming imperative in contemporary business, and I highly recommend this book to any reader interested in understanding the fundamental dynamics of such organizations.”

—Professor Georg von Krogh, *Chair of Strategic Management and Innovation, ETH Zurich*

“Aesthetics constitute an essential dimension of daily work in organizational contexts. Arts and the visual side of organization are more important than ever when dealing with the many unknowns in business and society. Students and practitioners will find in this interesting and fascinating book insights and suggestions for doing their own action research and using rich qualitative methods in their organization studies, as well as the invitation to engage with artful places in order to understand aesthetics, tacit knowledge, and symbolism in organizational life.”

—Professor Antonio Strati, *University of Trento, Italy, and i3-CRG, IP Paris, and art photographer*

“The book gives an excellent understanding of a reimagination and recreation of leadership and organisational theory written by two outstanding professors travelling less travelled roads.

Jevnaker and Olaisen present new perspectives and represent a new school of modernity and futurism based upon truly universal knowledge.”

—Professor Jon-Arild Johannessen, *Kristiania University College and Nord University*

Birgit Helene Jevnaker · Johan Olaisen

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PREFACE

Reimagining Sustainable Organization addresses our need for thinking and coping differently when facing the many unknowns in real-life enterprises in society. Endeavours in the development, knowledge creation, and sustainability in organizations are related to the challenging arts of making business and human enterprises more sensitive and responsible to people, resources, and processes. In this book we specifically seek to draw attention to new and travelling ideas, reimaginary attempts, and creative actions towards more attractive and sustainable organization.

Reimagining means to imagine again or in a different way. Reimagination points to the ability or power to form or conceive freshly or differently. This is called for in contemporary and future organization. Reimagination entails both novel ideas and ongoing contemplations which characterize renewal and innovative endeavours in leadership, organization, and management contexts. Reimagining sustainable organization also relates to the organizations' ubiquitous lack of social or environmental capabilities, the latter may, however, be changing. We note that management-oriented sustainability ideas seem to be spread like virus between organizations. Travelling ideas can both foster and hinder sustainable organization. In management and organizations, shifting, influential theories have travelled and trended over time. While we at the same time seem to know less on how and why core projects, work practices, or leadership activities in organizations actually become greener, smarter, healthier, or not.

Writing this book made this puzzle become an emergent insight for us. Our thesis is that ideas on sustainability evidently are travelling into the management agendas, but practices appear “green” in the double meaning of being in growth, yet also incomplete or enacted with little integrative experience. For example, organizations seem to start mainly by adopting abstract slogans, rather than engaging in any extensive sustainability rethinking or redesigning in their core business practices. On this background, we specifically examine possibilities in knowledge- and project management as well as power to act in real-life leadership. The book provides relevant multi-perspective lenses and philosophically grounded frameworks for critical and constructive approaches to knowledge creation, design, and sustainability ideas in management and in research.

Reimagining Sustainable Organization is not a handbook for sustainability or climate change. Instead, the book addresses dynamic perspectives on acting re-imaginatively in everyday work. Overall, as students of managing in real-world organization, we seek new directions along which to look for new or different, yet unknown directions. We contend there is much to learn by exploring living and imaginative practices in the broadest possible sense in both organizations and research contexts, business enterprises as well as projects in the arts and design fields.

For the reader’s learning journey, the book provides eight chapters addressing ideas and knowing in leadership and organization. The book may be read as an inspirational source in your own order. The book offers exploration in three parts, plus an introduction:

- The *Introduction* (Chapter 1) offers concepts and a set of perspectives on reimagining sustainable organization. We draw on process philosophy, e.g., from Arne Naess, and John Dewey, and inspirations from the biologist and Silent Spring book writer Rachel Carson. A recent start-up in the building industry highlights new reuse potentials. We further introduce dynamics in arts, design, knowledge, and project management, which we elaborate throughout the book.
- In *Part I, Facing the Unknown*, we address the puzzles of how and why some management ideas tend to travel and spread so widely (Chapter 2). Whereas the recent streams of knowledge creation as explored through some annual knowledge management

research presentations, offer possibilities as well as severe limitations. Grounded in four science philosophy frameworks, we discuss relevant research routes for complex problems (Chapter 3).

- In *Part II, Looking for Productive Practices in Real-Life Organization*, we specifically search for alternate learning and more action-oriented leadership (Chapters 4–6): How can we work with what we don't know that we know, and what we don't know that we don't know? To shed light on leadership for sustainability development, we explore environmentally oriented design thinking as pioneered in a puzzling case in the office furniture industry. An inclusive philosophy on experience is addressed in relation to four art museums and their exhibition strategies. We also consider the complex power to act with others in oil and gas business projects.
- *Part III, Advancing Theory and Practice*, reflects on future-related thinking and work design, involving both shifting and some sticking management ideas, as experienced in some local but globally working telecommunication enterprises (Chapter 7). On this mixed management background, leadership may work with the current gaps of knowing as well as the potentials in novel practicing. The book develops a dynamic knowledge perspective (in Chapter 8) to move towards an inclusive philosophy for the arts and leadership of distinctive sustainable organization.

This book is a peer-reviewed monograph based on own research. We have developed and written this book together, but a few chapters we have had the following different responsibilities: Birgit Helene Jevnaker wrote Chapter 1, was the lead author for Chapters 5–6, and she is the book's corresponding author. Johan Olaisen was the lead author for Chapter 4. All other chapters in the book have equally shared authorships. The research specifics are further detailed in each chapter. Drawing on real-world projects and practices, as well as process philosophies, we share ideas learning from tinkering and thinking in business companies and also in arts organizations. Theoretically, we see a strong link between the arts and other creation-intensive undertakings built on sensuous understandings of experience and organizing.

The book includes frameworks and conceptual tools as well as lessons for further explorations. It covers future pressing issues also for the technical, social, arts, and design professionals involved in co-creative work across organizational boundaries. This book spans over several areas of

our interests—as researchers and learners in a business school, organization, executive leadership, as well as arts & design settings. Both authors have benefitted from friends across other sciences, e.g., social and humanistic sciences, engineering, life sciences, innovation studies, entrepreneurship, knowledge management, arts, architecture, and design science fields. We hope the book will be useful for students, scholars, and practitioners of enterprising and research.

We thank for the long, often continued conversations with our informants, and for lively dialogues with numerous executive students and colleagues. A special thank goes to our life partners, Jørund and Maria, and family. Being oriented towards sustaining imaginary work, we encourage you, the reader to “dig where you are” to find and enjoy new possibilities.

Oslo, Norway
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Working with this book based in our cumulative research and reflecting on established and new streams of knowledge, management and organization theories, as well as arts, design, sustainability development, and other practice-related transdisciplinary fields, we have benefitted greatly from insights and encouragements from other researchers, colleagues, students, and professionals, family, and friends. You know who you are, many thanks! Some of our research have been presented in parts to relevant international conferences, and we thank for the possibilities to engage in stimulating discussions, which helped us develop our ideas, conceptions, and research writings much further. Most of our research have been peer-reviewed and presented in parts to relevant international conferences (e.g., EURAM, ECKM, ECMLG, IFKAD, EAP, EGOS), and we thank for the possibilities to engage in stimulating discussions, which helped us develop our ideas, conceptions, and research writings much further. Especially, we thank all our research informants who shared valuable and also surprising insights. We would also like to thank our employer BI Norwegian Business School for the necessary funding making it possible to publish with Open Access.

CONTENTS

1	Introduction: Perspectives on Reimagining Sustainable Organization	1
Part I Facing the Unknown		
2	Travelling Leadership Ideas as a Business Virus	31
3	Possibilities and Missing Links in Management Research: What We Do Not Know That We Know	55
Part II Looking for Productive Practices in Real-Life Organization		
4	Management as Power and Politics in Projects	75
5	Understanding Practices Through an Inclusive Philosophy of Experiencing: Insights from Four Art Museums	93
6	Leading for Eco-Effective Business Design: Co-creating Sustainability Development	111
Part III Advancing Theory and Practice		
7	The Future of Knowledge Work: Working Smarter and Greener in the Age of Digitalization	137

8 Towards the Dynamic Arts of Reimagining Sustainable Organization	157
Index	179

LIST OF FIGURES

Fig. 1.1	Towards inclusive process perspectives with relevant theorizing for reimagining sustainable organization. (<i>Source</i> Expanded from Jevnaker [2012])	11
Fig. 1.2	The triple bottom line of social, environmental, and economic interests—often called people, planet, and profit. (<i>Source</i> https://blog.goodhere.org/sustainable-business/)	17
Fig. 3.1	Knowledge representations (Olaisen, 1985)	61
Fig. 3.2	Empiricism, criticism, and constructivism	63
Fig. 3.3	Research paradigms	67
Fig. 4.1	A power and micropolitics model from potential to expression	81
Fig. 6.1	Flokk’s principles for sustainable design (<i>Source</i> Flokk)	123
Fig. 8.1	Modes of knowing (Adapted from Olaisen and Revang [2018])	162
Fig. 8.2	Development of new assumptions and mental models (Adapted from Olaisen and Revang [2018])	169
Fig. 8.3	Knowing as a collective project activity (Adapted from Olaisen and Revang [2018])	170
Fig. 8.4	Pace of change within a collective and between individuals and collectives (<i>Source</i> Jevnaker and Olaisen [2019]; Olaisen and Revang [2018])	173

LIST OF TABLES

Table 2.1	Summary of viral features and corresponding idea-handling processes	35
Table 2.2	Summary of idea-handling processes from Scandinavian annual reports	43
Table 5.1	Overview of key Deweyan concepts in the chapter	96
Table 5.2	Overview of a sample of key Naessian concepts	97
Table 6.1	Perspectives on leadership for sustainability action	116
Table 6.2	Sustainable designing as potential multifaceted organization practices	127
Table 7.1	Identified aspects of reimagining future knowledge work changes	150
Table 8.1	The different modes of knowing in art and business	161



CHAPTER 1

Introduction: Perspectives on Reimagining Sustainable Organization

Abstract How can we learn to lead and think greener, smarter, and healthier in our daily work? This chapter considers the rise of visions and goals towards more sustainable organization for both business and society. The landmarks of tomorrow seem to be broadly affected by management ideas on sustainability—whether by deep or shallow thinking. What can various sustainability orientations mean in an organization and management setting? The chapter offers concepts towards a multi-perspective framework for reimagining sustainable organization, grounded in process philosophy as well as dynamic views on arts, design, knowledge, and power to act with others.

Keywords Sustainability · Green · Knowledge · Research · Process philosophy · Entrepreneurship

1.1 INTRODUCTION: A WAKE-UP CALL

The power to develop and beneficially sustain—rather than damage—our living habitat is a hot topic on the agenda for leaders, specialists, and interest groups. It is enacting broad engagements by millions of citizens in particular among the younger generations. There is much to learn and reflect upon if we see sustainability and reimagination concerns as an open field for creative thinking and action.

Recall how the Swedish teenager Greta Ernman Thunberg boldly started her own school strike in Stockholm by August 2018 and how she soon was followed by thousands of other schoolchildren and quite a lot of adults too.

1.1.1 Learning with and from Young People

As landmarks of tomorrow, emerging trends and movements of young people are of great interest. Already the year after, 23 August 2019, Thunberg was invited to speak in the formal Climate Action Summit of the United Nations (UN):

... This is all wrong. I shouldn't be up here. I should be back in school on the other side of the ocean. Yet, you all come to us young people for hope. How dare you! You have stolen my dreams and my childhood with your empty words and yet I'm one of the lucky ones. People are suffering. People are dying. Entire ecosystems are collapsing. We are in the beginning of a mass extinction and all you can talk about is money and fairytales of eternal economic growth. How dare you!

It was a provoking message that went quickly around the world through numerous broadcastings and social media. The place for waking us up, was a strategic one. *United Nations* is an epicentre of climate action, targets, events, and publications. Sustainable development has no doubt become an important concern for the United Nations especially since the late 1980s. Following the UN Special Commission on the Environment 1984–1987, the so-called *Brundtland commission* after its leader, Gro Harlem Brundtland, the UN has for some decades now sought to inspire leaders and responsible people on all continents. The aim of the Brundtland Commission was to help direct the nations of the world towards the goal of sustainable development. The commission published its results in the Brundtland report in 1987. Thereafter, *sustainable development* became an important concept in the vocabulary of politicians, practitioners, and planners. And yet, Greta Thunberg, provoked with her message; “how dare you!”.

When facing unknown significant environmental changes and especially climate changes such as global warming, the requests of Greta Thunberg together with numerous people of all ages are that much more needs to be done to make progress in practice.

Assuming that more action and creative sustainability developments are essentials for innovative enterprises and leadership, we will introduce some relevant traditions for reimagination next, such as attention to both knowledge and ignorance in the emergence of sustainability ideas.

1.1.2 Pioneering Other, More Knowledge-Based Messages

The journeys towards enabling sustainability in business and human enterprises need to include our understanding of field experiments also including their darker sides. We will revisit an earlier significant wakeup-call, in the early 1960s, when another knowledge-seeking environmentalist, Rachel Carson, a writer and environmental field worker, combined all sorts of evidence across multiple disciplines and research sites in what became her bestseller book, *Silent Spring* (Carson, 1962/ 2018).

This pioneering work examined and eventually succeeded making clear the highly detrimental consequences of using pesticides (chemicals such as DDT) against insects in the agriculture fields. Initially, an important aim was also to find new uses for military innovations made during the Second World War. However, several kinds of these chemicals eventually turned out to impact not only insects in many detrimental ways but humans too (e.g., mothers' breast milk). Furthermore, the pesticides also made insects unintentionally resistant to the chemicals, which show the importance of often unforeseen, long-term environmental effects. This dark side resonates to some extent with the effects of long-term overuse of antibiotics, antibiotic resistance leading to therapeutic impotence, which the World Health Organization (WHO) today consider to be a major threat against global public health.

In what became a landmark book, Rachel Carson (1962/2018, p. 13) reflects on the more recent man–nature interactions:

The history of life on earth has been a history of interaction between living things and their surroundings. To a large extent, the physical form and the habits of the earth's vegetation and its animal life have been molded by the environment. Considering the whole span of earthly time, the opposite effect, in which life actually modifies its surroundings, has been relatively slight. Only within the moment of time represented by the present century has one species – man – acquired significant power to alter the nature of his world.

1.1.3 *Goals and Pillars of Sustainability*

On this background, it is noteworthy that the UN has elaborated a list of 17 sustainable development goals (SDG) in its *2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development* that came into force from 1 January 2016. With the SDG goals UN has also made a logo-pin which tends to be used by top notch spokespersons of the world, as well as business leaders and engaged professionals. Together with Climate change and other environmental goals, the list of SDGs includes developing the physical, the social, and the mental such as quality education. We can thus speak of an “enlarged sustainability” thinking, which today is becoming spread by and with leaders and reflective people in numerous communities and organizations.

Yet, actionable knowledge on reimagining and research on enlarged sustainability practices seem scarce. Few management books exist on these topics. As business educators, we personally think more can be done to leverage knowledge and action in the relevant areas, which means that we also need conceptual and analytical foundations.

1.2 CONCEPTUAL GROUNDWORK

In this book, we will address several perspectives on reimagining as real-world creative endeavours towards sustainable organization. Our concept of “organization” encompasses both business and other human enterprises. It points to the dynamic organizing and patterned ordering (Tsoukas, 2005; Weick, 2001)—thus entailing work activities in circular processes including co-creating practices (Follett, 1924/1951), as well as spontaneous action (Chia & Holt, 2009).

An “enterprise” is a living project, business-interrelated organization, or other kind of undertaking among people, their instruments, and interconnected practices. For example, an innovative enterprise needs to be understood beyond the formal firm, it includes several business relations (Jevnaker, 2012; Lazonick, 2002). The term “living” project can be in a metaphorical or real sense, as de Geus (1997) reflected upon in relation to a living company. We see a living enterprise or better: enterprising, as primarily process-oriented, which is fruitful for our purpose to include also co-generative, informal, or voluntary creative endeavours. Creative endeavours commonly involve aspects that can be emergent, original or unique, but also difficult, complicated, surprising, ambiguous, uncertain,

or risky (see Csikszentmihalyi, 1996), which thus tend to call for complex and often somewhat hidden knowledge (Jevnaker, 1993). To relate to the tacit, silent, or less articulate in knowing in action (Polanyi, 1966/1983) seems essential (see Sect. 1.3 below).

New thinking and reimagination may be embedded in actions among participants developing new or existing enterprises. Theories (from Greek: *theoria*) were in ancient times associated with participating in special crystallizing and contemplative performances. To engage with both the known and unknowns and transcend normative traps in management, this book builds on plural, critical, and process-oriented philosophical foundations.

Reimagining is the act and process of thinking again or differently. This relates to fresh or green thinking.

1.2.1 *Green Thinking and the Meanings of “Green”*

In general, green is regarded as the colour of life pointing towards nature, renewal, and energy. It is associated with meanings of growing, freshness, fertility, safety, and the natural environment. With the green’s association with renewal, growth, and hope, green stands for both a growing flora and a *lack* of experience. This can be interconnected in reimagination. For example, different thinking such as common in designer-enterprise collaborations, may be met with scepticism when people are lacking shared relevant experience (see Jevnaker, 2014).

Evidently, green is not only harmonic growth in a well-tended garden. In the stock markets, “green stocks” are a nickname for the young businesses, associated with many uncertainties and fluctuations in stock prices. The nickname is used to distinguish them from established enterprises. *Green* points to both what we know as growing *and* what we don’t know but suddenly may see unfolding. Why and how we can work with both the known and the unknown, we will elaborate throughout this book.

An essential meaning of green thinking that we will keep in mind, is that green is the colour for creativity and for seeing possibilities. Recall Edward de Bono’s “Green Thinking Hat” (e.g., De Bono, 1992, p. 80). In human spirituality, green thinking points to fresh thinking and creative capacities. This also concerns the energy to set ideas in action. Accordingly, reimagining also relates to *natality*, “the beginning of something new”, to borrow a term from the political science thinker Hannah Arendt

(1958/2000). This resonates with new beginnings as well as (re)emerging vitality in a circular living rhythm.

In searching for perspectives on sustainable organization in a human enterprise and management context, it seems fruitful to acknowledge several meanings of “green”, as a common metaphor for virtuous circularity. Reimagination includes our fresh creative feelings as well as possible inexperience with thinking anew or in different directions. It also includes what we might envy or conceive as somewhat strange and possibly may fear, e.g., when interacting with strange artificial objects or machine-learning programmes.

For example, new tech objects have emerged as sensor surveillance on our critical fresh water sources or used to track and control agricultural livestock or wild wolves moving around in nature. Data-assembling tools may rapidly be taken for granted on a wider scale (Zuboff, 2019), but they may have both positive and negative consequences (e.g., GPS tracking on children or on patients with dementia, etc.). On this wide background of change and in line with pragmatist phenomenological philosophers (e.g., Dewey, 1934/1980), we suggest multiple perspectives on a new or fresh experiencing in the everyday are something worth attending to and reflecting upon, for our learning and future survival.

Our book seeks to be optimistically oriented. Yet, we face ambiguities and complexities involved in sustainability thinking in relation to business enterprises. For example, what is termed “greenwashing” is a form of business marketing spin in which green public relations (communicating green values) and green marketing are used to make an unsubstantiated or misleading claim that an organization’s products, aims, or policies are environmentally friendly.

In short, greener enterprising has many meanings. The complex of dynamic relationships of living things in action with their surroundings are what is commonly termed ecological. Thinking deeper about their dynamics deserves our attention for many reasons.

1.2.2 *Inspirations from Process Philosophy*

In philosophy, imaginative as well as green thinking can be understood and further developed specifically in relation to *eco-philosophy*, i.e., how humans live and practice their wisdom in relation to their natural habitat. We will here build on the philosopher *Arne Naess* because he argued

for an open and optimistic thinking in relation to both possibilities and complexities in our surroundings.

Arne Naess (1912–2009) was a Norwegian and internationally known philosopher himself working actively with possibilities, eco-philosophy, and the meaning of practical wisdom, as well as the logical philosophy of science. In line with the pluralistic ideas where everyone can follow their own path, yet seeking to be an exemplar for others, he argued that everybody should develop their own eco-philosophy or what he coined “ecosophy”, that is, one’s personal system of values. To introduce his positive possibility-oriented approach, we will share a little story Naess often retold himself, which was grounded in his lifelong mountaineering and climbing interests. Once in the Spanish Pyrenees, he was lost on a rocket plateau, in a rather challenging mountain area. In this difficult situation, he then recognized the importance of considering alternate action. Through experiencing other actions, he discovered what he called the pleasure of “rambling along the peaks” rather than reaching for their highest top.

In other words, we can try to find alternate, feasible possibilities in human enterprise and development. Our “climbing” efforts can unfold in unforeseen ways that may lead to new joy, even in highly challenging surroundings. Interestingly, people stumble upon alternate ways. Arne Naess set out on his first mountain hiking trip (alone) when he was only 14 years old. On this trip, he happened to meet a man who proposed that he should start reading Spinoza, a seventeenth-century philosopher! We turn to this conceptual line of thinking next.

1.2.2.1 Some Concepts for Engaging with Possibilities

Arne Naess is among the key founders of deep ecological thinking, that is, “deep” in the terms of in-depth, sound arguments, and constructive practices. Deep ecology is thus related both to thinking and to being constructive in our approaches to change. This ecological thinking has several forerunners, embracing here and now, and the always open, next moment in natural time, as inspired from process -philosophy (e.g., Bergson, 1889/1913/2001). In the here and now we can have respect for all living, as Naess (2005) learned from India’s former leader Gandhi. The Naessian thinking also goes way back to early philosophers such as Baruch Spinoza in the Netherlands (1632–1677), as well as Aristotle in Greece (384–322 BC). Three of the interesting conceptions Arne Naess adopted from Spinoza we will briefly introduce below.

The first is potential—*potentia* or *Virtus* (from Latin, *vir* for man), which means the courage, character, and strength or power to do something, that is, to be capable of doing something of value, something excellent. The power term proposed by Spinoza as argued by Arne Naess (2005), has a special meaning. It is not “power over” something (as Machiavelli suggested), it is rather “power to” do something. Also, in this embracing of “Virtus”, Spinoza did not prioritize the mind over the body, which was common at the time he lived. Rather, mind and body should be regarded as equally important, Naess recurrently underlined.

The second concept we wish to highlight for an improved green thinking, is *joy*—and even *hilaritas*, a full joy that activates our mind/body. The feelings are very important to activate! In fact, both Spinoza and Naess saw active feelings as necessary for all to be capable for change. Arne Naess focused a lot on the free human’s playful affections in his own eco-sophic thinking. And joy was a recurrent theme in his many popular, inspirational philosophical writings, some of which became best-sellers. From this we may learn that it is a potential strength, rather than a weakness, to be passionate and open for full joy in our sustainability work. We may add that Naess remained personally intrigued throughout his life by children’s play, and he also continued to practice a childlike humour (e.g., he enjoyed burping unexpectedly in secret, such as on a tram or in other social settings).

The third key concept from Spinoza is *conatus* or effort. Arne Naess refers to *conatus* as a striving (also a key Aristotelian concept, we may add). This striving is important because it relates to *perseveration* as a dynamic notion; Naess preferred this old “perseverare” term to avoid the more static “preservation”. In this dynamic conception, we can understand *self-perseveration* as “an active concept in which the striving (*conatus*) is the force that makes the self sustain itself” (De Jonge & Whiteman, 2014, p. 437). According to Naess, this striving is something which is more than mere survival (Naess, 2005, p. 414):

There is an urge for change. Human beings, and others being, are always “on the way”—without change of essence. The dynamic, interactionist view of the self makes it inevitable to interpret a basic principle of *conatus* as a striving for self-causingness, activeness, power.

With “*conatus*” he specifically means the striving to continue to exist with the power to do. This includes man as well as other living creatures. The

active perseverations can further be regarded as an increase in the level of being in ourselves, an increase in our level of freedom, in our level of joy, and so forth. Thus, these concepts—power to do and striving to persevere, are interrelated and they can be very helpful, as we shall come back to throughout the book.

1.2.2.2 *Imaginative Working with Intrinsic Relations*

Overall, as free human beings, Arne Naess pointed to our positive imaginative possibilities, the potentiality of doing something more. He was no fundamentalist, he articulated that he was more interested in whether leaders had visions, rather than utopias. While exploiting logical reasoning and respecting opponents, Naess recommended to use active feelings creatively towards visions of our future. We should also try to transform the pessimistic aspects into optimistic ones. In other words, we should seek to do something more, with impact and joy.

He recurrently argued: “The basically positive function of the ecological crisis is to renew a general concern for what human life is about. What are we here for? To spoil the planet? Why should we do that?”:

By definition—or better, almost by definition—those who support the deep ecology movement are, like Spinoza, in part motivated by basic premises of philosophical or religious kinds and feel that all living beings have intrinsic value. It makes sense to care for these beings for their own sake, as creative beings. Clearly, the supporters may appreciate something like the above verbal articulations of deep attitudes. (Naess, 2005, pp. 404–405)

Furthermore, Arne Naess pointed to the *interconnectedness* of everything, a mutually constituting relationism, whether we are talking about ideas or tangible things. The world is regarded as “one”, that is, all in a dynamic interplay, as Spinoza also thought (De Jonge & Whiteman, 2014, p. 440 ff). To attend optimistically to interacting relations among humans and non-humans can thus be crucial to understand ecological matters with a power to do.

1.2.2.3 *What Perspectives and Means Can We Explore?*

Naess typically recommended to engage in human *dialogues* with due respect to all opponents. As a pioneering thinker and environmentalist, he was open to diverse views and creative action. The latter could possibly include non-violent resistance action if that was ethical and helpful. For

example, he once participated in a sit-down started by local farmers and other protesters, to save a precious waterfall (Mardöla) in North-West Norway.

Also, his own acting *with* nature, putting up a small cabin and living a life in recurrent long periods high up in the Hallingskarvet massif of the Hardanger (mountain) plateau of Norway, helped Arne Naess building his own “ecosophy”. It is a personal value system and wisdom that he encouraged everybody to develop. At this very rough place, he enjoyed living in nature in simple ways, which offered so rich experiences, e.g., an eagle eye’s view on to thousands of square miles and the majestic Hallingskarvet Massif. “Up here, it is difficult not to think big” (Naess, cited in De Jonge & Whiteman, 2014, p. 433).

Dwelling in other landscapes such as Spinoza’s in the Netherlands, could also offer beautiful experiences, if “appreciated” (Naess, 2005, p. 399):

Spinoza does not write about the beauty of wild nature. Perhaps he never talked about it—the coastline of the Netherlands, the storms, the varieties of light and darkness, the seabirds. There were people around him, Dutch landscape painters, who appreciated all this. Maybe he did also, but it scarcely influenced what he says in the Ethics. What he says about animals does not suggest he had any wide or deep sense of identification with any of them. Nevertheless, his kind of philosophy of life, its structure, is such that he inspires many supporters of the deep ecology movement.

Through such combinations of inspirations, Arne Naess developed his wild-life experiences into a thinking of the *place*, which he called Philosophy T, after the mountain cabin’s name Tvergastein. He argued that humans are not separate from nature (and to think so leads to trouble) (De Jonge & Whiteman, 2014, p. 446).

Said differently, there is a need to think in deeper ecological ways to consider the less observed actions and consequences. Arne Naess here also refers to Rachel Carson as being significant for his own ecological thinking. Often, the combination of ecological and economic sustainability issues comes with possibilities, as well as threats. Some of which may be unforeseen, as found by Carson (1962/2018) in the DDT chemical industry and agriculture case.

On this background, we must have multiple perspectives to be able to reimagine complex work and deal with emergent challenges, as also found in real-life innovation journeys (Van de Ven et al., 1999).

1.3 A MULTI-PERSPECTIVE PROCESS THINKING

In the following, we synthesize five areas of interest for our understanding endeavours towards reimaging sustainable organization (see Fig. 1.1).

The five areas we draw on are:



Fig. 1.1 Towards inclusive process perspectives with relevant theorizing for reimaging sustainable organization. (*Source* Expanded from Jevnaker [2012])

- (1) theories for complex knowledge and ignorance (see Chapters 3, 5, 6, and 8),
- (2) theories for new initiatives and travelling management ideas (see Chapters 2, 6, and 7),
- (3) theories for designing distinctiveness, the art of identity, valuable (re)usability, and meaning (see Chapters 5, 6 and 8), and
- (4) theories of collective action with the power to organize and realize innovative integration and collaboration (see Chapters 4 and 6).
- (5) Finally, the book is oriented towards an inclusive dynamic philosophy for sustainable organization, (elaborated throughout the book, see e.g., Chapters 1, 5, and 8).

As introduced, in our concept of organization, we include extra-organizational efforts beyond the formal organization (Tsoukas, 2005; Jevnaker, 2005). By the word sustainable, we point to the capacity to be upheld and endure, while not harming the surroundings, in an inclusive philosophy sense (cf. Naess, 2005). The “enduring” involves arts and our cultural experiencing of time (Bergson, 1889/1913/2001). This is a sensitizing conception (see Chapter 3) that should be further discussed, for example, according to dynamics in criteria for sustainability and in a cross-generational perspective, as introduced by the Brundtland Commission (WCED, 1987, see next section).

In Fig. 1.1, the circle indicates *dynamic interconnectedness* among the various perspectives in the contexts of leadership and organization, for example views on travelling ideas relate to our understanding of organizational integration (see Chapter 2). Furthermore, we believe perspectives from arts and aesthetic organization, in a broad sense (e.g., Kostera & Woźniak, 2021), can shed light on reimagining endeavours and their dynamics (see Chapters 5 and 8). As argued, the perspective areas are sensitizing, and not meant to be a final framing for a dynamic process orientation towards reimagining sustainable organization.

Notice that although processual aspects are interdependent, there are interesting *tensions* in-between theories. For example, perspectives attending to varieties of knowing/ignoring in situated practices and the perspectives in design that highlight projecting distinctive wholes through the art of shaping character and meaning across practices, evoke tensions of divergent and convergent views (see e.g., Dumas, 1993; Jevnaker, 1993, 2014). Sometimes, designing something in novel ways with external consultants may actually turn out to be suppressing

(forgotten or unseen) existing or past knowing in an established business enterprise (Dumas, 1993). For illustration, we may see the diverse traditions of theories in knowing/ignorance and designing as related to two aspect areas of an interconnected creation or generativity theme, because they tend to be interwoven in design-creation work (Jevnaker, 2005), as we shall come back to (see Chapter 6 and 8).

Furthermore, tensions also exist in-between theories of working with new initiatives and ideas, what has on one hand been coined “exploration” or search for novel approaches (March, 1991), and on the other hand understanding “exploitation” (March, 1991). In real-life sustainability-oriented action, innovation work can beneficially involve both exploration and exploitation strivings, even by some recurrent managers and specialists, or “hands” engaged (Jevnaker, 2012). Thus, we propose to reimagine how we understand sustainable organization with inclusive dynamic perspectives, e.g., theories of emergent way-finding (Chia & Holt, 2009) and extended co-creation (Follett, 1924/1951) among managers and collaborating parties, as well as organizational integration to foster innovative business enterprise over time (see e.g., Lazonick, 2002). Interestingly, developing sustainable and useful products such as office chairs with long lives depend on interweaving experimental and exploitative practices, which calls for *continued creativity* to sustain the suitable action (Jevnaker, 1991, 1995, 2012, see Chapter 6). In understanding creative experience, we should thus also consider the potential plus-values of different and even conflicting views (Follett, 1924/1951). We introduce the areas only briefly below, but their conceptions and interconnections are explored throughout the book.

1.3.1 *What is Knowledge—and Relevant Traditions?*

Knowledge comes from the Greek word, *Gnosis*, signifying knowing through observation or experience. In general, knowledge is what we know, that is, our meaningful understanding of something, whether it is acquired through experience, research, education, or otherwise. The meaning-making entails that knowledge is more than information or data, which always needs to be interpreted.

Evidently knowledge and an active search for new or improved knowledge are important ingredients in sustainability thinking. The two

environmentalists we have referred to, Rachel Carson and Greta Thunberg, have both searched extensively for many kinds of knowledge on environmental issues and their impacts on our living conditions.

Knowledge can be understood in multifaceted ways such as awareness and familiarity, knowing how and why, as well as knowing-what (Ryle, 1949). The latter is sometimes called declarative knowledge, emanating from observation and experience, our thought worlds, or “justified true beliefs” (Von Krogh et al., 2000). Individually, it can be regarded as the capability to draw meaningful distinctions in a domain of action, based on an appreciation of context or theory, or both (Tsoukas, 2005, p. 128). However, there are also limits to our knowledge and future thinking. “Because ‘everything affects every other thing’, we cannot predict the long-range effects of our particular actions and policies”, the philosopher Arne Naess often stressed (Naess, 2005, p. 411).

Complex knowledge is always many-faceted. Complex knowledge includes know-how and the procedural, of how to make or do something, which differs between a novice, an advanced beginner, a competent, or a master (Dreyfus & Dreyfus, 1986, 2005). Furthermore, knowledge can develop into practical wisdom through our strivings over time, as already understood by the Greek philosopher Aristotle (Ross, 2009). Personal knowledge and collective knowledge can include what has been assembled, embodied, and matured in relation to a person or a group. Personal knowing includes what has been learned in the past and what has become *tacit*, that is not specifically articulated step by step anymore (Polanyi, 1958, 1966/1983). Working with tacit complex knowing tends to be misunderstood (Jevnaker, 2012; Tsoukas, 2005) but is nevertheless critical in new or diverse thinking (see Chapters 3, 6, 8).

Nordhaug (1993) distinguished between different degrees of idiosyncratic or dissimilar competences. This includes firm-, industry-, and task-specific competences and *meta*-competence (operating at a higher level) such as creativity and learning capacity. Accordingly, what becomes shared or collectively known (or *not*) of what actors know and do, can be dissimilar and uncertain. Management can still be collaborating and seeking improvements at several layers (Cunliffe, 2021; Hansen, 2009; Olaisen & Revang, 2018). Finally, actors differ in how they engage with imagination and search exploring the unknown or unconventional (“outside the box”) thinking. Also, what may be regarded as “peripheral” ideas from temporal participation, enabled by otherwise non-participation such

as a consultant, can become fruitful (Jevnaker & Bruce, 1999; Wenger, 2002).

One way of leveraging complex knowing is through research. Research comes from the Latin word *Scientia*, which literally means knowledge. Science and scientific methods are systematic ways of acquiring knowledge about relations in nature and living organisms, as well as with the man-made physical world, for example through collection of data, observations, experimentation, and formulating testable hypotheses (see Chapter 3).

But approaches as practiced in the natural sciences or physics as well as life sciences are not the only ways of acquiring knowledge (Parrilli & Heras, 2016) for sustainability in relation to organization (Whiteman & Kennedy, 2017). Social sciences, law, and the human sciences (e.g., philosophy), as well as many interdisciplinary fields (e.g., technology management, business/economics history, design history, sociotechnical organization) offer a wide range of perspectives and methodological approaches of relevance for leadership, management, and organization studies in relation to sustainability. Combinations of sciences and so-called “DUI”, learning-by-doing, by-using, and by-interacting, can become relevant for understanding varieties of innovation modes (Parrilli & Heras, 2016).

Inspired by Arne Naess and other philosophers, we acknowledge the benefit of *multiple* perspectives or “pluralism” in science. Several perspectives are often necessary to explore different aspects of problems as well as probing varieties of approaches to come up with new or improved solutions. Complex and ill-defined problems and related knowledge are typically multidimensional, not one-dimensional (see Part I).

Our experiences from the broad field of executive education as well as design education are that people with different theoretical and practical backgrounds tend to see the problems from quite different angles, which can be highly useful. Specialists and managers may need to expand their views to see differently and design something sustainable for the future (see e.g., Bruce & Jevnaker, 1998). Action research is one way of doing research while working with improving some focus situations. It commonly seeks to involve a wider learning in its own organization (Coghlan, 2019).

1.3.2 *What are Sustainability Ideas Travelling in Emergent Practices?*

Sustainability is not just a one-way highroad to the promising land. Sustainability is an umbrella term with multiple meanings, and each meaning tends to be multifaceted. For example, the meaningful aspects of ecological or man's dwelling, and local habitat can shift when you move from a fixed settlers' community to a nomadic community. Also, sustainability concerns will differ when building in a hot climate zone versus in a cold one.

Sustainability thinking engages with the present and the future, as well as the past. In 1987, *the United Nations' World Commission on Environment and Development*, often called the Brundtland Report (WCED, 1987), defined sustainability as "meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs".

However, as the philosopher Arne Naess understood, when we create a new vision for the future, we will probably also view the past differently. For example, the past generations tended to throw their waste just outside their habitat, whether into the street, into the sea, or into certain places such as what accumulated as landfills. These common waste practices were previously regarded as normal and quite satisfying, but today rather disgusting or even dangerous, such as garbage and chemicals polluting the harbour areas.

The term "sustainability" has currently come to be broadly used to indicate programmes, initiatives, and actions. Yet, the abstract goals as well as input or output resource thinking seem to be foregrounded. For example, the public debating is oriented towards reducing emissions (the climate-related output called footprints) and improving inputs or preservation of a particular resource such as drinking water.

In general, sustainability refers to the intersection of several dimensions such as the human, the social, the economic, and the environmental—known as the four pillars of sustainability. A fifth core dimension is also sometimes added, that is, public policy. Commonly, it is referred to three key pillars mainly: People (the social), Planet (the environmental), and Profit (i.e., the economic area or dimension). Place is another dimension referred to nowadays in relation to, for example, urban sustainable development, because more people of the world now live-in cities rather than rural districts. As realized early on by the design professor Victor Papanek

(1995), we have to start searching for “a cure for a problem” before we recognize it—or a proper diagnosis is possible.

1.3.3 Critique

However, linking *sustainability* to only the intersection field of a selective number of pillars, for example, *People*, *Planet*, and *Profit*—thought of as distinct areas—is something to reflect upon critically. It is typically illustrated as three circles in part intersecting and thus defining the field of interest for sustainability (Fig. 1.2).

- First, this way of distinguishing what is the sustainable area tends to portray a relatively narrow intersecting field for sustainability (see Fig. 1.2). We will argue that the possibilities are much larger and more dynamic, than this kind of “the shared intersecting fields” portrayal. People can work with and see possibilities beyond the narrow intersection area in the middle of the intersecting circles (see the Flokk company case, in Chapter 6).

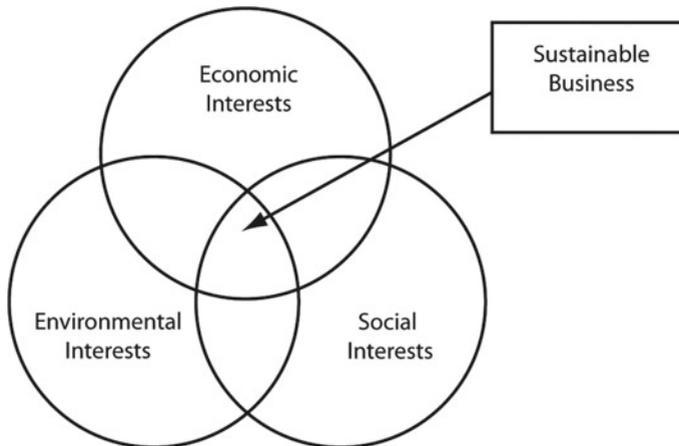


Fig. 1.2 The triple bottom line of social, environmental, and economic interests—often called people, planet, and profit. (Source <https://blog.goodhere.org/sustainable-business/>)

- Second, the Sustainability circles (of people, planet, profit, public policy, etc.) are probably more interconnected in both foreseen and unforeseen ways. As already understood by Adam Smith (1776/2003), one of the fathers of economics, markets can become enabled by public legislation and policies. For instance, introducing low customs on imports of electric cars have triggered new sales and wider consumption of electric cars in Norway, one of the countries with the highest use of electric cars relatively (54% of new cars sold in 2020 were electric, according to national statistics). However, the same favourable policy is not yet enacted for new car parts and adopting used components is seldom considered because it threatens the sales guarantees. Taken together, these two practices may affect a possibly relatively short life cycle of a new electric car. It has already led to increasing waste assemblies of many brand-new electric cars—as an unintended critical consequence.
- Third, the People, Planet, and Profit circles and their respective interconnections can be highly dynamic and with many uncertain or ambiguous interfaces. We do not know where for example people’s future actions or industry actions eventually will move and what that may lead to. Economic activity can also be unfolding for more reasons than profit. In fact, the meaning of the Profit circle was originally much broader, more like prosperity, Elkington (2018) argued, who said he invented this 3Ps or Triple Bottom line (3BL). As we will explore (Chapter 2), managers do engage in ideas traveling across geographical and cultural borders between many kinds of enterprises.

1.3.4 What is Design Projecting Distinctiveness and Co-creating Meaning?

Visiting alternate ideas in further abstract and concrete concept development is inherent in real-world complex designing, which involves emergent tensions and actions in many directions (Jevnaker, 2014). Theories of design focus on projecting and expressing a distinctive identity and meaning. Designing is a creating process that can integrate multiple aspects including enhanced user-friendliness and sustainability thinking. Designing can relate to both innovation and heritage in cultural artefacts and needs to be understood in dynamic ways of thinking and working, though involving some habitual practices (e.g., prototyping, testing, etc.).

Design innovation can be highly engaging and stimulating, working across several organization boundaries (Jevnaker, 2012) and seeking to tackle emergent challenges and setbacks, as common in innovation work (Van de Ven et al., 1999). Tension and creative breakings can thus emerge among people in different positions and with diverse backgrounds (Jevnaker, 1995, 2012). There is a gap in research regarding complex design collaborations (Bruce & Jevnaker, 1998; Jevnaker & Bruce, 1999), which tend to involve co-creation and sustainability thinking over several projects (Jevnaker, 2012). Perspectives in design and design/sustainability thinking is further elaborated later (see Chapter 6).

1.3.5 *Theories of Organizational Integration, Entrepreneurial and Leadership in Collective Action*

We contend that all people working in or with an enterprise can potentially contribute to leadership as co-creating practices, which can foster or hinder sustainability in action. Interestingly, creativity research has found that all people can be creative, and that engaging in creative efforts can expand our abilities (e.g., Csikszentmihalyi, 1996).

However, we also need to acknowledge that research suggests that people seem to have different abilities for creative action (Csikszentmihalyi, 1996). Not every manager, employee, or expert enjoy the potential hardships in daily co-creating and problem-solving,—but some do! Although perhaps few tend to be acting with something new or different in the beginning, both specialists and leaders or others engaging in innovation practices may enable further support and action (Jevnaker, 1993, 2012).

Furthermore, *power to act* with others needs to be understood beyond work regarded as fabrication (in industry) or labour (reproductive work e.g., in households), according to the public policy thinker Hannah Arendt (1958/2000). We thus propose the human capacity to act with others is critical for understanding and potentially affecting the ongoing changes in and between organizations and societies. “*It is beyond doubt that the capacity to act is the most dangerous of all human abilities and possibilities, and it is also beyond doubt that the self-created risks mankind faces today have never been faced before*” (Arendt, 1958/2000, p. 296).

This *power-with* perspective, as well as our own lifelong engagement with action-based leadership training, is sensitizing us towards multi-faceted leadership in action beyond formal leaders. If possible to engage

creatively with others in a situation, everyone can in principle contribute to leadership in action. It can thus be crucial to find potential high-creative companions (designers, fellow workers, clients, end-users, etc.) as well as engage with managers constructively championing sustained development (Jevnaker, 2012, 2014; see Chapters 6 and 8).

Entrepreneurial action can expand the fields of interest for sustainability as creative practices. Probing new combinations (Schumpeter, 1947) can lead entrepreneurs to sense and seize new possibilities (Teece, 2009). This needs some more introduction, which we turn to next in Case vignette 1.

Case vignette 1

When the entrepreneur Anjali Bhatnagar and her co-investors in Spring 2020 launched *Törn*, a new net-based building material business platform based on a customer-friendly app (software application), she made new, previously unsold building materials easily accessible for many customers for heavy discount prices. In the beginning, several months went by with a slow recruitment of shops. Bhatnagar thus contacted shop after shop in the building industry including recruiting building chains. Since July 2020 the *Törn*'s turnover doubled each month, and before the end of the year, nearly 100 shops were onboard and registered their surplus building material. All shops had to accept discounts of at least 50% to the customers provided through this new net-based platform. However, the alternative was that on average 8-10 % of the building shops' inventories were stipulated to be stored for long and then thrown away or burnt. Indeed, between 5 and 10 % of the unsold wares had previously just been thrown away, one local shop-owner in Stabekk, west of Oslo city, explained to the daily business newspaper. (Klevstrand, *Dagens Næringsliv*, 5 February 2021)

Organizing new offerings through interacting in new ways is illuminating "entrepreneurship" or entrepreneurship as a social practice (Johannisson, 2011). Making this enterprising possible with unsold building material previously dealt with as loss or waste, is just one example of the manifold ignored resources that may be converted into more ecological business circulation. In the *Törn* business, to make it work did depend on organizing an accessible technology platform for pooling interested customers with many existing shops with unsold wares (in this case, at least one-year stored new, but unsold building materials). It can become a win-win

for both established shops and the new net-based shop, as well as for customers.

Also, the active business-to-business networking of the Törn entrepreneur who was mobilizing “shop after shop” onboard this new service, seems critical. In fact, this woman entrepreneur had a PhD in solid state physics, and she has experience from several enterprises including project management and telecommunication (Telenor), design groups (Creuna, Halogen, Design without Borders) and a former not successful start-up (LinkedIn-profile, visited 01.03.2021). In 2021, Schibsted and other investors invested in this e-business firm (Schibsted’s website, visited 18.11.2021).

This building industry case illuminates the crucial links between knowing and ignorance of “silent” problems and possible solutions. The emergent projecting and collaborative action fostered a viable solution; in this case transforming the loss (even burning) of surplus materials into a net-based offer that people might be interested in, when supplied accessibly and to lower prices. We also see in this case that the increasing knowing-whom to contact and mobilize onboard (e.g., local shop representatives in the building industry) were crucial, which resonates with theories of mobilizing invisible assets (Itami, 1987).

However, without the relative abundance of nearby surplus resources (building materials) and the possibilities for easy trials and demonstration on how to earn or save money (the business model) for customers, suppliers, and also the operator of the new net-based trade platform, this particular innovation in the building industry might not have been realized.

Our experience is that innovation can be founded on overlooked or ignored issues and imaginative thinking (Jevnaker, 2014), such as apparent in this Törn case.

1.4 ENLARGENING—OR SHRINKING—SUSTAINABILITY

With *enlargened* sustainability in relation to management and leadership, we mean an inclusive practicing of the ecological, human, social, technological, and capital relations. The idea of inclusion is adopted from the philosophical idea of inclusion, proposed by the American pragmatist philosopher *John Dewey* (1928/1998) (see Chapters 5–6). In this book, we seek to include multifaceted resources when relevant for our learning purpose. We will thus address sustainability thinking in close relation to

also the social, the physical, the economic, as well as the envisioning or imaginative capacities of interest for human enterprises.

Green innovations are eventually affecting production and consumption in several business fields from lightweight industries such as food and wine production to heavyweight industries like electric vehicles and ferries. Services are in the process of change, too, as indicated in terms such as green shipping and sustainable finance. For instance, the green bond market aims to enable debt markets to fund projects that contribute to environmental sustainability. Green bonds facilitate capital-raising and investments for new or existing projects that have environmental benefits and mitigate risks associated with climate change. When there is an intentional mix of environmental and social benefits, the bond is referred to as a “Sustainability Bond”.

1.4.1 *The Paradox of Green*

As a multifaceted phenomenon, sustainability is also a paradox. It can simultaneously be involving green thinking and thoughtless sustainability (e.g., doing more of the same, business as usual, thoughtless economic growth, too green narrow measures, etc.) and good strivings with sustainability in an enlarged ecological way. Recall that with enlarged, we here mean an inclusive practicing of the ecological, social, technological, and capital relations. Some companies find it valuable to engage in new green practices of financial sustainability reporting (e.g., the ESG system assessing Environmental, Social, and Governance factors). However, the leadership or governance may become misguided, for example, if involving only possibly narrow shareholders’ interests and not engaging with stakeholders and democratic orientations. Reducing set goals over time can be another sustainability-shrinking practice.

Ample evidence suggests that green business actions have possible unknown and even dark sides, as early understood by Carson (1962/2018). For instance, on one hand it sounds great that sustainability-oriented actions of energy companies have led to more investments in reproductive energy sources such as wind craft. On the other hand, the super-large size of new windmills has led to several new problems. In coastal areas these “monsters” with gigantic heights and blades are disturbing the milieu in the local communities and have led to accidents in the natural habitat of birds (e.g., eagles).

Even if we knew what could be essential to learn in developing increased sustainability, it normally takes some time to learn how to act and make skilled distinctions and assessments in ill-defined or dynamic real-world situations. That is why we need to engage in recurrent explorations of problem situations in varied contexts with diverse expertise and perspectives (see Chapter 6).

1.5 CONCLUSIONS

In this chapter, we have introduced how sustainability thinking has been put on the agenda of world leaders through emergent efforts in institutions such as the United Nations. The future-oriented undertakings were inspired by recurrent wakeup calls by pioneering environmentalists and their synthesizing of diverse, not well-known knowledge across many disciplines and places. As underlined by the *Silent Spring*-author Rachel Carson, novel environmental interventions can also become harmful. Her work inspired deeper eco-philosophy work by e.g., the process philosopher Arne Naess. Recall that Naess, like Carson, pointed to the benefits of multiple perspectives.

We have thus reflected upon the double meanings of “green” activity. On the one side, *green* spiritually refers to a fresh, creative, or revitalizing capacity. On the other side, green points to new beginnings, incomplete or little experience, and immaturity, which may lead to thoughtless acts. In other words, reimagination as “green” endeavours is not merely positive, and both kinds of meanings seem relevant. To act in sustainable creative ways for the longer term may require rethinking and redoing in diverse fields of project ideas, knowledge management, design creation, and organizing work.

Taking a process perspective, we have seen that creative undertakings beyond what is conventional practices can be of special interest. Managers, employees, external specialists, customers, and other actors can gain new experiences when actually interacting with new possibilities (e.g., Dubois, 1998; Jevnaker & Misganaw, 2022), such as in the building industry case (case 1)—creating a new service with reuse of surplus materials.

Learning can thus be inherent in the necessity of taking alternate routes—and not a waste of our time. Recall how the mountaineer Arne Naess—when not being able to reach a mountain top, instead survived by “rambling along peaks” which for him became an essential experience to a deeper eco-philosophical thinking.

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PART I

Facing the Unknown



Travelling Leadership Ideas as a Business Virus

Abstract Virtually identical management ideas seem to crop up simultaneously in similar organizations globally, in what ways can this phenomenon be understood? Leaders in organizations may play a more active role than those often depicted in the management fashion theory. The encounter between thought and practice may be lasting; beliefs may affect training and practice. The ideas may represent a trade-off between business strategy, leadership, and employees. We keep acceptable and adequate ideas while we drop unacceptable and inadequate plans. The ideas work like a sensitizing concept of directions along which to look for temporary order and stability, as well as potential change. Adopting a business idea is like a virus spreading worldwide, leaving an enormous impact through global corporations and societies. In this chapter, we study management ideas in a selection of top Scandinavian corporations to generate and discuss 8 relevant hypotheses. The same ideas might reach public institutions like universities and hospitals. In public institutions, they might present as a form of New Public Management or merely a way of managing, e.g. universities or hospitals through a magic business virus, creating what looks like similar strategies found in private businesses.

Keywords Travelling ideas · Fashion theory · Virus theory · Digitalization · Sustainability · Flexible workplaces · Project management agility · Trust-based leadership · Value-based leadership · Business spirituality · Business modernity · Mysticism

2.1 INTRODUCTION

The first sentence of Leo Tolstoy's novel *Anna Karenina* is: "*Happy families are all alike; every unhappy family is unhappy in its own way*" (1877, p. 1). Here Tolstoy means that for a family to be happy, several vital aspects must be given (such as good health of all family members, acceptable financial security, and mutual affection and values). The happy corporations are all alike sharing key travelling ideas giving good health (i.e., modernity), financial security, and mutual virus processes, including local virus variants. In other words: happy corporations share a standard set of ideas and attributes which lead to happiness, while any of a variety of ideas and attributes can cause an unhappy corporate family. The concept might be transferred to public institutions and different societal frameworks.

How then can we understand this spread of ideas among some organizations? "Travelling ideas" denotes that virtually identical management ideas crop up globally in similar or dissimilar organizations. In studies of this phenomenon, the dominant theoretical perspective is "management fashion theory" (Abrahamson, 1991, 1996; Abrahamson & Fairchild, 1999). Proponents of this research tradition associate the spread of ideas with organized clothing fashions' global diffusion (Gill & Whittle, 1993). Fashion creators are the leading global consulting companies. The fashion might be ideas of the lean, core business, outsourcing, agility, or new public management dressing up organizations in the same way. The fashion theory looks upon fashions as a natural and positive part of leadership and management, creating competitive advantages for those utilizing the fashion trends in change and innovation management.

Røvik (2011), who launched his alternative "virus-inspired theory" approach in organization studies, believes that the metaphor of virus propagation can serve to fill several of the gaps that fashion theory has left us. He stresses how fashion theory seems to presuppose the fleeting nature of ideas: that they come and go without exerting much impact on business practice. Using the virus metaphor, Røvik (2008, 2011) seeks to pinpoint the possibility that the encounter between idea and exercise may be *lasting*. Beliefs may affect practice, and leaders in organizations may play a more active role than those often depicted in the fashion theory. We will use the virus theory describing the receivers as active users using the virus to transform and change their organizations.

We found this perspective relevant and triggering because we identified the similar ideas for example at some key telecommunication competitors Telia (Sweden) and Telenor (Norway), two essential telecommunication enterprises in Scandinavia that also work and compete internationally. Their ideas include: Globalization, digitalization, sustainability, trust-based leadership, value-based leadership, virtual teams, project management agility, transparency, and flexible workplaces. Furthermore, we also found that most of the 60 largest corporations at the Scandinavian stock market practice the same ideas. We have thus concluded that strategic and leadership concepts work as travelling ideas. These buzz words go to almost any private business forming the way of thinking and working as a travelling virus. In the following, we argue that this chapter's empirical probing test supports a belief that a virus-inspired theory gives a more vibrant picture than the fashion theory.

2.2 THE VIRUS-INSPIRED THEORY

Several management authors have noted that in the past few decades, we have seen a rise in the creation, dissemination, and commercialization of management ideas (see e.g., Sturdy, 2004). Ideas emerging in one part of the world are packaged with descriptions and examples and then disseminated worldwide through the business press, consultants, and conferences. This distinctly global phenomenon characterizes modern businesses (Engwall & Kipping, 2004). The phenomenon has also boosted researchers' interest in how and why management ideas spread and what happens when they interface with organizations (Abrahamson, 1996; Davenport & Prusak, 2000; Sturdy, 2004).

Comparing management ideas to fashion by observing their popularity trends, rising, and falling, has shown how management ideas resemble other styles. One of the proponents of this perspective is Eric Abrahamson (Abrahamson, 1991, 1996; Abrahamson & Rosenkopf, 1993; Abrahamson & Fairchild, 1999). Abrahamson's main idea is to model a *bandwagon* and how many jump on it and show how much innovation they gain by jumping on the wagon. Jumping on the bandwagon is a way to get positive and negative innovations into the organization (Abrahamson & Rosenkopf, 1993). The bandwagon model is, however, not empirically tested and remains an anticipation. Recently, however, management fashion theory has been increasingly questioned, notably because it offers little explanation of what happens to an idea once it

is adopted by an organization (Clark & Greatbatch, 2004; David & Strang, 2006; Morris & Lancaster, 2006; Scarbrough & Swan, 2001). Neither the adoption itself nor the further process is well explored, due to lack of empirical evidence. To offer a more differentiated and nuanced understanding of what happens after a management idea penetrates an organization, Røvik has presented a theory comparing instead management ideas to viruses (Røvik, 2011).

In an open organization context, Røvik (2011) argues that a *virus metaphor* might be fruitful for understanding and describing organizations' handling of management ideas. Using the virus as a metaphor for idea-handling processes, Røvik combines knowledge from biology and virology with organizational research and management ideas. Metaphors have been used in organizational theory for many years. They take a concept from one domain and transpose it to another and use the metaphor as a "surprise machine" (Gouldner, 1970). New insights have come, and we have expanded our knowledge in organization theory. Using metaphors in theory development is a challenge in balancing between sharing sufficient similarities between the two domains and keeping a high potential for novel insights. We feel that the virus-inspired theory presented by Røvik (2011) intuitively shares many similarities with idea handling processes (i.e., diffusion, adoption, contagion, and the complexity of the diffusion process).

Nevertheless, the similarities are not trivial. Røvik (2011) applies Ortony's (1979) theory of "salience imbalance" when describing the virus-inspired approach. Røvik (2011, p. 634) describes the procedure of salience imbalance as follows:

By mirroring the target domain in light of prominent source domain features, one can reinforce features of the target that we consider previously non-salient or even borrow notable elements from the source. Attribute them to the mark and thus reveal qualities of the goal formerly unperceived.

A salience imbalance might be a reason to be ready for a virus and adopt it.

Thus, we have fragments of a fashion theory, a bandwagon theory, and a virus theory. The theories neither explain nor explore well what happens to travelling ideas in organizations. We will use the theories for developing hypotheses and use qualitative empirical material to describe and

analyse the adoption of viruses in organizations. The research is reflection and model (i.e., theoretical) based. Combining a theoretical and empirical approach may contribute to a more affluent foundation for understanding travelling ideas.

2.2.1 *Summing Up the Fragments of a Proposed General Virus Theory*

Below we present a table that illustrates similarities between viruses and management ideas. We then “mirror” the virus metaphor with our cases—Telia and Telenor—to generate our hypotheses. The six characteristics from Røvik (2011), we have adapted into a table suggesting their viral features and transformational processes (see Table 2.1).

Table 2.1 Summary of viral features and corresponding idea-handling processes

<i>Viral feature</i>	<i>Idea-handling process</i>
1. Adoption	The formal decision in an organization to adopt an idea
2. Non-adoption	The deliberate organizational decision not to utilize an idea
3. Isolation	A formally adopted but not implemented virus residing in units often at an organizations’ top-level, (e.g., in some actors’ memories, in documents, and decoupled from organizational practices)
4. Expiry	The gradual evaporation of a formally adopted idea, often without any formal decision to quit
5. Rejection	The decision to stop using an assumed idea regarding experiential learning (e.g., unsatisfactory results) and incompatibility, i.e., has proven not to fit in with institutional norms, logic, and sophisticated practices)
6. Entrenchment	The transformation of a virus into practice (i.e., it anchors in organizational structures, routines, and daily activities) so that specific intended effects reproduce the virus in different parts of the organization
7. Maturation	An idea lingers in an organization, often for a long time, before materializing, leading to a gradual, slow-phased transformation of the concept into practice
8. Translation	The deliberate change of methods and approaches occurs when they transfer viruses and implement viruses
9. Inactivation	Organizational activities related to an adopted virus either decrease or are discontinued
10. Reactivation	An adopted but dormant idea is “turned on” again, and organizational activities connected to the idea increase

There are six characteristics possessed by viruses presented by Røvik (2011): (a) infectiousness, (b) immunity, (c) replication, (d) incubation, (e) mutation, and (f) dormancy (for elaboration, see Sect. 2.3 below).

Summing further up, we might relate four phases to the travelling and practical adoption of an idea:

1. Replication
2. Incubation
3. Mutation
4. Dormancy

The passive recipient image of the fashion metaphor can be reframed using the virus metaphor. A typical property of viruses is that they spread contagiously through direct contact between the infected and those free from infection. A virus does not spread by itself; instead, it spreads by infected hosts. Once infected, the virus will spread through the host. The new ideas become adopted possibly throughout the whole organization. In our view, this description tallies what often happens when new ideas are introduced in organizations. The leadership and the consultants use whatever is needed to transform the organization from A to B. The transformation might be done by a 3, 5, or 7 steps model securing the integration. Business schools might be hired to offer extensive virus-based executive training programs.

2.3 TESTING THE VIRUS THROUGH EIGHT HYPOTHESES

This chapter thus assumes the view that the virus theory can be fruitful as a metaphoric understanding for the endemic spread of management ideas. We have used the theoretical fundament to develop eight hypotheses for testing the travelling virus idea empirically. To our knowledge, our approach represents the first empirical test of the virus theory on leadership and organizational processes. Using the cases of two telecommunication companies (Telia and Telenor), the test will be undertaken by exploring eight hypotheses (*H1-H8*):

- H1: It is probable that Telia and Telenor initially is an active part, which also involves local involvement and “local wizard actors”,*

i.e., actors who actively translate and transform the travelling idea.

A virus will trigger a defence mechanism or an immune reaction when trying to infect a new host. When it comes to ideas, this kind of defence mechanism could lead to non-adoption or, at a later stage, rejection of the concept in its most severe form. Nevertheless, other idea-handling types of processes, such as isolation or expiry, are also possible later. Loneliness could be described as the idea of only being present in documents at the leadership level and lacking significance for organizational practice. Expiry is another way to disarm a travelling idea, such as when employees in the organization simply stop caring, the idea may gradually evaporate.

H2: When the virus ideas meet Telia and Telenor, it will trigger several defence mechanisms.

In virology, a virus contains a genetic code that dictates how it will reproduce in host cells. The virus controls the host cell's metabolism and uses it to multiply rapidly, which is called replication. Replication is a part of concerning management ideas. Entrenchment is the term used to describe how a concept or a design transforms into practice, like routines or other organizational structures. Specific intended effects in line with how the ideas integrate within the host could, for example, involve that a public organization adopts the concept of new public management by appointing "process owners". Contrary to the fashion theory, this indicates that travelling ideas can be implemented and sometimes have a long-lasting and considerable impact. The ideas thus behave more or less as a permanent virus for many years and not fast like a temporary fashion.

H3: The idea will materialize into changes within Telia and Telenor. These changes will be following how the concept describes in theory.

Viruses require a period of incubation. There is a varying duration for different viruses from when the host is exposed until symptoms appear. We claim that management ideas follow the same route and often linger in latency states before they materialize. This maturation phase seems to vary depending on the intensity, i.e., the strength and the duration of attempts to materialize a management idea into an organization. Power,

in this case, refers to how massively the ideas are promoted (Foucault, 2002 [1969]).

H4: An intensive initial campaign within Telia and Telenor will quickly result before changes in line with the travelling ideas are noticed.

When it comes to viruses, errors sometimes occur in the replication process: the virus mutates, i.e., miscopies itself. An organization may also become infected by several different viruses at the same time. Some variations are successful and do not harm the virus. Mutations may also often make the mutant virus become invisible to the immune system. Here, we draw the parallel with the renaming of management ideas, when the linguistic label is changed, and a local name perhaps attached to a general, globally spread thought. But in other cases, a mutation can be compared with the translation of management ideas, i.e., generic ideas that in a specific organization more or less deliberately transform into something different (Czarniawska & Joerges, 1996; Hallström, 2006).

H5: The travelling idea will in local versions at Telia and Telenor in some or several aspects differ from how the concept describes in theory.

To conclude the review of the virus metaphor, we have to understand the idea of dormancy. One feature of certain viruses is that they may be challenging to eliminate once they have entered the body. They may then, for example, alternate between active and inactive states. The introduction of a new idea often initiates great enthusiasm, grand plans, and a generally high activity level. The views get over in the “bend over here it comes again” phase where the employees do not identify the purposes as urgent or proper, or adequate. Inactive management ideas reactivate when actors other than those who worked on them initially, present new plans for their introduction and use. Reactivated (“infected”) management ideas may often be reshaped (mutate) so that e.g., leaner becomes smarter, online homework becomes flexible, globally becomes glocal (both global and local considerations), and greener becomes sustainable.

H6: In the longitudinal story describing process management within Telia and Telenor, there will be an alternation between active and inactive states.

Using virus as a metaphor we relate to the idea-handling processes in varieties of sometimes complex ways. Their relations can be of three general types: succession, tangling, or competition, according to Røvik (2011, p. 645). We might ask ourselves how *H1* and *H2* are related if we look at the eight hypotheses presented in this chapter. They are both in the early phase of the idea handling process, and the interpretive flexibility (Bijker, 1995) in Telia and Telenor is probably still high.

H7: The virus buzz words tend to give meaning for the leaders, managers, and employees as a spiritual star or soul for the corporation.

There is a strong need for a mission star or meanings to believe in while working in today's corporations. The virus buzz words might work as a spiritual belief for hope and order and togetherness. The managers often behave like prophets for the virus ideas and present them as the gospel of modernity.

H8: There is a need for somebody saying that some ideas are just bullshit.

We do not find this in the theoretical foundation. However, it is clear that many of the travelling guru and consultant ideas in today's businesses are hardly relevant, and we would like to test if there is a need for a bullshit manager in organizations.

Nevertheless, are the spread of management ideas in succession, intertwined, or conflict? What is the relationship between *H5* (mutation) and *H3* (replication)? They compete since *H3* is more or less a replication (i.e., copy) following the original idea. At the same time, *H5* transforms the unique design into another shape. However, *H3* and *H5* are also similar since both are active phases where things happen. Another thought might be that *H5* can have a relation to *H2* (immunity), in which the protection (i.e., resistance) is regarded as a fundamental reason for the occurrence of the mutation (*H5*). Finally, it might be tricky to separate and classify *H6* (dormancy) and *H4* (incubation), which is probably best seen as complementary hypotheses.

2.4 EMPIRICAL METHODOLOGY

To explore our hypotheses in a corporate setting, we will use insights from two Nordic telecoms. The Telia and Telenor study is a case study with interviews and central documents as primary data sources. Throughout, Telia and Telenor showed interest in our research, and we were thus guaranteed good access also over time. The scope for comparing two periods, the early phase pre-COVID-19 and a more current phase during COVID-19, is a crucial component of our study, given that the time aspect is crucial for understanding the adoption of management ideas.

The same researcher (Olaisen) conducted ten interviews in April 2019 (5 in Telia and 5 in Telenor) with various “process owners”, managers, and work developers. Each meeting did focus on the respondent’s views and experience of travelling ideas, and interviews lasted 1–1 1/2 h and were made by phone. He repeated the ten interviews in April 2020. Many questions focused on the changes in the organization during the years, in light of the historical situation and how the respondent perceived and interpreted the changes made along the journey to the present case. What did they see as critical incidents in why things turned out to be the way they are? We found their general strategic overview of what has happened to be an advantage (Fesser & Willard, 1990). A potential disadvantage of choosing organizational leaders as the prime source might be that they can be seen as biased and not likely to criticize strategic decisions partly being their work responsibility. However, we feel that most of the respondents were very open and reflecting during the interviews.

Our approach regarding Telia and Telenor from without and within—also means that we devote relatively little space to the internal organization. It is considerably more interesting to study the transformational processes, i.e., travelling ideas as workflows. Further research will have to look closer at the internal processes.

We decided to examine also the annual reports of 2020 for the 20 largest corporations at each of the stock markets in Oslo, Stockholm, and Copenhagen to investigate if we could find a description of similar travelling ideas as followed in Telia and Telenor. The annual reports were readily available and offer today an overview of all essential processes in the organizations. The bias is, of course, that the annual reports only give an overview of the positive processes while omitting the unsuccessful or damaging processes.

Of course, a cultural bias of the whole study is that we base it on Scandinavian corporations and Scandinavian leadership and management. The largest Scandinavian corporations are, however, global both in strategy and business practice. In the latest IMD report on global competitiveness, Sweden is ranked 2nd, Denmark 3rd, and Norway 6th (IMD, 2021). Scandinavian leadership and management should therefore be of interest to all businesses.

2.5 ANALYSES OF SCANDINAVIAN TRAVELLING VIRUSES

Accordingly, we investigated the 20 largest companies in each of the stock markets in Norway, Sweden, and Denmark ($N = 60$). We found that 41 companies (69%) subscribed to the nine same virus ideas as Telia and Telenor:

- Globalization
- Digitalization
- Sustainability
- Virtual teams
- Trust-based leadership
- Value-based leadership
- Project management agility
- Flexible workplaces
- Transparency.

Globalization means that the market and the production of services are global. Digitalization means that all facilities plan to work digitally. Sustainable means to work for greener societal solutions (see Chapter 1). Virtual teams say that all organizations should operate across geography and time. Trust-based leadership means that the leaders and managers trust the employees to find the best solutions. Value-based leadership means no tolerance towards discrimination or violence towards gender, race, sex, age, or mobbing cases. Project management agility means that we perform as agile projects. Project management or temporary project teams are usual organizational forms among Scandinavian corporations. Flexible workplaces suggest that the employees might define if up to 20% might work at distance or from own home. Transparency includes information openness (e.g., publishing financial reports), organizational

transparency (e.g., openness regarding ownership and joint ventures), and openness for example on the corporation's impact on the environment. Openness to scrutiny may concern in principle all relevant processes and stakeholder relations (e.g. anti-corruption measures). The interpretation can be fully transparent or to a high degree, including incentive systems. A form of Scandinavian equality. Its meanings and presumptions are however not to be taken for granted, as we need to reflect on.

Scandinavia is a small part of the world (22 million inhabitants) where social welfare, free education, and a good infrastructure are available for all inhabitants. Equality and mutual respect are vital for understanding Scandinavian management. The cooperation between the corporations, the trade unions, and society is a cornerstone for Scandinavia. Also, a relatively high taxation system. Still, Scandinavia prospers on most measurements, e.g. on both welfare and productivity. The Scandinavian culture is still a bias of this study, but other parts of the world might nevertheless reflect on and learn from Scandinavian management experiences. However, the study is an explorative study with no ambition of delivering a general virus theory.

If we exclude trust-based leadership and transparency, about 80% subscribe to the other ideas. We conclude that at least 70% of Scandinavia's leading corporations subscribe to the same virus-infected purposes as Telia and Telenor.

We have used the frameworks from the theoretical foundation upon the evidence from the annual reports (see Table 2.2).

Summing further up, we might relate four phases to the travelling and adoption of an idea like a virus:

1. Replication. The annual reports are telling about a robust replication process through all the corporations.
2. Incubation. The top management group decides on the incubation period by maturity and risk.
3. Mutation. The mutation in different local viruses is vital to secure the suitable local variant of the virus to the correct local place. Values and transparency offer differ between different places.
4. Dormancy. The annual reports do not report any dormancy except a few cases where the corporations report that they have always been solid upon sustainability, transparency, value-based leadership, and globalization. Dormancy is only related to positive opinions about corporations.

Table 2.2 Summary of idea-handling processes from Scandinavian annual reports

<i>Viral feature</i>	<i>Idea-handling process</i>
1. Adoption	The formal decision in an organization to adopt an idea. The annual reports report the adoption of the virus as a decision by the top management group
2. Non-adoption	The deliberate organizational decision not to utilize an idea. The reasons for not adopting an idea are based either on that, e.g., trust-based, value-based, or transparency-based leadership do not fit with a global strategy or a global practice. The other reason mentioned, is that the corporations are not ready for digitalization, transparency, or value-based leadership
3. Isolation	A formally adopted but not implemented virus residing in units often at an organization's top-level (e.g., in some actors' memories, in documents, or decoupled from organizational practices). The annual reports mention that the corporations evaluate several changes and trends, but a top-level decision is yet not taken
4. Expiry	The gradual evaporation of a formally adopted idea, often without any formal decision to quit. No annual reports mentioned expired ideas at all
5. Rejection	The decision to stop using an assumed unfavourable idea due to experiential learning (e.g., unsatisfactory results) or incompatibility, i.e., that it has proven not to fit in with institutional norms, logic, or sophisticated practices. The reason for rejection is that the ideas do not correspond with the overall strategy or do not fit with global practice
6. Entrenchment	The transformation of a virus into practice (i.e., it anchors in organizational structures, routines, and daily activities) so that specifically intended effects reproduce the virus in different parts of the organization. The annual reports stress the importance of spreading the ideas to the whole organization through all channels and means. The reports stress a strong belief in the total entrenchment. Total enrolment is essential for value creation
7. Maturation	An idea lingers in an organization, often for a long time, before materializing, leading to a gradual, slow-phased transformation of the concept into practice. The reports refer to a long time for maturation and fear for failure met through consequence reports and views from hired consultants

(continued)

Table 2.2 (continued)

<i>Viral feature</i>	<i>Idea-handling process</i>
8. Translation	The deliberate change of methods and approaches occurs when they transfer viruses and implement viruses. The annual reports underline the importance both of a good story and a well-documented process. The translations should be both central and local in their form, and the importance of process owners at all levels is described as a key for success
9. Inactivation	Organizational activities related to an adopted virus either decrease or are discontinued. The reports do not mention discontinued ideas and avoid any kind of criticism about the corporation. The communication departments must have all got the message that everything in the report about the past, present, and future should be positive
10. Reactivation	An adopted but dormant idea is “turned on” again, and organizational activities connected to the idea increase. Sustainability-based leadership, value-based leadership, and trust-based leadership are mentioned as reactivated mature processes

The annual reports from 30 of the largest corporations studied (among a total of 60 selected) from the Scandinavian countries confirm the idea handling processes derived from the theoretical discussion of the foundation of the chapter. The ideas come to the top management group from internal and external sources. The external sources might be personal knowledge or collective knowledge. Sustainability and digitalization are described as a must. At the same time, trust, transparency, and values depend upon practice, risk, and strengths and weaknesses. The annual reports about ideas hitting 41 of 60 corporations at the same time form their way to better value creation and modernity. There were not reported any disagreements on the ideas or their implementation. We conclude that ideas are hitting organizations simultaneously, and that the ideas transform businesses or the ideas of businesses. The businesses are different, but their ideas are very similar. We do not know how important the ideas are for value creation in practice or if they are only paintings of a wished modernity.

For example, in two of the companies where interviews were conducted, the virus ideas worked like mission statements giving meaning and belief to work as a spiritual business soul of belonging to modernity

and the future. The virus ideas seemed to work like directions along which to look for meaning, belonging, and modernity. By the virus perspective adopted, we seek to explain the spread, we do not propose any illnesses per se.

2.5.1 *Reflection*

The first sentence of Leo Tolstoy's novel *Anna Karenina* is: "Happy families are all alike; every unhappy family is unhappy in its own way" (1877, p. 1). Here Tolstoy means that for a family to be happy, several vital aspects must be given (such as good health of all family members, acceptable financial security, and mutual affection and values). The happy corporations are all alike sharing key travelling ideas giving good health (i.e., modernity), financial security, and mutual virus processes, including local virus variants. In other words: happy corporations share a standard set of ideas and attributes which lead to happiness, while any of a variety of ideas and attributes can cause an unhappy corporate family. The concept might be transferred to public institutions and different societal frameworks.

The world of ideas has many authors from the field of Philosophy, and we might add that Aristotle states the same principle in the *Nicomachean Ethics* (Ross 2009, p. 103):

Again. It is possible to fail in many ways, while to succeed is only possible in one way (for which reason also one is easy and the other difficult – to miss the mark easy, to hit it difficult); for these reasons also, then, excess and defect are characteristic of vice, and the mean of virtue; For men are good in but one way, but bad in many.

It seems the corporate annual reports are good in but one way, and the corporations choose to report the same travelling ideas since it is possible to fail in many ways. We may speculate: To succeed is only possible in choosing the same ideas and spreading the ideas as variants of the same virus. That said, the image of modernity through global buzzwords might also be a self-betrayal. Most businesses would probably benefit more from critical reflections and learning from their own culture and history including how ideas actually spread.

2.6 DISCUSSION OF HYPOTHESES

In this chapter, we set out to challenge what is labelled fashion theory of the ways management ideas spread in some large corporations by instead drawing on a virus-theory informed perspective. We based the eight hypotheses previously presented on the virus theoretical foundation, and we will now discuss and reflect on the hypotheses compared with our qualitative empirical data from the Telenor and Telia case.

H1: It is probable that Telia and Telenor initially is an active part, which also involves local “actorhood” i.e., leadership actors who actively translate and transform the travelling idea.

The extended leadership groups in Telia and Telenor actively supported the ideas of globalization, digitalization, sustainability, virtual teams, and value-based leadership as parts of the corporation’s strategy. In contrast, trust-based leadership, transparency, and online workplace and working from home are actively supported by the trade unions and the employees. There were top-down support and bottom-up support of travelling ideas and dynamic top-down and bottom-up support. The travelling ideas translated and transformed into the context and culture of Telia and Telenor. The dynamic Scandinavian model incorporated the trade union’s view of utilizing the travelling ideas and combined the ideas with the top management selection of ideas. In the winter and spring of 2021, during Covid-19, both corporations and the trade unions strengthened the demand for flexible work at home or in-house at the corporations. In Scandinavia, Telenor and Telia have performed excellently with nearly 100% digital work from home, and in the future, the corporations are opening up for 60% work from home and 40% at work (in corporate offices, etc.). Telenor and Telia have translated the Covid-19 situation into a win-win situation translating the ideas into a new Scandinavian practice waiting for a translation into global practice.

H2: When the travelling idea meets Telia and Telenor, it will trigger one or several forms of defence mechanisms.

There were defence mechanisms both in the extended leadership group and among the employees. The employees did not support digitalization, virtual teams, and globalization, and the leadership group did not

support trust-based leadership and value-based leadership. The practice of work during COVID-19 increased the support for handling work both from the workplace and from any distance. The defence mechanism met with the Scandinavian trust of not reducing the number of employees or imposing early retirements.

H3: The idea will materialize into changes within Telia and Telenor. These changes will be following how the concept describes in practice and theory.

As once said, to know an organization, we have to change the organization. A theoretical description of the ideas had no meaning neither for the employees nor for the leadership group. The COVID-19 changed the way Telia and Telenor worked without any script or theory behind the changes. The hypothesis is not supported since it is not the way the concept was described that direct action. The changes in Telia and Telenor did not follow any theory but were practically based.

H4: An intensive initial campaign within Telia and Telenor will quickly result before changes in line with the travelling ideas are noticed.

The leadership group might launch several ideas either as strategic choices or as workout plans. However, the employees might look upon the ideas as travelling consulting ideas without content (“bend over here, the consulting ideas come again”). The initial campaign in Telenor and Telia was well-planned cooperation between the leadership group and the trade unions agreeing on an initial campaign. The cooperation model made Telia and Telenor change fast, and any ideas were easily reflected and accepted as the number of employees and the salary rate were not threatened.

H5: The travelling idea will in local versions at Telia and Telenor in some or several aspects differ from how the concept describes in theory.

The local version will not be a theory or concept but an acceptance that digitalization, sustainability, and globalization did not threaten jobs, but

created new opportunities. Value-based leadership and trust-based leadership guarantee a just and acceptable working situation. The COVID-19 proved the success of working from home, and both Telia and Telenor adopted a model with up to 100% home or distance work, which were changed to a plan for the possibility of 60/40 home/at work “after Covid-19”. The trade-off between the need for profitability and employee involvement and engagement builds into trust-based leadership.

H6: In the longitudinal story describing process management within Telia and Telenor, there will be an alternation between active and inactive states.

One-third of the employees was regarded as very actively involved in the ideas and in practicing them. One-third was active in practicing them, and one third was neither active nor involved in the theory of the concept nor the practice of travelling ideas. There were thus active participants and not active participants. The intensity of the virus and the numbers affected will depend upon the participation rate.

H7: The virus buzz words tend to give meaning for the leaders, managers, and employees as a spiritual star or soul for the corporation.

In Telia and Telenor, the virus worked like mission statements giving meaning and beliefs to work as a spiritual business soul of belonging to modernity and the future. The virus worked like directions along which to look for meaning and belonging. The ideas can be regarded as strange, working towards an idealized modernity or belonging to the future. The employees believed in or accepted the ideas of digitalization and globalization. Telia and Telenor are selling telecommunication offerings, and they practice the road they are selling. The Norwegian author Knausgård (2020, p. 197) writes in his latest novel:

Mysticism in the working life has come to stay. Mysticism contributes in an age where everything is explained, given, numbered, measured and counted. Mysticism gives spiritual meaning and might be the star and inner soul we always have been looking for.

The hypothesis *H7* can never be proven and will have to be rejected. Anyhow, we might have come to a time where the mysticism of the travelling ideas is the soul of modernity, we as leaders and employees want to belong to a form of community. We need a dream and hope. The travelling ideas coming to us like a virus, including local variants, might be the dream and the hope. They might also be the same old shit. Bend over, here it comes again. Still, according to Telia and Telenor, their experience of ideas or mysticism in their company organizing gave hope and a dream not only for a corporate world but for a better world.

H8: There is a need for somebody saying that this is only bullshit giving no meaning.

The interviewed agreed that it is too easy to develop bullshit, especially when ideas come from external sources, and too many are expecting that all new ideas should be accepted. There are too many ideas about directions along which to look. A bullshit manager might be needed to do what all think. Bend over—here all the bullshit comes again. There is an agreement that there are too many ideas to be evaluated and a need for stability in ideas.

In other words, a bullshit manager is warranted. There are too many travelling ideas, and somebody must take the role like the little boy in H.C. Andersen's story (1837) to say: "The emperor has no clothes". When a leader surrounds himself only with *yes*-men, it often leads to absurd and embarrassing results. It is far better to surround oneself with critical people who are not afraid of raising questions or point out deficiencies as they see them and as they occur.

2.7 CONCLUSIONS

In this chapter, we aimed to shed light on how ideas spread in organizations by use of an alternative theory than the dominant fashion theory. Specifically, we address travelling ideas within leadership and explore empirically if ideas behave like a virus in organizations. We have done this in an essay form, reflecting on the ways the metaphor of virus proliferation fills several gaps that fashion theory did not explain.

- One clear example is the weak demonstration within the fashion theory of what happens within an organization after an idea has “travelled in” (David & Strang, 2006; Scarbrough & Swan, 2001).
- Another example is the simplified adoption–rejection dichotomy. The virus-inspired theory identifies more possible processes in the idea-handling process, leading to various outputs.

Our study’s significant contribution is that the theorizing has been exploratively tested against real-life data. The findings support that the virus metaphor can help us identify and understand idea-handling processes in greater details with much more sophistication than the fashion theory. The description entails which ideas are the travelling ones, and insights on how ideas are implemented, accepted, rejected, or reactivated. Even if the richness might be more extensive, we have analysed concrete ideas and reflected on the rise, fall, and decline of management ideas from the virus perspective. This is not only anticipations but a theoretical discussion. We have identified similar ideas as recurrent organized patterns, here supported by research evidence from two large corporations. By that, we have given a theoretical and practical contribution to using the virus theory as an alternative to the fashion and bandwagon theory.

We also looked into the most significant 20 corporations in each of the Scandinavian countries. The findings demonstrated how nearly all large corporations are influenced by the same travelling ideas, however, by different local virus variants, and how these viruses and virus variants are spread through the corporations. We found that most Scandinavian corporations had worked with the following ideas (in 2020):

Globalization, Digitalization, Sustainability, Virtual teams, Trust-based leadership, Value-based leadership, Project management agility, Flexible workplaces, Transparency

Trust-based leadership, value-based leadership, and transparency were the most challenging ideas to adopt and spread. We do not know if the corporations have adopted and implemented these ideas, but they mention them as a guiding star for their businesses.

The case interviews demonstrated the influence and development of travelling ideas in single corporations. Telia and Telenor worked with the same ideas as all the corporations in Scandinavia. The corporations did follow our proposed cycles for adopting a virus and for spreading the

variants of the virus. Telia and Telenor's dynamic cooperation between the leadership and trade unions made it possibly simpler to work with transparency, trust-based leadership, value-based leadership, and transparency. The whole organization's dynamic cooperation opened up for working with and including travelling business ideas like a virus through the whole organization. The most exciting hypothesis regarding ideas as a part of mysticism gave Telia and Telenor a meaningful soul of modernity and meaningfulness was accepted.

Eventually, we would like to clarify that by using the virus as a metaphor for idea-handling processes, we propose by no means that management ideas are excessively pathologic. Indeed, numerous studies of the biosphere suggest that micro-organisms "rule in the world" through dynamic processes with varieties of impact. Furthermore, any correspondence between viral features and idea-handling is constructed and not just found (see Chapter 3). In conclusion, we will stress that the organizations we have had the privilege to study are well-functioning in several respects. We see the viral features as a metaphor for a complicated process and not as a normative statement of any kind.

2.7.1 *Limitations and Further Research*

We may see this as a sign that the area we study, i.e., travelling ideas and their influence on organizations, is perhaps not as significant as we may tend to believe. The truth may be that organizations contain so much accumulated wisdom and knowledge inherited from past generations to make everything else a superficial veneer.

Alternatively, it may take longer time to spread essential management ideas from the abstract into more concrete activities in and between the established corporations, for example, incorporating deep ecological conceptions into the organized value-creation. In fact, concerning the process of working with travelling ideas, we know very little about how the ideas are integrated at different layers in an organization, including in what ways corporate practices transform the ideas into daily routines and work processes.

Furthermore, the concept of sustainability, transparency, trust-based leadership, and value-based leadership are examples of how corporations support the idea but might do something completely different in practice. The mutation process may help explain how an organization can assert that it is working by following a specific idea but doing something that

appears different. The corporations tend to tell another story than they are practicing. Ideas may also become dormant or fail to connect, their time has not yet “come”. Ideas often need to be reactivated (Jevnaker, 1993), pointing to both time and processual aspects for spreading ideas (see Chapter 6). On this background, we suggest the relation between entrenchment and translation in idea-handling processes as one particular area towards which future research should be directed.

Acknowledgements In this chapter, we draw on our previous conference paper to European Conference on Knowledge Management (Jevnaker & Olaisen, 2021) and a longer science-of-ideas anthology chapter (Jevnaker & Olaisen, 2022), as well as our shorter popular science articles (in BI Business Review and BI Leadership Magazine). Extended rewriting and discussions with other researchers helped clarify the present chapter.

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Possibilities and Missing Links in Management Research: What We Do Not Know That We Know

Abstract The purpose of this chapter is to address possibilities and missing links by looking into some contemporary knowledge management research. For this aim we analyse and compare all the papers in the proceedings of *European Conference on Knowledge Management (ECKM)* in Barcelona (2017), Padua (2018), Lisbon (2019), and the digital conference in 2020. The approach uses a philosophy of science framework and compares this to the content of the research papers. We will discuss the findings in four representations of knowledge, two typologies of concepts, and four paradigmatic classifications to open up for creative future explorations in knowledge management research. The results indicate a conference based upon as-is knowledge and less upon new and often unsolvable problems. There are however more critical and green papers in the 2020 conference opening up for new perspectives in the choice of methodology, problems, and knowledge.

Keywords Paradigms · Concepts · Perspectives · Knowledge creation · Knowledge accumulation · Research domain

3.1 INTRODUCTION

Tornebohm (1983) conceives social science as a sequence of partly cumulative and partly non-cumulative transformations of knowledge (K), problems (P), and instruments (I). This science philosopher argued that if the sciences and social sciences are going to progress, there has to be a balance between K, P, and I. An overemphasis on any of them will hinder a free scientific discourse and, by that, the development of any scientific field.

For instance, a central notion from the compound (K1, P1, I 1) to (K2, P1, I2) occurs when the problems P1 are solved to increase the stock of knowledge from K1 to K2. In the problem-solving process, new instruments may be developed or borrowed from other disciplines, at this moment changing I1 to I2. If one of the three aspects is allowed to dominate the other two, the discipline becomes less relevant.

Overemphasis on knowledge (called “knowledge-itis”) may result in empirically empty structures irrelevant to the problems. Empty content structures are the case discussed for business school research in general (Van de Ven, 2007; Olaisen & Revang, 2017), if researchers are producing more and “better” research than ever, but the practical business world finds the study results less relevant than ever. Preoccupation with problems (“problem-itis”) may mean shallow pragmatism and conceptual malnutrition.

Finally, too much attention to instruments (“instrument-itis”) may erode the substantive core. Where much of the focus of the studies is how to practice the research methodology in itself, the researchers end up testing themselves if they can master the instruments and not the theories. Tornebohm (1983) identifies these imbalances in the researcher’s orientation as lacking commonly agreed-upon perspectives and something less than social science and something more than fiction. Kuhn identifies it as a pre-scientific situation where any discipline might remain until the discipline dies or advances a new paradigm. The initial KPI maps the aspect of interest (in this case, feature of knowledge structures or processes). The KPI compound in this process filters through what is called the ‘researchers’ orientation and worldview” or perspectives in Tornebohm’s words (1983) or paradigms in Kuhn’s words (1970) or research domains in Olaisen’s words (1985).

These authors are all referring to the fact that there are alternative ways of approaching the social sciences and, by that also knowledge

management research. The aspects studied are not given once and for all. New knowledge can widen the boundaries (Jevnaker, 2003), as might happen after the broadening of the knowledge management research. Tornebohm's idea is that *pluralism* is needed in any discipline to get an accumulation of knowledge, and if this pluralism is lacking over time, any discipline will erode and be a form of mechanistic puzzle-solving of more and more irrelevant problems. Kuhn (1970) defined this as normal science activities where the scientists agree upon good science reproducing noticeable results in quasi-scientific ways to gain respect within a smaller and smaller circle. The relevance may then be found in other disciplines replacing a discipline over time.

Coming from a broad background (educated as a mathematician and sociologist, working as a social scientist and international peace researcher), Johan Galtung's (1972) idea was to identify four ways of approaching the social sciences in a triangle of theory, data, and values:

- (1) Empiricism—is what we are presenting true or false (if true consonance if false dissonance)
- (2) Criticism—is what we are presenting acceptable or not acceptable (if acceptable consonance if not acceptable dissonance)
- (3) Constructivism—is what we are presenting adequate or inadequate (if adequate consonance if not adequate dissonance)
- (4) Pluralism—a triangulation of empiricism, criticism, and constructivism (if congruence consonance if not congruence dissonance).

According to Galtung (1972), data sentences explain the empirical world by including what they observe and eliminate what they do not see or imagine. Theory-sentences (hypotheses or propositions), on the other hand, define the foreseen world, including aspects that are predicted by the underlying theory. Finally, value sentences refer to the preferred world, including what is accepted and excluding what is rejected. Galtung's idea was that all the social sciences could be analysed according to this framework.

The sociologist Herbert Blumer (1969) argued that research concepts in any social sciences might be divided into definitive concepts and sensitizing concepts. The concepts have an essential role in any scientific inquiry. They are usually the anchor point in the interpretation of findings.

The purpose of the *definitive concept* is to:

Describe-Explain-Predict and Control and Rule (A definitive and objective process). Bunge (1967) named this process “the process of all serious systematic research”.

The *sensitizing concepts* have another purpose:

Describe-Explore-Reflect-Participate and Change (A subjective and relative process). Glaser and Strauss (1967) named this process “Grounded-theory-research”.

Olaisen (1985) divided any kind of knowledge into four types of knowledge:

- (1) What we know defining
- (2) What we do not know implying
- (3) What we do not know that we know as a part of
- (4) What we do not know that we do not know.

According to Olaisen’s framing, to get a scientific, intuitive, and creative movement between these four types of knowledge represents the essence of representable and non-representable knowing modes in any science and social science. Acknowledging interwoven implicit or tacit knowing in all complex knowledge work, Jevnaker (1993, 2014) points to aspects rather than “types” of knowledge (see Chapter 8).

Olaisen (1985) divided the social sciences into four paradigms in a quadrate of harmony versus conflict and objectivity versus subjectivity:

- (1) The empirical objective-oriented, or better, empirical variance paradigm (e.g. cause-and-effect research)
- (2) The materialistic political paradigm (e.g. parts of history research)
- (3) The clarified subjective paradigm (e.g. experience-based qualitative research)
- (4) The action paradigm (varieties of action-oriented research).

According to Olaisen, any social science paper could be placed within these four paradigms.

3.2 METHODOLOGY

This chapter aims to analyse and compare all the papers in the proceedings of European Conference on knowledge management (ECKM) in 2017, 2018, 2019, and 2020. A total of 430 double-blind reviewed academic

papers within a framework of 5000 words for each paper. The approach uses a philosophy of science framework and compares this to the content of the research papers.

We have used five philosophy of science frameworks to analyse all the papers:

- (1) Tornebohm's knowledge, problem, and instrument description (1983)
- (2) Galtung's scientific perspective triangle (1972)
- (3) Olaisen's four kinds of knowledge identification (1985)
- (4) Blumer's two kinds of scientific concepts (1969)
- (5) Olaisen's four kinds of paradigms identification (1985).

This chapter has combined frameworks (4) and (5) into a pluralistic proposal for future progress for knowledge management research. To our knowledge, the present study is the first time Galtung's and Tornebohm's approaches are used analysing international conference papers from a research discipline.

Each paper has been classified according to:

- (1) Problem
- (2) Methodology
- (3) Theoretical foundation
- (4) Propositions or hypotheses
- (5) Analyse
- (6) Discussion of results
- (7) Conclusions
- (8) Theoretical and practical implications.

The aim was a critical-constructive exploration, thus being broadly and deeply familiar with the ECKM conferences was essential. Both authors participated in at least three of the recent annual conferences and one of us had long experience with the ECKM research papers. For each academic paper, a decision has been made for each of the five frameworks according to which format the paper fits within. The decision is based upon the reading of the paper (conducted by one of the authors, who participated in ECKM over this period). For two-thirds of the papers, the decision of placing them into a category was clear. For one-third of

the papers, the experienced researcher had to make a subjective decision for which category to place them within. The decision is based upon our study notes from each paper, and if in doubt, rereading of the paper. Our analytical writing from preliminary identified aspects of this study was also presented and debated at the ECKM conferences (Olaisen & Jevnaker, 2020, 2021).

3.3 FINDINGS ON KNOWLEDGE-ITIS, INSTRUMENT-ITIS, AND PROBLEM-ITIS

The papers are suffering from “instrument-itis” and to some extent from “knowledge-it is”, but they are indeed not suffering from “problem-it is”. Problem-oriented research is demanding and requires systematic and logical argumentation (Lawrence, 1992). Problem-orientated research might be a weakness for knowledge management researchers. The researchers do the statistical tests well, and the researchers present the data in “nice” total packages as a form of scholarly truth. However, very few results conflict with existing results or anything. 2 of 3 hypotheses are found to be correct, and 1 of 3 hypotheses is incorrect.

There are many similar hypotheses/propositions (54%) in papers dealing with knowledge sharing and knowledge management, while 61% reach the same result and 39% reach a different result for similar propositions and hypotheses. The Popperian falsification process (1973) is used for both explicit and tacit knowledge-based processes even if 82% in 2017, 84% in 2018, 83% in 2019, and 68% of the papers in 2020 do not make any such distinctions. Two-thirds of the papers lack a definition of knowledge, information, management, leadership, or the situations these concepts are used within.

The lack of definitions presents a kind of storytelling where a story exemplified with statistics is told. This resonates with what Kuhn (1970) defined as a pre-scientific situation where anything might be equal in importance or what Popper (1968) described as the situation for psychology as a field. Kuhn (1970) called this “something less than research”. The lack of deeper attention to problem-itis makes it challenging to make progress and accumulate knowledge (see e.g., Nonaka & Takeuchi, 1995).

More than 60% of the papers write about the need for new ways of knowledge leadership, knowledge management, and knowledge organizing. The papers, however, are centred around traditional leadership,

management, and organization issues. The papers' label and marketing are proposing new ways of leadership, management, and organizing, but they do neither define the situation today than the situation tomorrow, nor how we will take us for tomorrow. The papers' problems are centred around solvable matters and very seldom if anytime, related to unsolvable problems. We define such "instrument-itis" and "knowledge-itis" in knowledge management research as a misdirecting striving for respectability. Forty of 430 papers (9.3%) discuss our ecological systems' problems and what we need to do to solve the climate crisis through sustainable businesses. These green ecological papers ask several questions they cannot answer and are all conceptual papers without any empirical basis. The 2020 conference doubled the number of such papers and increased the conference's relevance for our actual and future business situation.

3.4 THE ASPECTS OF THE WORLD STUDIED

We are making a distinction between four areas of knowledge in management research: "What we know" (1), "What we know that we don't know" (2) and "What we don't know that we know (3) and What we don't know that we don't know" (4). Area (1) will define the area (2), while there will be a misinterpretation and bias towards the area (3) and area (4) (see Fig. 3.1).

Will imagination and intuition be necessary for the creativity needed to make a scientific movement in knowledge management in zone 3 and 4? If we expand only into area two, it will be somewhat limited knowledge research emphasizing instruments and knowledge while the problems will be defined by what we know.

Fig. 3.1 Knowledge representations (Olaisen, 1985)

(1) WHAT WE KNOW	(4) WHAT WE DON'T KNOW THAT WE DON'T KNOW
(2) WHAT WE DON'T KNOW	
(3) WHAT WE DON'T KNOW THAT WE KNOW	

If we want to move between area one and two, the logical, empirical studies (“secure and clean studies”) will be ideal, but the source of bias and misinterpretations start as soon as we move into what we do not know anything experienced. We will here begin to involve imagination and intuition. Experience-based intuition is the start point of any essential research effort, while the movement from area one to area two is only instrumental puzzle-solving, most often without any knowledge accumulation (Mintzberg, 1979; Morgan, 1980). The way to improve our technique is not to attempt to analyse things into their elements, reduce them to measure and determine functional relations, and educate and train our intuitive powers (Knight, 1936). If our role is only to produce some publishable or travelable research, then we are reduced to mechanic puzzle-solving, demonstrating that we can master the techniques we were learning in our Ph.Ds. Between 80 and 90% of the research papers represent this kind of mechanic puzzle solving (Morgan, 1980). We are sending out a questionnaire to a large sample getting a response rate of 5–20% applying statistics and getting a classification of research results in nice tables, diagrams, and figures, getting more of the same trivial already known knowledge. The 2020 papers are slightly more based upon qualitative in-depth interviews, constructed datasets from several studies, and theoretical foundations.

3.5 SCIENTIFIC ORIENTATIONS

Recall that according to Galtung (1972), data sentences explain the empirical world by including what is observed and excluding what is non-observed. Theory-sentences (hypotheses or propositions), on the other hand, define the *foreseen* world, including aspects that are predicted by the underlying theory. Finally, value sentences refer to the preferred world, including what is accepted and excluding what is rejected. Most of the papers (65%) in 2017, 63% in 2018, 61% in 2019, and 52% in 2020 do not develop hypotheses but only describe the theory’s findings without concluding them into hypotheses for testing (Bunge, 1967). We have synthesized Galtung’s social science thinking in Fig. 3.2.

However, the research studied tends to compare data sentences with theory sentences without using Popper’s falsification principle (Popper, 1968). *Dissonance* does not produce new theory sentences, while a *consonance* occurs in noting that the research results are in line with mainstream knowledge management research. Criticism is the type of scientific

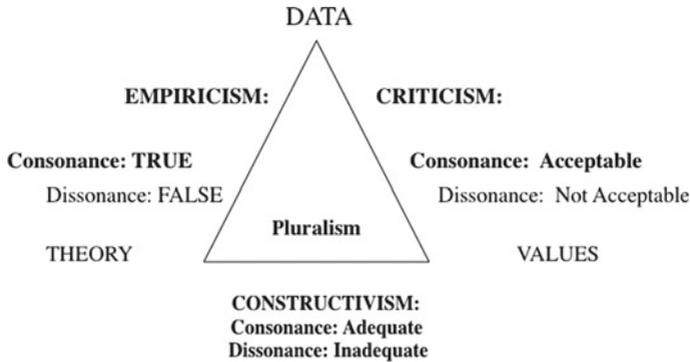


Fig. 3.2 Empiricism, criticism, and constructivism

activity where data sentences are confronted with value sentences. By the tenets of this orientation, consonance is created by producing new data sentences by changing reality into an acceptable condition. Criticism is not a large part of the ECKM 2017, 2018, 2019, and 2020 papers (15% versus 16% versus 18% versus 23%). The trend is towards more criticism-based papers. Criticism is needed through values, speculations, and ad hoc methods to advance a field even if the validity and reliability are low.

Constructivism implies comparing theory sentences with value sentences to see to what extent the foreseen world is also the preferred world. Consonance refers to what is adequate and dissonance to what is inadequate. In dissonance, theory and value sentences are about equal in priority, and both might be changed in knowledge management research. Constructivism represents 20% of the papers, increasing from 15% in 2017 to 25% in 2020. The business reality is today complex and global. A combination of the understanding of both holisms and atomisms is needed in a good research strategy (Mintzberg, 1979) and actionable puzzle solving (Morgan, 1980). Imagination and intuition are required for this process (Bunge, 1967; Alvesson & Skolberg, 2009), but the intuitive powers seem to be less trained among the ECKM researchers.

Intuition, imagination, and creativity are needed to handle a high degree of complexity like scenarios for the business future or the green environmental future. Such complex scenarios are only handled in 31 of the papers (7%), where both criticism and constructivism are handled simultaneously to develop what is acceptable and not acceptable for the

society going on with what is further adequate and inadequate for the businesses.

The distinction between what is acceptable and what is *adequate* might, as a result, give us a greener, more innovative, and safer world where businesses and societies cooperate. The paradigmatic perspective change results in more subjective and actionable research for a better future, missed in the ECKM 2017, 2018, and 2019 papers while increasing in the 2020 papers. Also missed is what kind of leadership will take us into a more responsible, sustainable world. The knowledge management papers tend to represent the status quo. We have to ask the question of what is acceptable and what is not acceptable. We have to construct our data for this purpose since data in itself does not prove anything. It is our argumentation that can help prove something. We need constructivism, where we ask what is adequate and what is inadequate for a sustainable future.

3.6 THE DYNAMICS OF PARADIGMS

The essence of Kuhn's position (1970) is that paradigms serve a normative and conserving function. When a standard prevails in a discipline, "normal" science practice evolves as the puzzle-solving activity. During normal science, the scientific community works under the assumption that "it knows what the world is like» and is prepared to defend this assumption "at any cost". (Kuhn, 1970, p. 5). Very often, normal science suppresses "major novelties, conceptual or phenomenal" (Kuhn, 1970, p. 36). Thus, scientists are only preoccupied with solving problems/puzzles according to accepted specific rules according to the traditional viewpoint or preconception. With such anomalies built up and scientists losing faith, the field enters the crisis stage.

Kuhn writes that "there can be a sort of scientific research without paradigms, schools, perspectives"... (1970, p. 11), in such research "... though the field's practitioners were scientists, the new findings of their activity were something less than science or social science" (1970, p. 13). He further notes that "... every individual researcher starts over again from the beginning" (1970, p. 13), that some competing schools are directing their publications where they may be published, and a continued discussion over the same fundamentals and no scientific progress is made at all" (1970, p. 159).

We may sum up Kuhn (1970) in this way:

1. Only readily available facts are collected.
2. At this stage, all facts seem equally relevant.
3. The instruments are overemphasized and often presented in “quasi-fanciful” ways to get “false” respect.

If we look at knowledge management research at ECKM, we conclude that this is the situation for more than 80% of the papers. The 2020 papers were more scientific than 2017, 2018, and 2019 papers—71% versus 83%. There is in 2020 progress in making knowledge management more scientific and robust. We found that Kuhn’s description fit the situation in knowledge management research well. It looks like every researcher starts over again from the beginning with easily collected survey, and case data are assembled and presented in fancy scientific ways. The papers in 2020 (21%) on sustainable businesses, greener businesses/societies, and the future of knowledge work represent a positive change.

There is a potential Matthew effect (Merton, 1968) in young scholars’ work—those who do it the most accepted way shall get more, and those who do not do it the accepted way shall not be published or getting tenure. Most researchers in knowledge research are trained in Ph.D. programmes with an emphasis on empirical studies. They know that to get papers accepted, they must follow the “correct” researchers, have a representative sample, and use a proper statistical package to prove their results and end up with decent results or a proposal for another knowledge framework. The papers in 2020 on sustainability, gender equality, and new professional working opened perhaps for a new generation of critical business and societal researchers at ECKM.

3.7 ALTERNATIVE CONCEPTS

The concepts have an essential role in any scientific inquiry. They are usually the anchor point in the interpretation of findings (Blumer, 1969; Baugh, 1990). The concepts are the glasses we have used since we got our Ph.Ds. We discuss two different worlds of ideas. The definitive concept is based on empirical data or “evidence” and often searches for causal relationships.

The more definitive concepts are linked to “what we know” and “what we know that we do not know”, while the more sensitizing concepts will be related to “what do not know that we know” and “what we do not know that we do not know”. Sensitizing concepts will advise where to look and will set up and compare alternative views. They will indicate more relationships, and they will be dependent on inductive research methods and precise descriptions. Definitive concepts represent deductive quantitative research methods. For induction, the sample of 0 (imagined sample) or one might be good enough, while deduction requires large samples. Induction is closeness, while deduction is distance. Induction is participation and involvement, while we do not interfere at any price. Induction might be exploring, and actionable while deduction might be explaining without action.

In knowledge management studies, the definitive concepts are taking over the ground of the sensitizing concepts. Taking all the papers and dividing them into one of these ideas, around 65% of the studies rely on definitive deductive theories while 35% rely on inductive sensitizing concepts. In the ECKM 2020, about 55% rely upon definitive concepts while 45% rely upon inductive sensitizing concepts. The induction process is described as “directions along which to look and use intuition and curiosity” instead of facts or data is less used. Intellectual curiosity might be the path to choose for creative scholars. The papers are becoming more inductive and sensitizing in the 2020 conference than the 2017, 2018, and 2019 conferences.

3.8 ALTERNATIVE RESEARCH PARADIGMS

It is here proposed to analyse knowledge management research to become more conscious of multiple perspectives, for example, according to the four main groups of perspectives in Fig. 3.3.

These alternative realities are different meta-theoretical assumptions about the nature of social science. The “empirical variance” paradigm is based on fixed entities with varying attributes. Its explanatory power consists of establishing causal relations between variables (see Van de Ven, 2007). The knowledge systems and the knowledge technology relations have a concrete, actual existence and systematic character producing quantitative and qualitative findings according to the need for the societies and businesses. The business world is considered primarily conflict-free and harmonious at a higher level of aggregation. 50% of the studies

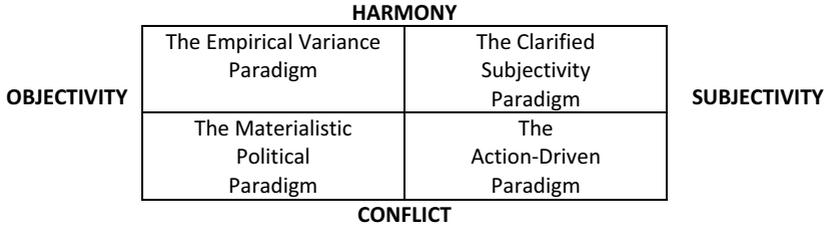


Fig. 3.3 Research paradigms

in 2018 versus 45% of the 2019 papers belong here compared to 38% in 2020. However, note that objectivity does not exist any longer in the past, “neutral” sense. Observations in all research are affected by pre-suppositions, which can be mistaken. The trend in the papers analysed is towards fewer empirical variance papers.

The “materialistic political” paradigm where physical events and behaviour are the surface manifestations of underlying mechanisms. The materialistic paradigm relies on the assumption of predictable uniformities in the knowledge systems. The world of knowledge systems exchanges is defined by concrete, measurable, ontologically fundamental structures, and the interdependencies in knowledge systems. 20% of the studies in 2018 are here versus 21% in the 2019 conference and 16% in 2020.

The “clarified subjectivity” paradigm (see Chapter 8) holds social reality is interpreted through the individuals and organizations’ subjective and inter-subjective experiences (Berger & Luckmann, 1966). According to this paradigm, knowledge behaviour must be understood from the employees’ experiences and organization’s viewpoints and practices. We can only get such understanding by direct, give-and-take interaction with the employees and managers, as well as observing activities in organizations. We can, of course, get in surveys as questionnaires, but then we are defining the questions and the business situation. 25% of the studies in 2018 are here versus 27% of the 2019 studies and 32% of the 2020 studies. The “action-driven” paradigm (5% of the studies in 2018 and 7% of the studies in 2019 compared to 14% in the 2020 studies) also assumes that what passes for reality is socially determined. The move towards experience-based clarified subjective paradigms and action-based paradigms in 2020 is significant.

The role of knowledge research is to identify the stakeholders in the systems, their goals, interests, and power bases to describe the conflicts and contradictions of the knowledge systems and also show how to move towards responsible emancipation including, for instance, working distributed, smarter or greener. A more sensitizing complex knowledge concept along subjectively and intersubjectivity chosen directions demands another kind of research paradigm (see Fig. 3.3). Knowledge management researchers inspired by the action paradigm are concerned with discovering how individuals can link thought and action as a means of transcending their alienation. The papers often analyse the situation where the author is a consultant, owner, or employee. The relationship to the investigated firm is close, so self-reflection is essential. The results are own experiences, knowledge, and attitudes from the actual situation resulting in practical and theoretical recommendations.

3.9 CONCLUSIVE REMARKS

There are some methodology movements towards phenomenon research in leadership and organization studies, taking research out of the iron jacket into a flexible and soft jacket opening for alternative realities (Doh, 2015; Schwartz & Stensaker, 2014; von Krogh et al., 2012). The movements are towards action-based and experience-based orientations (which include process-, and practice-based views) to grasp sustainability, gender equality, and new professional working forms.

The action-driven and the experience-based research orientations represent a different degree of complexity and subjectivity. They represent both harmony and conflict. Various levels of complexity require different research approaches; pluralism is demanded to catch different aspects of reality. Subjectivism is necessary to capture complexity, but it can still be systematic and logically rigid (Olaisen & Jevnaker, 2021).

Consequently, we need to cooperate with businesses and society to gain deeper insights into the ways sustainable societies and businesses are supporting or hindering greener, more thoughtful, and safer solutions. A more open-ended and engaged knowledge management research field is called for to understand the potentially sustainable businesses replacing traditional businesses (Jevnaker & Olaisen, 2021, 2022). We also need to continue debating the unobserved as well as competing theorizing orientations.

Pluralistic orientations can be rewarding but demanding. The definitive concepts represent a small degree of subjectivity (i.e., the high degree of objectivity, if possible), while the sensitizing concepts express a high degree of subjectivity as well as intersubjectivity (e.g. Husserl, 1973 [1939]; Berger & Luckmann, 1966). Future researchers thus need to learn to use sensitizing concepts coupled with actionable definitive ideas.

In the knowledge research reality both sustainability and climate conflicts entail local and global complexities with many known and unknown knows. In conclusion, to understand more of reimagination and green sustainability thinking in this emergent context, we have to critically explore and reflect upon our investigations for theory building (Eisenhardt & Grabner, 2007).

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PART II

Looking for Productive Practices in Real-Life
Organization



Management as Power and Politics in Projects

Abstract In this chapter, we explore what impact do micropolitics and power have upon the conduct of project management in an organization? Drawing on interviews with project managers of four oil and gas firms, we discuss how the informal power and micropolitics played a massive role in the projects, and personal and relational knowledge appeared to achieve the expected project results. Power and micropolitics were regarded as necessary skills and tools for a successful project manager. A democratic and consensus-oriented culture opens for power games and micropolitics rather than hedging them. Compared to more hierarchical organizations, informal micropolitics and power mean a high potential to prolong and complicate decision processes and significantly reduce efficiency. The theoretical implication is a general model for power and micropolitics, while the practical implication understands how crucial informal power and micropolitics are in projects.

Keywords Power · Micropolitics · Project management · Power games · Power model · Influence

4.1 INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, we start by asking: What is the importance and conduct of power and micropolitics in project management? Scandinavia has a corporate culture for consensus and compromises fostering micropolitics and power. Power and politics may, however, be considered a non-issue in Scandinavian project management. This peculiarity is that Scandinavian organizations' image is democratic and equal, involving all employees (Olaisen & Revang, 2017a). Project management is the temporary leadership of teams and the management of working groups compared to more permanent organizational forms. To succeed in project management, you need both to deliver the results and be reappointed by your peers for new projects. The project manager role fosters micropolitics and power in the role intentions and experiences even if not included in any of the four investigated companies' role descriptions. The rules of the project process are learned on the road as streetwise project tools and attitudes and by that as critical success factors (Olaisen & Revang, 2018).

There is a knowledge gap in project management between what we know and what we do not know about the function of micropolitics and power. Micropolitics and power represent what we formally do not know. Everybody, however, sees the importance of handling micropolitics and power, and we may then say our problem represents what we do not know that we know. The practical usefulness of micropolitics and power for project management is evident, and the theoretical need for knowledge about the concepts is thus also overdue. We have as a theoretical contribution proposed a general model for power and micropolitics in organizations.

The methodological approach has been to do a survey study to start interviewing twelve project managers in four Norwegian hydro, oil, and gas companies. All the companies practice project management throughout the whole organization. We got access to twelve project managers, each of them handling projects averaging one billion NOK (0.5–2 billion NOK).

The results showed that formal and informal micropolitics and power are used actively in all projects. A project manager must handle the balance of leadership and management and the skills of handling micropolitics and power. The rhetoric of convincing stakeholders and project members and the use of power and politics are as needed as the professional skills. We may rather say it is a requirement for a project leader that

power and politics are included in his or her knowledge, experiences, and attitudes as well as relationships and work practices with others (Olaisen & Jevnaker, 2021, see Chapter 1).

The combination of formal power and informal power and micropolitics are needed in all projects to meet the time limits and required results. According to their networks, project leaders recruit team and group members, experience and professional and social skills. The employees prefer managers using power and micropolitics since it contributes to their mobility upwards.

The chapter is further organized in a selective literature review, methodology, findings, and conclusion with practical implications, theoretical implications, limitations, and thoughts for further research.

4.2 A SELECTIVE LITERATURE REVIEW

4.2.1 *The Game Concept*

Crozier and Friedberg (1979) assume that formal structures will never sufficiently describe or predict individuals' behaviour in an organization. The behaviour runs in contradiction to traditional theoretical approaches. Assuming that an organization can only be successful by its individuals' combined activities, Crozier and Friedberg's thesis implies that an organization's success is finally not dependent on structures, processes, and procedures. As professional as it might be, this framework always has uncertainties, which individuals will use for their interests. Each actor's primary goal is to increase his/her control over uncertainty areas, i.e., to become less controllable or predictable. In other words, each actor seeks to accumulate power over others to push through his agenda, which can but must not be in line with the organization's goals (Kieser & Walgenbach, 2007, p. 57). Two fundamental thoughts are hedging the process:

The game's essential rule is that no actor seeks to destroy that he is an integral part of the game. Instead, he must accept a particular organizational framework like a project. The second important parameter is that all actors seek to stay and preferably rise in the organization. The effect of such a structure we do not negate. This ambivalence seems to meet practical experience: a company or a team needs structure, but only partial renunciation of the given framework and the acceptance of uncertainties provide room for change, power, and efficiency (Fischer, 2005, p. 89).

Significantly, this is eminent in project teams, which require a high level of flexibility and whose matrix-organizations have fundamental conflicts of authority built within. So, when looking at power and micropolitics in projects, the thoughts mentioned above describe the team's underlying theory and the surrounding organization. The main question is how an actor can beneficially explore and use uncertainties to extend his/her power in the setting. The extension of power will be reused in new projects and strengthen the use of micropolitics and power in projects. The more agility and flexibility, the more power, and politics.

4.2.2 *Power*

“Power defines and govern all human relations including all organizations” (Foucault, 2005, p. 10). *“Power is the potential to allocate resources and to make and enforce decisions”* (HBSP, 2005, p. xi). *“Power dressed as a cognitive authority deliver all the results you need”* (Olaisen, 1984, p. 47). *“The more bullshit you deal with as a manager the more you need to bend the processes your way”* (Olaisen & Revang, 2017a).

We find Essential insights about how power constitutes itself at French and Raven (1968). The authors state that seven bases of power exist:

- Legitimate which is solely based on role, position, or title
- Coercive power to negatively sanction a behaviour
- Reward power to grant another person what that person desires
- Expert power administers information, knowledge, or expertise
- Information powers based on the potential to utilize the information
- Referent power is often regarded as admiration or charisma of a role model
- Incentive power as bonuses, positions, resources.

Often, several power bases constitute themselves in the same actor, either openly assigned or hidden (Martin, 2003, p. 154). In conjunction with the initial definition, this leads to a differentiation of power into formal and informal sections, further elaborated. However, no transparent allocation can be made since they are mixed. We may add coalition power, network power, and rhetoric communication (Olaisen & Revang, 2017b).

According to Foucault (2005), the relationship power is the crucial power to influence today's knowledge society, and Foucault stresses

the importance of the pipeline relationships on the road to the top. Nonaka and Takeuchi (1995) concluded in their book “The knowledge creating company” that personal and relational knowledge handled through power and politics are the key for managers. Olaisen and Revang (2018) concluded that having a team leader who was also a member of the top management group will secure the transfer of explicit and tacit administrative knowledge needed for resources and decisions. The skills of politics and power are tacit but may become explicit in their consequences.

4.2.3 *Micropolitics*

As per definition, power is a potential that, to be realized, needs forms of expressions (Jevnaker & Raa, 2017). In organizations, power often expresses itself as micropolitics: the ability to change, direct, or influence others’ behaviour without openly ordering or threatening them. In other words, micropolitics describes a way of using formal and informal power to push through its agenda.

In each case, the intended outcome is the same: encouraging other people to do what we want them to do, preferably but not necessarily through the semblance of their own choice (Bosetzky, 1988). Micropolitics might help, but if not, we do what we need to do to achieve decisions and results (Foucault, 2005; Nonaka & Takeuchi, 1995; Olaisen & Revang, 2018). Power and micropolitics in projects are often two sides of the same coin but might also be applied with a Janus face where we see the face and the “revolver”. “Tacit and explicit pressure are used all the time in any relations to get what we want” (Foucault, 2005, p. 129).

4.2.4 *Influence and Persuasion*

Influence and persuasion are two elements of micropolitics: *Influence* is a mechanism through which people use power to change behaviours or attitudes. Influence can produce an effect without the apparent exertion of force, compulsion, or direct command. The strength of one’s influence is generally a function of one or another form of power and others’ level of dependencies. However, to influence others, one must be open to influence from them; the key is understanding what others want or value (HBSP, 2005, p. 43).

Persuasion is a process that enables a person or group to change or reinforce others' attitudes, opinions, or behaviours. It is essential for success in all relationships—personal and business alike. Persuasion has four elements: credibility, an understanding of the audience, rhetoric argumentation, and effective communication (HBSP, 2005, p. 73). Credibility is a cornerstone of persuasion. Influence and persuasion are linked to both cognitive, affective, and emotional reasons (Olaisen, 1984). To know when to show loyalty and when to raise one's voice is a part of persuasion.

4.2.5 *The Proposal of a General Theoretical Model*

By graphically comprising the literature review results, the below model illustrates the principal development from power as a potential in an organizational environment to its micropolitics expression. It must be considered that all borders, although displayed as solid lines, are generally flowing and permeable (Fig. 4.1).

In the subsequent sections, the model is used to analyse the findings of the interviews. By graphically comprising the results of the literature review, it helps to systematically describe actors and their intentions—from top to bottom:

- The position of an actor in his/her organizational environment, his/her area of uncertainty, and his/her general level of power are described based on Crozier & Friedberg's theory.
- The actor's power bases, according to French and Raven (1968), are looked into to get a clearer picture of where his/her strengths come from
- The actor's power is further investigated (Foucault, 2005). How does it constitute itself (formal/informal), and how does he/she apply it?
- What kind of power—the manager is the actor, what motivates him/her when applying power (Nonaka & Takeuchi, 1995)?
- Finally, the kind of micropolitics is elaborated. Does the actor apply power open and directly or indirectly and hidden, what is his/her agenda, how does (s)he influence and persuade (Olaisen, 1984)?

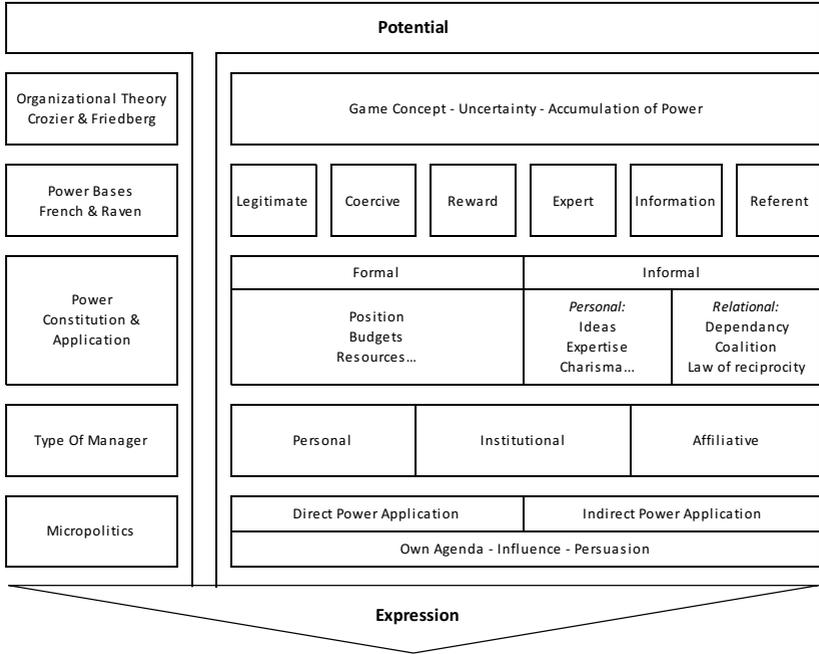


Fig. 4.1 A power and micropolitics model from potential to expression

4.3 STUDY METHODOLOGY

The chapter is an action research-based exploration in an oil and gas project management setting one of us was involved in. To a certain degree, results are subjective; during the interviews, conflicts, and side discussions came up, which reflect the findings and conclusions. The study is an explorative study using sensitizing concepts giving direction along which to look and understand. Olaisen engaged in this exploration together with corporate participants (see below), whereas both authors contributed to the analytical interpretation in this chapter.

4.3.1 *Data Collection*

The results of the literature review form the background for the survey questionnaire. The sequence of nine questions was set up in the following way:

Question 1 seeks to clarify formal/informal power and micropolitics' definitions to proceed from a joint base.

Questions 2 and 3 seek to evaluate the perceived importance of formal power vs. informal power/micropolitics.

Questions 4 and 6 try to determine the interviewee's level of knowledge and ability to handle the subjects. We designed the questions to uncover potential gaps between the rated importance from questions 2 and 3 and our skills.

Questions 5 and 7 seek to evaluate whether the interviewees are happy with their answers to questions 4 and 6 or whether they would like to learn more.

Questions 8 and 9 are phrased as open questions and ask for their own experience.

The questionnaire was sent to 12 project managers in four Norwegian oil and gas companies in November 2017 ($N = 12$). All forms were filled in and returned on time (100% response rate). The analysed answers to the survey questions were the background for the in-depth interviews.

We further made twelve in-depth interviews with twelve project managers ($N = 12$). In all cases, lively discussions were held, and the interviewees acknowledged the subject's general importance. Each 90 min interview expanded the coming interview owing to a better grasp of the concepts and made each interview special and challenging to compare. This qualitative interviewing was inspired by a grounded theory by Glaser and Strauss (1967). In the further analytical work, we also used theory-informed, abductive thematic analysis.

4.4 FINDINGS

4.4.1 *Appearance of Power and Micropolitics in Projects*

As one result, all twelve interviewees agree with the definitions of power, informal power, and micropolitics (Question 1). Nothing is added or changed. Hence, we conclude that a common understanding exists and forms the base when answering the questionnaire's subsequent sections.

In all cases, formal power is rated as necessary for controlling the project (Question 2). In 8 out of 12 cases, informal power and the use of micropolitics are rated as very important, and in 4 cases, they are rated as necessary (Question 3). In general, informal power and micropolitics are deemed more important or at least as necessary as formal power. Our finding is generally in line with the theory; Kotter (2012, p. 181) describes an evaluation of organizations empowering employees, resulting in extended use of the accumulated power. Wong (2007, p. 226) comes to the same conclusion. Also, it leads to the question of what precisely the formal power among project managers represents.

The experience of using informal power and micropolitics ranges from 4 × good and 8 × excellent (Question 4). The 100% confidence in applying informal power and micropolitics is higher than the knowledge level. The knowledge level ranges from poor (3 cases) over good (3 cases) to 6 cases excellent (Question 6). Considering that “People generally distrust and fear power and those who seek it” (HBSP, 2005, p. 14), the results are remarkable as they could be expected to be lower. On the other hand, the interviewees' group consists only of project managers, each with many years of experience. These managers must have had closer contact with the subject than a randomly chosen group of managers. They all seek more competence (Questions 5 and 7 wholly answered with No) and support the conclusion that mastering is of high importance for the perception and project result. The results document both that the knowledge about power and micropolitics is good and that the project managers are ready to use micropolitics and power whenever needed.

We use preciseness together with expert power to overcomplicate things. As all the managers agreed, “It is better to be roughly precise than precisely wrong”. If these experts are contractors, the personal agenda behind it is often to justify their positions and extend working contracts. The project manager must restrictively adopt the practical framework to move his project forward and not end up in theoretical expert exercises that are inefficient. Doing this, (s)he must rely on his/her

knowledge, experience, and skills, constantly making his/her project's target a priority. To do this successfully, (s)he needs to have support from key stakeholders. In all the interviews, the support of key stakeholders is essential for running the project and getting enough resources to handle the project's milestones.

Power must be investigated how far a culture of “democracy and consensus”, is open for power processes and micropolitics in general. The research monograph of Pahlke and Alexander (2009) characterizes Norwegian companies by:

- Flat hierarchies with consensus and harmony
- Low expression of formal power or strong decision-making
- Avoidance of open external conflicts, but allowance of internal conflicts
- Decision processes involve many people, and decisions can permanently be changed.

The findings are entirely in line with the results of interviews in the present study. Accepting that organizations need the power to exist, it can generally be anticipated that its informal counterpart's lack of formal power will be compensated. The more it is unclear who will finally make the call within a considerable team, the more room opens for micropolitics. Consensus-oriented discussions “at the coffee corner” replace open conflict management. The longer the process takes or the more often it changes, the more unclear why decisions are made. These appearances might honourably be called signs of a democratic process. However, a company is, per se, not set up as a democracy. Leaders are neither elected nor is the opinion of the majority finally dominating. Instead, when benchmarked on an international stage, the processes mentioned above are time-consuming (=costly) and create uncertainty for partners and suppliers (see more on how cultures collide in e.g., Lewis, 2018). Both aspects have the potential to damage efficiency and effectiveness seriously.

The issue was described more sharpened by informants as “no badmouthing on my project! All must propose a way forward for success”. Alternatively: “we do behave externally in our project, but we are fighting hard internally” and: “we have to hire communication people for managing the stakeholder politics”. “Handling the politics decide upon

what resources we get” and “We have to use our authority for what it is worth”. All the interviewed supported the use of formal and informal politics and power as essential to handling projects.

Most interestingly, even a new power base was proposed by the interviewees: endurance. It seems to lie within persons in the same organization for such a long time that everybody anticipates they “must somehow be important”. As a result, they are being followed without any visible reason or conspicuous achievement. They are, over time, accepted as cognitive authorities owing to their long experience and the stories of what they have accomplished. In a way, their personal story gives endurance.

4.4.2 *Active Handling of Power and Micropolitics*

Essential findings about the usage of informal power and micropolitics are:

- The ability to phrase things and the rhetoric to convince
- The knowledge of whom to ask and whom to use
- Acting by example externally and by power internally
- One-on-one conversations within the exemplary network
- Using pipeline networks given on the road up as manager
- Identifying and using upward mobility among employees
- Using personal relations and stakeholder coalitions
- Using endurance as corporate stories of historical success
- Using political compromises to get a best possible result.

In general, formal power exertion must be backed up by some informal power to work. What is needed is multiple skills and tools found in coalitions and networks. The attitudes and strengths to use the experiences, skills, and tools are required for success. A title, education, or position does not suffice in a project where the outcome for the members and the project are the two most important factors. A project manager is judged by that outcome and must do what is necessary to achieve the outcome if accepted in the corporate culture. All interviewed thought consensus does not finally drive decisions but is often just created to push through an agreed-upon decision. Decisions are often taken on the basics that “somebody has talked together on the back room where everything is

decided”. When the project leaders met the stakeholders, there might be hefty discussions, but the decisions remained as anticipated.

The institutional project manager, who controls his/her stakeholders and makes decisions which (s)he and not necessarily his/her team can finally justify, is regarded as the most successful actor. The institutional manager knows the game and how to play his/her cards and knows that the team will highly appreciate his/her results. (S)He must keep his/her career in mind and cannot act entirely independently, but informal power and micropolitics are significant assets used all the time. This institutional manager appears to become the team’s hero, and members are lining up both to be on his/her team and support him/her. The team may be followers working their way up the pipeline.

4.4.3 How Are the Findings Related to the Actor’s Intentions

The actors’ intentions raise the following four questions from our model, which are answered elaborately:

- How does power constitute itself (formal/informal), and how does the actor apply it?

In its entirety, power constitutes itself as a sum of formal and informal parts. An actor primarily applies it as a mixture: Pure application of formal power is not sustainable in consensus-driven teams, and informal power alone lacks authority. In principle, a project manager is by far more on the “informal side”. A high level of situational awareness must carefully balance the elements of power to push through a case.

- What kind of power—the manager is the actor, what motivates him/her when applying power?

The affiliative manager who wants to be liked rather than apply power to succeed is often found. It can be assumed that this is the case also for project managers. The avoidance of conflicts would be in line with Pahlke and Alexander (2009). The project manager applies power open and directly and indirectly and hidden; what is his/her agenda, how does (s)he influence and persuade?

Within these corporations, power is often applied indirectly and hidden. For a new person in the organization, it can take a considerable amount of time to understand how and why decisions are made, crucial parameters, and authority. Influence and persuasion are

often carried out "low profile" and long discussions in long meetings, including virtually everybody. Often, the manager's agenda seems to be consensus and team harmony, giving him/her informal power to proceed even though (s)he does not fully comply with his/her team's opinions. It is fascinating how far these rather time-consuming processes move the organizations in a more competitive position than the market or whether the opposite is the case.

- How does an actor express micropolitics?

Actors want to rise in the organization or at least secure their position. Actors try to increase their importance by exerting expert or information power, which drives discussions and decisions in a specific direction. In Norwegian organizations where everybody is heard at length, an expert or information holder has a strong position that can be used for his/her agenda (i.e., delaying decisions, influencing the allocation of resources, and making himself/herself essential). An institutional manager might use cognitive authority to speed up a process or delay a process together with getting the manager's decisions. The process might be time-consuming and challenging to understand since there are hidden agendas all the time. The institutional project manager muddle through formal and informal power and micropolitics.

4.4.4 How Are the Findings Related to Answer the Remaining Research Questions?

- How do power and micropolitics appear in projects?

The informal power and micropolitics played a massive role in the projects, and personal and relational knowledge appeared to achieve the expected project results. Power and micropolitics appear through main coalitions of stakeholders and project managers talking together in the backroom or forming alliances.

- How does the Project Manager use power and micropolitics to influence the result of his/her project?

The project manager uses personal networks, personal relations, mentor's network together with cognitive, affective, and emotional influence as power and politics if needed to achieve expected results. All the project managers use micropolitics and power as a critical success factor and, as such, also as a tool for successful project management.

- How do the employees regard managers' use of power and micropolitics?

Employees would work for managers who have power over those who do not. The former can get them what they want: visibility, upwards mobility, and resources. In contrast, subordinates of bosses who have no power are usually dissatisfied with their situation. The pipeline upwards is open for those supporting the right power and micropolitics.

- What organizations foster and hinder power and micropolitics?

A democratic and consensus-oriented culture opens for power games and micropolitics rather than hedging them. Compared to more hierarchical organizations, informal micropolitics and power mean a high potential to prolong and complicate decision processes and significantly reduce efficiency and effectiveness.

4.5 CONCLUSIONS

The findings relate well to the manager's intentions and experiences in this study setting. The power and micropolitics process is reused in every project in that formal and informal power, and micropolitics is a significant part of project work. Actors with a leadership role and cognitive authority power are the primary beneficiaries. The accumulation and wise handling of power and politics is an essential leadership exercise for every manager. Political influence, persuasion, and compromises are also used in all projects, according to our informants. Handling large projects requires a balance between leadership and management and understanding power and micropolitics as craft tools. Power and micropolitics were accepted as critical success factors of all the project managers.

Although it could be assumed that a flat hierarchy and consensus-oriented decision processes prevent power games, this paper concludes that the opposite is the case. Strong informal power bases exist within all the four investigated companies, potentially affecting the efficiency and effectiveness of a project. The main reasons are unclarity and a lack of discipline and urgency in decision-making. In international competition, this can negatively affect benchmarks as the four companies need more prolonged time and more costs to come to the same conclusions as others.

4.5.1 *Practical Implications*

Which recommendations can be given to handling the subjects in daily project management work? The project manager should make the following clear for his/her project:

- How does the game look? Who are the actors and essential practices, where are areas of uncertainty?
- Which bases of power does each actor have access to, how do they constitute or enact them?
- What are the relationships (coalitions, dependencies) between the actors?
- What types of managers are involved, and what drives each in their practices?
- Which hidden agendas can be assumed, and how will they be pushed through the project?

In parallel, it is essential, to be honest about one's situation and define the following success factors:

- What is our personal goal? Is it in line with our project's goal?
- Independent of our work order, what appears to be the minimum/maximum achievable outcome?
- What are our power bases, dependencies, and coalitions?
- What practices and actors do we need to influence or persuade, and what is the possibly best or fruitful way to succeed? Are there maybe alternative productive ways overlooked?
- How do we create a sense of urgency and healthy pressure on the stakeholders?

4.5.2 *Limitations and Future Research*

The study is done in a Norwegian branch and learning context for oil and gas producing companies, and there is certainly both a cultural and branch bias. Temporary project organization is a key for how these corporations organize their activities which might imply a much higher degree of micropolitics and power games than in more permanently organized organizations. Norwegian organizations are regarded as relatively flat and

democratic and might invite to micropolitics and power than more hierarchical organizations. The respect for solution-based professionals versus more position-based professionals might also invite more micropolitics and power games.

We need to investigate if the Scandinavian model for project management fosters micropolitics and power while the hierarchical model hinders micropolitics and power. What are the consequences of different models concerning micropolitics and power? Likewise, we should look into the corporate cultures for project management. Specifically, we should address what fosters as well as hinders more concrete sustainability-oriented action in real-world project management practices (see Chapter 1).

With the ongoing and future major changes in project work, for example, in natural resource-based industries such as energy, the dynamics and challenges of management will probably increase. This reminds us, as stated by Michel Foucault in his *Archaeology of Knowledge* (2002, p. 6), that “*the problem is no longer one of tradition, of tracing a line, but one of division, of limits; it is no longer one of lasting foundations, but one of transformations that serve as new foundations, the rebuilding of foundations*”.

The proposed model thus needs to be tested and adjusted or rejected to form a theoretical basis for the use of micropolitics and power in project management.

Last but not least, the present study suggests unfolding of rich hidden as well as seen powers and micropolitics in managing large projects in practice. As managers from the four oil and gas companies experienced recurrently in their everyday project work, the *informal* power uses were critical for the success of their work and thus reused in dynamic and somewhat hidden ways.

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Understanding Practices Through an Inclusive Philosophy of Experiencing: Insights from Four Art Museums

Abstract The chapter discusses the inclusive knowledge philosophy fundamental for different modes of experiencing living enterprises. We combine two related philosophical lenses to enable fundamental understanding of concerted practices and strategic accomplishments for leadership and management. The American pragmatist philosopher John Dewey pointed to the importance of restoring the continuity between the refined and intensified experiences in our practices and everyday doings. He based this restoring on “the inclusive philosophic idea”. By this idea he was acknowledging the possibilities of imagination and associations among the social, technological-physical, natural, and mental modes. Another philosopher, the Norwegian Arne Naess, also highlighted imaginative experience and the human/nature interconnectedness including its potential joy and perseverance for individuals as well as organizations. We provide examples drawing on our own studies of four art museums. Given that rich knowledge endeavours are necessary to develop arts for society, how can valuable exhibition practices be accomplished in inclusive, resourceful ways? The chapter introduces a philosophical framework for how this might work. Dynamic art, design, and innovation processes are imaginative practices where the past, the present, and the future melt together. The imaginative experiencing in each museum place might be

crucial not only for its recurrent co-creation but also for the make-believe of sustainable arts thinking.

Keywords Philosophical foundation · Strategies · Museums · Change · Art · Dewey · Naess · Munch

5.1 INTRODUCTION

In this conceptually oriented essay, we address arts as necessary, imaginative perspectives for knowledge management (KM) in organizations. Specifically, we build on process thinking from the philosophers John Dewey and Arne Naess, because they are offering fruitful concepts and views based on experiential possibilities in everyday. We propose the process concepts Naess used in his sustainability thinking can be combined with a pragmatist philosophy for experiencing, where we lean on John Dewey's inclusive philosophical idea and "art-as-experience". Because the combined lenses of ecological process philosophy and art-as-experience can have a strategic role with far-reaching impact on developmental processes and knowledge sharing in both temporary projects and enduring organizations, KM can benefit from this enlarged experiential philosophy. Specifically, we explore this inclusive knowledge idea view in a Nordic art museum context, which offers further valuable insights on the importance of imaginative experiencing.

Our research question is: *In what ways does a Nordic art museum build creative experience and collective knowing through their art exhibitions strategies?*

Our primary interest in this explorative case research lies in identifying imaginative exhibition practices of exemplary art museums using the lens of an inclusive knowledge philosophy perspective. By using the combined philosophical concepts from original thinkers John Dewey and Arne Naess, respectively, we contribute to an improved understanding of the fundamental experiential ways of exhibiting such as in a museum organization. It can also contribute to organizational wisdom and spirituality including the potentials of KM strategies as artful practices (see elaboration and more examples in e.g. Guillet de Monthoux, [2022](#)).

5.2 THEORETICAL FRAMING FOR AN INCLUSIVE KNOWLEDGE PHILOSOPHY

In the following, we specifically address the lens of inclusive or multifaceted experiencing to understand imaginative KM approaches in complex, creativity-dependent organizations. For the first time to our knowledge, we combine the lenses of an inclusive pragmatist philosophy with process ecological thinking in the contemporary developmental context of art museums and their KM approaches.

5.2.1 *Deweyan Inclusive Experiential View*

Our idea of inclusive knowledge philosophy is adapted from the philosophical idea of inclusion proposed by the American pragmatist philosopher and educational reformer John Dewey (1859–1952). Dewey (1932/2018) pointed to the inclusion of the social, the physical, the economic, as well as the vision and mental capacities of interest for human enterprises. This inclusive philosophy is embracing multiple modes of association and interconnectedness regarded as foundational for “the art of experience” (see Table 5.1). Dewey (1928/1998) saw experience as “a product, one might almost say a by-product, of continuous and cumulative interaction of an organic self with the world” (p. 220).

According to Dewey (1934/1980, p. 22), “experience is the result, the sign, and the reward of that interaction of organism and environment which, when it is carried to the full, is a transformation of interaction into participation and communication”. The “art” in the art of experience is not regarded as something entirely separate, or compartmentalized. Dewey saw art as “prefigured in the very process of living” (p. 24). Why then introduce art in relation to experience? Dewey (1934/1980, p. 260) reflects that “ordinary experience is often infected with apathy, lassitude and stereotype. We get neither the impact of quality through the sense nor the meaning of things”. Whereas “art celebrates with peculiar intensity the moments in which the past reinforces the present and in which the future is a quickening of what now is” (p. 18). Since artists tend to use rich imagination in their intensive interaction with the object in focus, materials they experiment with, and surroundings they explore, their art can become a gateway to a whole, imaginative experience. “Taking in” any vital experience can be both engaging and painful, as it involves reconstruction. It is “something more than placing something on the top

Table 5.1 Overview of key Deweyan concepts in the chapter^a

<i>Concepts for an inclusive philosophy of art</i>		
<i>Terms</i>	<i>Meaning</i>	<i>Examples and significance</i>
Experience	Experience is a matter of the interaction of an organism with its environment	“An experience has a unity that gives it its name, <i>that</i> meal, that storm, that rupture of friendship” (Dewey, 1934/1980, p. 37) “A piece of work is finished in a way that is satisfactory” (p. 35)
Aesthetic experience	Experience in its integrity All aesthetic experience is imaginative	“Any practical activity will, provided that it is integrated and moves by its own urge to fulfillment, have esthetic quality”
Imaginative vision	“The power that unifies all the constituents of the matter of a work of art, making a whole out of them in all their variety” (p. 277)	Ideas and imagination come in flashes The imaginative experience endures

^aBased on Jevnaker and Olaisen (2021)

of consciousness of what was previously known” (Dewey, 1934/1980, p. 41).

Dewey further contends, “Possibilities are embodied in the works of art that are not elsewhere actualized” (p. 268). Objects of art express, i.e., “to stay by, to carry forward in development, to work out to completion” (p. 62). With an *inclusive philosophy* of knowledge creation and sharing, we also need to attend beyond the material or digitized objects to the art of experiences of the living creatures. To *experience* in a human enterprise context thus means to participate in the carrying forward as well as enjoy or use (something) jointly with another or others in natural and artificial surroundings. The inclusive idea means embracing the experiences in its entirety, including the human, social, technological, capital, and ecological relations. We thus turn to an ecological process-oriented thinking next.

5.2.2 *Further Inspirations from Process Philosophy—A Naessian View*

As introduced in Chapter 1, Arne Naess (1912–2009) was a Norwegian philosopher working actively with possibilities, ecological thinking, and the meaning of practical wisdom, as well as the logical philosophy of science. In line with ideas that everyone can follow their own path, he argued that everybody should develop their own eco-philosophy or what he coined “ecosophy”, that is, one’s personal system of values.

Interestingly, Arne Naess is among the key founders of deep ecological thinking. Deep ecology is related both to thinking and to being constructive in our approaches to change. The Naessian thinking also goes way back to early philosophers such as Baruch Spinoza in the Netherlands (1632–1677), as well as Aristotle in Greece (384–322 BC). Three of the conceptions, Arne Naess adopted from Spinoza, we will briefly introduce below (see also Table 5.2).

The first is *Virtus* (from Latin, *vir* for man), which means the courage, character, and strength or power to do something, i.e., to be capable of doing something of value, something excellent (Naess, 2005). The second concept we wish to highlight is *joy*—and even a full joy that activates our mind/body. Both Spinoza and Naess saw active feelings as necessary for all to be capable for changing. The third key concept from Spinoza is *conatus* or effort. Arne Naess refers to *conatus* as a striving. This striving

Table 5.2 Overview of a sample of key Naessian concepts^a

<i>Concepts for ecological process-view on knowledge</i>		
<i>Terms</i>	<i>Meaning</i>	<i>Examples</i>
Virtus (<i>potentia</i>)	The courage, character, and strengths, power “to do”	Power to realize something
Joy	Openness and happiness in action, i.e., in movement Enacting active feelings, necessary for change	Enjoying active feelings including freedom to move
Striving (<i>conatus</i>)	A striving beyond mere survival	Ongoing meaningful efforts. Relates to <i>perseveration of self</i> as a dynamic notion
Ecosophy	One’s personal system of values	Personal reflection and philosophy

^aBased on Jevnaker and Olaisen (2021)

is important because it relates to *perseveration* as a dynamic notion (De Jonge & Whiteman, 2014, p. 437). The fourth concept is an ecological philosophy or *ecosophy* (see elaboration in Chapter 1).

Overall, as free human beings, Arne Naess (2005) pointed to our positive imaginative possibilities, the potentiality of doing something more. He was no fundamentalist, he articulated that he was more interested in whether leaders had visions, rather than utopias. As he understood, when we create a new vision for the future, we will probably see the current knowledge as well as the past differently. Moreover, imaginative work includes a third kind of knowing (e.g., intuition), which is different from both vague sense perceptions and rational (scientific) thinking, according to Naess.

While exploiting logical reasoning and respecting opponents, Naess (2005) recommended to use active feelings creatively towards visions of our future. We should try to transform the pessimistic aspects into optimistic ones. In other words, we should seek to do something more, with impact and joy. Arne Naess developed his own wild-life experiences into a thinking of the place. He argued that humans are not separate from nature and to think so leads to trouble (De Jonge & Whiteman, 2014, p. 446).

5.3 METHODOLOGY AND MATERIAL

How then do organizations enable imaginative strategies and more inclusive experiencing of their offerings? We base the chapter on our study of modern and contemporary art leadership and organizing practices in the Northern context of modern art museums. We investigate how the museums' accumulated and regained implicit and explicit strategies transform into art experiencing at the collective and individual level.

The research assumptions are a visionary eye of the future is needed for leadership organizing for understanding and developing imaginative knowledge. Inclusive modes of experiencing are ways of developing knowing, but how are these experiential knowledge challenges explored in the art museums' exhibition practices?

5.3.1 *Methodology*

We base our research methodology upon Bunge's (1967) theory of conceptual generalization as clearly different from empirical generalization. The empirical generalization demand verification and falsification during the analyses and discussion. The conceptual generalization

demands a strict logic interpretation and argumentation. We adapt the conceptualization methodology from an exploration of clarified subjectivity concepts. It is exploring the concepts of knowledge together with the concepts of art and business. The concepts are sensitizing, seeking directions to look as opposed to definitive concepts seeking already predefined directions (Blumer, 1969). The argumentation is thus not falsifying anything but instead exploring possible directions to look for art and business.

This article neither develops a grounded theory of KM nor presents an entirely new theoretical framework; instead, it examines some key philosophical process-based conceptualizations of imaginative work and shows—by analysing specific cases of interest for the experiential, sustainability-oriented economy—how they can help us analyse changing knowledge practices. Resonating with this methodology, we propose a more dynamic understanding of process-oriented KM combined with an arts-based inclusive theory of experience (Dewey, 1934/1980).

5.3.2 *Cases Explored*

To illuminate our conceptual chapter, we draw on empirical insights we collected from four Nordic arts museums: (1) Munch Museum (MM) and Munch's artworks, (2) The National Museum for arts, architecture, and design (NaM), (3) The Henie Onstad Kunstsenter (HOK) and The Monster Dada Show, and (4) The Kistefos arts museum and its new Twist.

We visited these museums and their exhibitions several times, took part in their events and open meetings, and have consulted their annual reports, their online webpage, and social media communications, as well as other available documentation (incl. through membership in their museum friend networks). Furthermore, one of us (Jevnaker) took part in some previous meetings with leaders and specialists in two of the museums, one of which allowed observation of art curation and design work in the making of specific exhibitions. A brief overview of the four museums is provided below.

The Munch Museum: a museum for works by Edvard Munch (1863–1944), an internationally renowned painter and graphic artist born in Norway. He is most famous for a few of his iconic prints, such as *The Scream*, *Madonna*, *Vampire*, and *the Sick Child*. Munch is also known for his Oslo University ceremonial hall paintings such as “the Sun”, which is a new way of portraying progression in the sciences. It is placed in front

inside the Aula Magna. Note that Munch gave most of his vast production to Norway's capital city municipality (Oslo), which eventually built a museum devoted to his arts, first located outside the inner-city centre (1963–2021). Over time it was regarded as not sufficiently funded, nor well-placed. An entirely new museum building opened October 22, 2021 in Oslo's central seaside area (Bjorvika).

The National Museum of Arts, Architecture, and Design (NaM): NaM in Oslo is a state-owned museum. It was re-established on July 1, 2003, by merging several arts, architecture, and design museums. NaM can offer a rich collection of Norwegian and selective international painters including a great collection of Munch's artworks. For a period, NaM's paintings were not on display in Oslo due to the planned move to their new main building in Oslo's harbour area. The new building designed by architects Klaus Schuwerk (Kleihues + Schuwerk) will become the largest art museum in the Nordic countries (Director's report in the Annual report 2018). The Light Hall is the building's signature architectural feature, with its 2 400 square metres at the top of the building. The new museum building did not open as planned in 2020, due to trouble with the safety doors (Hindsbo in Klassekampen newspaper, 22.09.2020). Artworks have however been on loan or on multiple tours to other institutions. NaM launched its new digital museum website in 2020 in beta version to stimulate a broader user engagement with its vast collections. The new museum building which can exhibit 5000 works, twice as many as before, is eventually finished, opening June 11, 2022. With its 54.600 m² total surface area, the National Museum in its new main setting will no doubt become a new venue in the cityscape, being situated close to the city hall square and with great views to the fjord.

The Henie Onstad Kunstsenter (HOK): As a modern international art museum established in 1968, HOK represents the new wave of modern art's acceptance and work (together with the Astrup Fearnley museum) as a "MOMA" for Oslo. The HOK works towards communicating with a broad audience. It has workshops for children, alongside a broad array of media facilities, shops, meeting rooms, the cafe, and a sculpture park, accessible in a white well-placed building in coastal surroundings, 15 minutes from Oslo city centre. HOK had 89,206 visitors (2018) increasing to 95.000 in 2019 (cf. annual reports). The avant-garde strategy including art photography and targeting younger generations, are to be continued. The Covid-19 pandemic led to unfortunate closure of the indoor museum in parts of 2020–2021 while the

coastal outdoor museum nature park with some sculptures has remained open.

The Kistefos museum: The Kistefos Museum is a modern indoor and outdoor art gallery about 80 km from Oslo that tries to integrate modern outdoor sculptures and modern indoor paintings exhibited in an old industrial setting in a rural area. The museum is young (established 1996) and is currently expanding its presence in Norway and internationally, thanks to engagements by its key owner and investor, Christian Sveaas, together with a team of competent curators. Every year, Kistefos presents new art exhibitions by highly recognized national and international artists in its two galleries. The Twist (new spectacular building, see below) and the Nybruket Gallery are located in one of the old factory buildings. The outdoor gallery is also an excellent exhibition during all seasons. Art is mainly modern, but also contemporary art exhibit extensively. The social media and word-of-mouth marketing made it among the best-visited Norwegian art museum during the pandemic 2020.

Why these art museums and not others? We chose these four museums to provide a tasty variety of Nordic arts museum practices while keeping the setting relatively constant to make comparisons and exciting contrasts. They are all situated in or near Oslo, which allowed recurrent observational visits in one setting. This research design enables the investigation of a “contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context” (Yin, 1994, p. 13) and facilitates comparison to uncover emerging patterns (Eisenhardt, 1989). These museums are of interest for exploring arts-based approaches working with varieties of knowing in the creation of arts experiences. In short, their exhibition strategies enabled us to identify varieties of “art as experience”.

5.4 FINDINGS FROM ART PRACTICES IN FOUR NORDIC MUSEUMS

In the following, we draw on research and arts-based texts grounded in four Nordic museums’ art practices. We have chosen four excellent museums in the Oslo region to explore this.

5.4.1 *Five Ways of Building Experiencing with Artworks*

Drawing on their contemporary art practices, several points of general interest can be made.

First, making artwork imaginatively present—here and now—for the visitor can *deepen* the creative experiencing with artful knowledge among the public (e.g., by experiencing side by side enlarged, illuminated versions of Munch’s colourful expressions of a couple walking towards the forest). No doubt, MM has an internationally highly attractive collection to draw on to deepen our experience and knowledge with his artworks. Throughout his life, Edvard Munch experimented in both painting and graphic visual arts, and he regularly also made and preserved rich notetaking. His works encompass narrative and poetic texts, sketches, and multifaceted laboratory materials.

Second, the art museums showed *parallel* aesthetic forms of art in multiple materials, technologies, and processes. All four museums were striving to engage new and existing audiences by inviting the visitor to parallel rich art worlds, such as at Kistefos, combining a sculpture park and artworks in old forest mill buildings with its brand-new Twist, a signature art gallery placed over the wild river. The Twist is a gallery, a bridge, and a sculpture, all in one. The 1000 square metre building twists into a sculptural form. The building spans 60 m spectacularly across the Randselva River. Human sculptures stand at the river side looking into the huge glass windows of the building, as if from a parallel world.

Third, the four art museums were also, to some extent, curating a *double or combined presenting* of artworks as well as offering multi-modal forms of art enabling this. The MM has exploited this strategy by curating combinations of finished and unfinished artworks by Edvard Munch, sometimes contrasting the qualities of dualities with other artists. The museum curators have exhibited excellent artworks by several distinguished international artists such as Gauguin and Van Gogh juxtaposed with selections of Munch’s artworks. The arts experiences enacted were triggering and invited visitors to reflect on deeper emotions and know many facets of human life by, for example, Munch plus Van Gogh.

The MM has thus found a new way to exhibit their extensive collection of Munch paintings by deliberately contrasting them with another famous painter in what they call *The Munch + exhibitions*. In short, the curators are creating a new combination of paired artists and selective artworks that can attract new audiences and recurrent visits and interests.

The fourth pattern is curating *opposing/contrary presencing* of forms of art and art technologies. One example is Dada artworks. In 2019/2020, Henie Onstad Kunstsenter said, “Welcome the dada rebel”. Dada is an avant-garde art movement in the early twentieth century. This Dada, Great Monster major exhibition sought to present “the historical works of the Dada movement with a contemporary side program pinpointing how the avant-garde ideas are of relevance today” (from the HOK program, 2019). The exhibition presented more than 200 works by 43 artists (incl. collage, sculpture, painting, drawing, photo, film, sound, puppetry, and periodicals). The HOK also offered events, e.g., the Cabaret-The Great Monster Dada Show, with support from The Fritt Ord (Freedom of Speech) Foundation and Goethe-Institute.

Other examples of opposing/contrary presencing include Bjarne Melgaard’s multimodal works at MM, with some highly controversial video-recordings. Melgaard’s works exhibited closely entangled with Edvard Munch’s artworks at MM created quite a stir, which helped communicate the new exhibition series. Furthermore, the National Museum staff have also engaged in creative video recording and documentation related to, e.g., the Picasso and Nesjar mural arts on a controversial “brutalist style” demolished governmental building, designed by the modernist architect Erling Viksjo. Key leaders at NaM as well as HOK assembled relevant knowledge to help communicate arts-based resistance towards the planned demolition of this artful building in 2020.

Finally, a fifth pattern we could identify was a *surprising presencing* of art-as-experience. Edvard Munch’s Scream painting is one evident example. Also, the Munch plus exhibition series have created some surprising juxtapositions, attracting an international audience to visit the respective exhibitions at the MM. We also found the Kistefos museum could foster a surprising presencing of art in the woods.

5.5 DISCUSSION

Specifically, we asked how a Nordic art museum builds creative experience and collective knowing through their art exhibitions strategies. Our study suggests the four museums work with partly overlapping and partly different strategizing patterns—from deepening various national and international seminal arts forms to inviting the visitors into parallel worlds

in a particular landscape of arts to showing contrary art forms. These art museum practices are thus multifaceted (e.g., combining artworks, physical, and digital) and may be beneficial for each museum and the regional art scene.

We believe insights from the four Nordic museums can contribute to an inclusive leadership and KM philosophy also in other contexts in at least three ways:

Our first contribution is *the actuality of making enterprises into attractive places, especially museums can become attractive destinations*. This finding resonates with Smith (2021) and all the four museums we studied were engaged in this strategy. At Kistefos, the industrial museum buildings and their natural river park combine with a new signature modern art museum house built over a river where all are a part of a large river. The Danish star architects BIG—Bjarke Ingels Group designed the building, which is named as a "must-see" cultural destination by the New York Times, Bloomberg, and The Telegraph, among others. The architecture received several awards. The Kistefos Museum is also regularly using outdoor environments as a part of its exhibition strengths. Thus, the museum is offering arts as experience with highly inclusive resources (the river landscape, the old factories, the social joy with getting close to the playful artworks, etc.). This combination apparently became appreciated during the long Covid-19 pandemic. The Kistefos museum had 25.777 visitors in 2019, increasing to 127.000 visitors per October 1, 2020. There are astonishing many travelling such a long distance outside Oslo.

Our second contribution is *the potential of making digitization an important, integrative part of the art experience*. At MM, the large text and visual material offer rich insights into Munch's poetic and reflexive thinking and highly experimental doings and ongoing arts workings. For some years, these texts have been in the process of becoming fully digitized and organized in accessible ways, which enable a revisiting of an international artist's work and his reflexive writings over a lifetime. The MM's contemporary strategy gives this work high priority. More than 30 people are regularly working on this large digitization project (32 persons according to MM's 2018 annual report).

Our third contribution is adding to the knowledge-intensive *strivings behind creating an enduring imaginative vision* (Naess, 2005). For example, as part of Munch's preparing, competing, and experimenting over several years with and for the University Aula decorations

in Norway's capital, we may revisit his Laboratory materials (published by MM as a catalogue in 2011). In showing us all kinds of material (digital/physical/social/mental) enriched with the research-active curators' knowledge of particular artwork practices, we learn how Munch broke away from the Greek assumptions of what and how to portray in mural decorations and how he worked hard to find other ways of representing knowledge-building of the nation (Jevnaker & Olaisen, 2019; see Chapter 8). Munch created his seminal University Hall paintings between 1909 and 1916 dedicated to knowledge sharing of the past, present, and future melting together, searching for the new light.

5.6 CONCLUSIONS

The five patterns identified in these Nordic art museums illuminate the importance of making a memorable experience through imaginative, inclusive expression of artworks. As both Dewey and Naess argued, an art experience builds on imagination to become fulfilling. Placing artworks to be interacted with in special surroundings can foster this (new buildings are not enough). Enlarging the art experience also includes sharing more of the artworks artistic and knowledge-based backgrounds, which represent current possibilities in all four museums' KM.

Below we point to two learning lessons for potentially strategic accomplishments in this endeavour.

5.6.1 *The Importance of Place, Continuous Striving, and Ecological Thinking*

The placing of the Twist, Kistefos' new white gallery building twisting unexpectedly beautiful over the local river "in the wild" of Norway, is contributing to making art a memorable experience. The lively river landscape can be experienced artfully in many installations. Kistefos has created an interesting *place* attracting a record number of visitors in 2020 and awarded as the museum of the year 2019.

From Munch Museum, recently relocated into its brand-new, much-debated "Lamda" building in Oslo's harbour area (opened in 2021), we can learn how the continuous striving placing Munch's arts in an enlarged context matter in nontrivial ways. Edvard Munch and notable other artists whose works are contrasted within the Munch plus exhibition series, such as Paul Gauguin, lived complicated lives in places that did not merely

harm them as artists. Both used art exploration of humans in nature encompassing trial and error to develop and reflect human life in stimulating new ways. Gauguin is said to have remarked that he closed his eyes to see, while Munch famously put it like this: “I do not paint what I see, but what I saw”. Both Gauguin and Munch encourage us to turn our gaze also inwards and focus on the indelible impressions that art can make.

With their constant experimentation, both the HOK and the MM museum have adopted *a principle of continued exploration*, expressing strivings and distinctions involved in the arts. This resonates with the strivings suggested by Naess in his readings of Spinoza, a philosopher the artist Munch also appreciated. Interestingly, Munch found several ways of dealing with and transgressing the dark sides when he painted and repainted *The Sick Child* in a close-up fashion that broke away from the conventional. Looking afresh at Munch’s *Scream* painting reveals the agonized face in the middle of a moving landscape, an iconic Art image symbolizing modern man’s anxiety and uncertainty. Screaming is a dynamic way of expressing since it opens for a reflection of why we—actually here, the Nature is screaming.

5.6.2 *Joy and Pain in Knowledge-Seeking*

We suggest art is bringing us in contact with knowing and life matters of untouchable kind. Moving into a kind of imaginative knowing also means that metaphors partly determine the future collective knowing. “Metaphor (...) constituted an important method of creating a network of concepts which can help to generate knowledge about the future by using expressions from any existing knowledge”, Nonaka (1994, p. 21) emphasized. These expressions are a part of Munch’s paintings, e.g., in “*Alma Mater*” as mother of all faculties in his *Aula Magna* decorations for the University of Oslo. They are also a part of “*Path of Silence*”, a fountain sculpture by Jeppe Hein in front of the old pulp mill at Kistefos.

The question often posed is if art can *change* the world or the actual behaviour (Dewey, 1934/1980). The traditional way of thinking is that art cannot transform businesses and society. Ideas and concepts can only do this transformation. We propose that art may also be converting the business community like the works of Munch. The Munch *Scream* describes the anxiety of modern times anytime and is spread as virus internationally. Art is in transit between the non-representative and representative. From this reason, art might change an individual and collective perspective. Having seen Munch’s life frieze images such as the *Sick Child*,

people reflect upon their life. Hope is essential (Naess, 2005). After recovering from his own illness, Munch worked in outdoor studios re-focussing his imaginative workings towards the life-bringing Sun, the Alma Mater, and the old fisherman sharing his knowledge to a young-one under a tree as crucial for enlightenment in society. Art certainly can change perspectives, attitudes, and behaviour, which can be an inspiration in museum exhibitions and beyond them. As reflected by Edvard Munch in relation to his work with History (cited in Munch's Laboratory Life, p. 125):

When I painted the wonderful
 model Børre the one that inspired me to create the
 work – I saw how the old world-
 travelled captain sent lightning from his
 eyes when something from the past appeared before
 his inner eye – When in our conversation we
 touched upon his life and sailor's life –

A “black-lightning” appeared there as though a
 Searchlight was thrown back in time –

During the work features came of
 themselves which expanded and enriched
 the motif – The little bright red
 cap he used became for me a bloody
 crown or helmet – The different coloured
 large patches became “patches
 of time” – They had destruction and struggle in them –
 The large red patch on the knee became
 A bloody sheet – A bloody battle –

And there was an interactive effect in the patches
 on the trunk of the old tree – The
 enormous patches of moss – The disintegrating roots
 that grow in the earth –

It resonated together as in a
 symphony with the millennium-long layers
 in the rocks – In the crushed
 Reefs way out at the edge of the sea –

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Leading for Eco-Effective Business Design: Co-creating Sustainability Development

Abstract Sustainability thinking in enterprise strategies has spread like a virus in abstract corporate visions communication. We propose that more attention be devoted to leveraging the concrete developmental work from an action-based leadership for sustainability perspective. This chapter offers concepts from change management, process philosophy, and design for understanding leadership for sustainability as continuously creative practices. The chapter provides in-depth insights into an exemplary case, *Flokk*, a North-European furniture industry enterprise that has pioneered leadership for sustainability.

Keywords Leadership · Sustainability · Change management · Processual philosophy · Ecological tinkering · Design thinking · Eco-effectiveness · Flokk

6.1 INTRODUCTION

Sustainability thinking in enterprise strategies has emerged as a new concern for leaders in many industries. It has spread like a virus in corporate visions communications, which tend to be abstract (see Chapter 2). Despite increasing attention on countries and companies' sustainability goals, we know less about leadership for sustainability as continuous practices in micro, at the layers of more concrete developmental activities. On

this background, we propose that more attention could beneficially be devoted to how change management and design practices can leverage sustainable design in the enterprise's innovation-oriented workings.

For this aim, we combine processual philosophy and sustainability-oriented design thinking with exemplary practices in one specialized business enterprise in the office furniture industry, to help us understand how and why micro sustainability practices can be born, formed, and shaped and how they can evolve into something foundational for an entire value creation.

The focussed case in this chapter, *Flokk*, has pioneered sustainability thinking in both its design and development work, as well as its entire philosophizing towards the users (Jevnaker, 2012). In contrast to prevailing management beliefs towards unconstrained creativity, enduring imaginative design and development efforts and leading with some concrete constraining criteria can become beneficial for leveraging sustainable practices, as shown in this puzzling office chairmaker case.

This conceptual and empirically grounded chapter seeks to understand sustainability thinking in micro-practices, which we understand as part of the nitty-gritty of everyday work. In line with Ciborra (2009), we argue the need to move from abstract thinking to explore more concrete “tinkering” with complex information and design. In short, the daily creative workings can open for ways to reuse and reduce resources, transform offerings and core systems, and thus enabling (or hindering) sustainability innovations. The combination of understanding the change and design processes as parallel or entangled processes for sustainability makes the chapter unique.

However, to follow the pioneering examples of the office furniture-maker, Flokk, and their communities of practices who have worked with sustainable design for over 40 years, we need to attend to multifaceted practices over time. The current CEO emphasized both the people and the culture, and the design guide criteria used in “tough” ways to assemble their long-lasting products (Flokk's Sustainability report, 2021). Flokk's strong position on sustainable design goes back to the early nineties, or before that (Jevnaker, 1991, 1995). It is founded on development practices including solid quality control to ensure that no harmful substances are used, and that the furniture still achieves the adequate strength required.

Our research problem is (1) to shed light on how and why such micro sustainability practices can be born, formed, and shaped? Furthermore, (2) what the roles for leadership are in how sustainability design may evolve into something foundational for an enterprise's purpose and value creation? Finally, (3) how do creative design and change processes contribute to understanding sustainability?

For this explorative conceptual aim, we combine processual philosophy and sustainability-oriented design thinking with exemplary practices in one specialized business enterprise to help us understand beyond the abstract sustainability goals layer. Specifically, we explore and discuss how design practices in relation to this enterprise could take steps towards beginning and eventually leading ecological sustainability development in office chair-making. This concerned discussions on both “what might be” (Simon, 1969/1996) *and* “what might NOT be” (Jevnaker, 2012), as well as what could make sitting a joyful and meaningful experience in a dynamic sitting perspective (see Jevnaker, 1991, 2012; Opsvik, 2008). The latter is highly relevant since many participate in a daily sitting marathon throughout their work and commuting hours and at home.

Ecological thinking, in general, refers to living creatures' dwelling (see Chapter 1), which we contend includes the office work habitats and the “seated man”. Concurrently, tonnes of waste in office furniture harm the environment, which calls for organized changes and responsible leadership action. It is thus noteworthy how leadership for sustainability involved constraining aspects to avoid “the bad, wrong and ugly” commonly present in industrial long-linked technologies, such as in furnishing industries.

6.2 PERSPECTIVES ON ORGANIZATIONAL CHANGE

How, then, to address sustainable organization changes in industries like furnishing? A common and essential categorization in organizational change-oriented research is the distinction between change as episodic, discontinuous, and intermittent at one side, and change as continuous, evolving, and incremental (Weick & Quinn, 1999). The first stream of contributions assumes that stability is the standard and desired situation for most organizations. Change efforts must be managed by extraordinary activities commonly represented as linear projects consisting of planned actions. Examples are the practical guidelines offered by Kanter et al. (1992), Kotter (1996), and Luecke (2003). Within the second stream,

organizational life is assumed to consist of micro-changes that can aggregate into more macro and fundamental organizational changes over time. This category is often called organizational development (OD). It has the common presumption that change is emergent, meaning it is “*the realization of a new pattern of organizing in the absence of explicit a priori intentions*” (Orlikowski, 1996, p. 65; Weick & Quinn, 1999, p. 375).

These two categories have also been combined in the same model. Portraying organizational growth as alternating stages of change and development, Greiner (1972) called such a trajectory “*evolutions and revolutions as organizations grow*”. This sequential phasing of different change forms was later labelled the punctuated equilibrium paradigm (Gersick, 1991) or the punctuated equilibrium model (Miller & Friesen, 1980; Tushman & Romanelli, 1985). Duncan (1976) used contingency theory to provide a prescriptive model for two basic organizational processes innovation and implementation which requires different organizational design (p. 185). His contribution lies in the articulation of when and how to switch between the two processes. Duncan’s argumentation is based on the premise that an organization just can handle one process at a time. More recently, we have seen contributions emphasizing that different change efforts and processes can coexist and take place in parallel (Langley & Denis, 2006; Meyer & Stensaker, 2006; Stensaker et al., 2002). Our research model is based on how these two processes coexist in an extended understanding of design, change, and sustainability (Jevnaker & Olaisen, 2021).

Almost everyone who writes about change bases their argumentation on a paradigmatic assumption that change adds to the complexity of an organization, which is the same as assuming that stability and equilibrium are the typical attributes of organizational life. We turn this dominant assumption around and work on the premise that both episodic and continuous organizational change is a standard and wanted situation in most firms. Such changes occur primarily as persistent dynamic processes (Tsoukas & Chia, 2002), and successive projects are present simultaneously either as separate actions, parallel, or intertwined processes. The dynamic processes contrast the punctuated equilibrium model, assuming that organizations experience relatively long periods of stability or equilibrium, punctuated by condense periods of revolutionary change (Gersick, 1991; Miller & Friesen, 1980; Romanelli & Tushman, 1994; Tushman & Romanelli, 1985). Stability is not a wanted situation but rather parallel or intertwined continuous change processes, design, and sustainability

improvements. Nevertheless, they may be difficult to leverage and realize in beneficial ways, and stabilizing aims, and accomplishments are essential, too.

Viewing organizations as fundamental change-creating entities or processes challenges many of our taken for granted interpretations and raise many essential questions (see e.g., Langley & Tsoukas, 2017). We think it is of utter importance to clarify the mechanisms that energize such organizations because these could significantly contribute to understanding why and how sustainability change activities and design processes occur.

6.3 PERSPECTIVES ON SUSTAINABILITY: THINKING AND TINKERING

Zooming in on leadership for sustainable design in real-world enterprises, we may distinguish between similarities and differences in perspectives, aspirations, practices, and premises. Indeed, numerous companies seem to follow some global trends in management, and leadership ideas may spread almost like a virus (Jevnaker & Olaisen, 2022; see Chapter 2). Our purpose here is not a literature review. Instead, we seek to orient this chapter towards fruitful action-based views on leadership for sustainable design.

Inspired by Ciborra (2009), we distinguish between thinking and tinkering when enterprises engage in design (see Table 6.1). Extending this perspective to leadership with and for sustainability design, we draw on our past research on complex design processes between enterprises and creative design specialists (see e.g., Jevnaker, 2000, 2012).

McDonough and Braungart (2002) distinguish between eco-efficiency and eco-effectiveness. *Eco-efficiency* is a term that emerged from the business actors engaged in the 1992 Rio Earth Summit. Primarily, it means “doing more with less”, including “being less bad”, argue McDonough and Braungart (2002, pp. 51, 67). They point out that in a philosophical sense, “efficiency has no independent value; it depends on the value of the larger system of which it is a part” (p. 65). As a part, it may be beneficial, but “it is not a strategy for success over the long-term”.

Being less harmful “is to accept things as they are” contend McDonough and Braungart (2002). On the other hand, *Eco-effectiveness* is about “doing the right things”, as Peter Drucker (a critical leadership thinker) suggested. Most interesting is that these authors stress that we

Table 6.1 Perspectives on leadership for sustainability action

<i>Leadership for, with, and about sustainability design</i>	<i>Sustainability enterprise thinking</i>	<i>Sustainability enterprise tinkering^a</i>
Aspirations	Eliciting expanded goals for People, Planet, and Profit	Enacting aspirations for recurrent trials related to sustainability-oriented practices
Perspectives	From cradle-to-grave to cradle-to-cradle thinking towards Reduced negative value creation and increased reuse and recycling	Iterative creative improvization, co-design and design experiments for long-lived products, reuse, elimination of waste
Practices	Corporate communication Measure-oriented indicators Eco-philosophic practices	Parallel or intertwined processes are redesigning symbols, objects/services, organization, business models/strategies, and partnerships
Premises	Spans from principles of eco-efficiency and greenwashing to eco-effectiveness, including collaboration for the common good	Discovering, recreating, and refining premises and making sense of design principles in action

^aInspired by Ciborra (2009) and research in creative design-oriented enterprises by Jevnaker (2000, 2012)

humans can do better than “to be less bad”. What about an entirely different model? What would it mean to be 100% good, they ask?

6.3.1 *Sustainability as Action-Based Practices*

Ciborra (2009) distinguished between thinking and tinkering. He observed that enterprises tended to drift and fail in their planned ICT projects. Inspired by this information and knowledge management literature, we argue that merely abstract thinking for the People, Planet, and Profit (see Chapter 1) is not enough for leveraging and accomplishing sustainable design. Interestingly, Ciborra noticed that successful companies tended to spend a lot of their time trying out or tinkering.

As explained by Ciborra (2009), tinkering or bricolage can be the constant re-ordering of people and resources, the constant “trying out” in permanent dynamics of change.

6.3.2 *The Roles of Leadership in Sustainable Design*

Sustainable designing can be regarded as a kind of paradoxical collaborative action (Jevnaker, 2014). Firstly, working closely with independent-minded designers in strategically essential areas both in-house and out-of-house across several customers, suppliers, and knowledge networks may seem paradoxical to everyday thinking. Secondly, experimenting with uncommon, somewhat wild ideas may seem even more so.

However, as we shall explore, experiences from corporate innovations in office furniture-making suggest that it can be gratifying to adopt and foster uncommon design ideas and work persistently to make leaps in different and sustainable ways.

6.3.3 *Reflections on Organization Changes*

Classifying theories of change, Van de Ven and Poole (1995) use the expression motor as a valuable metaphor for investigating organizational changes, “*we will call them motors—to explain how and why changes unfold*” (p. 511). They ended up with four organizational development and change theories—evolution, dialectic, life cycle, and teleology. These categories rely on ideal motors of change which can be recognized as a distinct action style (p. 524). A metaphor allows us to stretch our thinking and deepen our understanding, allowing us to see things in new ways and act in new ways (Morgan, 1980, 1986). The motor metaphor may be good because it is associated with energy that propels organizational changes, but the type of changes they refer to lies mainly within the traditional paradigm of change as development or extraordinary activities for filling gaps.

Our focal firm Flokk tries to drive changes in the industry due to the often-changing business conditions that others must accept. In a situation like this, we think it is appropriate to swap the mechanical machine associations from the motor metaphor with some more dynamic and opens possibilities for multi-tasking; working with several practices in some combinations. We suggest using the metaphors energy and processor for catching the kind of changes we have discussed. The metaphor of *energy*

pays attention to what fuels or energizes the organization to bring about proactive changes (or possibly resistance). Whereas the metaphor of a *processor*—a central processing unit (CPU), or better: *processing* that is not only allowing for but encompassing distributed programming, leadership, expertise, and engagements from manyplaces—contains options for a variety of ways of performing or enabling changes. This can help us understand processing and practices with other entities, for example, through parallel, simultaneous, or combined processing of activities, which we will come back to and reflect upon.

Nevertheless, before that, we dwell on the role of the mediating technology. March (1991) distinguished exploration and exploitation as two adaptive processes in organizations. The winning design is explored and understood to be able to exploit them in the production process. According to March, exploring and exploiting simultaneously is necessary to be competitive, requiring an everchanging competence—knowledge, experiences, and attitudes working together from what we know to what we do not know that we know as an imaginary mental process.

6.4 PUZZLING EXAMPLE: A STRATEGIC DESIGN INNOVATION-ORIENTED CASE

In the following, we draw on one company case and its brand, HÅG, a former separate company that today is a crucial part of the more significant concern, Flokk Ltd. Within the furniture industry, Flokk is a leader when it comes to sustainability, with decades-long, puzzling history of sustainable innovation dating back for example to 1990 when HÅG was the first company in Norway to hire a full-time sustainability officer. Even before, designing sustainable or long-life products was attended to in HÅG's designer collaborations (Jevnaker, 1995, 2012). What is puzzling then is the transformative evolution of this local chairmaker and its working relations in the product design development, communication, distribution, and customer and end-user contacts. Organizing design has evolved from a limited competence situation without any professional designer assistance towards a knowledge creating and dynamic sustainability design approach. Drawing on several decades of innovation-rich development history, this sustainability design evolution with Flokk is of interest to other companies, managers, and specialists.

The case material we draw on in the following is collected in research by one of us (Jevnaker) and is also assembled from the company's

current open sources (own webpage, videos, annual reports). The case research encompasses several rounds of extended interviews, multiple company visits, numerous conversations and events over time (1991–2021), allowing a recurrent initiation and inspection also of core products and work processes. The field work also included two research visits with rich informal dialogues and guided tours at HÅG’s factory as well as participation in many internal and external events, seminars, and exhibitions (see details in Jevnaker, 1991, 1993, 1995, 2000, 2005, 2012, 2014). The method is a qualitative inquiry following this company and some of its key designer relations in some projects and over time—from the early 1990s onwards for an explorative, phenomenological purpose.

In this paper, we have used Eisenhardt and Graebner (2007) to build a theory from single cases that fit into the Flokk (and embedded HÅG) case, drawing on a longitudinal study by one of us (see Jevnaker, 2012). We have further used Yin (1984) for the understanding of case research. Finally, we have used Schwartz and Stensaker (2014) for phenomenon-driven research. These methodological approaches have formed the basis for our explorative research.

The Norwegian company HÅG was established in Oslo in 1943, but it was almost bankrupt in 1974. However, a new leader and novel design development approach collaborating with external design studios for the first time helped re-focus the company and leverage its office chairs (Jevnaker, 1995). Production was already moved to another region (Røros), while the headquarters remained in Norway’s capital (Oslo). Since 1974, HÅG has taken advantage of creative designer-enterprise relations and manifold expertise in design development, delivery, communication, and corporate culture (Jevnaker, 2012). Developing high quality, innovative products, the company eventually succeeded in international markets, combined with continued leverage of product designs and production and delivery systems. This innovative company HÅG was later sold and merged with several other furniture companies into Flokk, another story. Flokk in 2020 had a turnover beyond 3 billion NOK and is a current market leader in office chairs in Europe (2020 Annual report).

In 2011 Flokk published its first sustainability report in GRI Format (Global Reporting Initiative), a thorough examination of every aspect of the company, creating a picture of their overall impact on the environment. Total design principles were introduced back in 1993. They started to use consumer recycled materials in some chair models, and “we’re progressed the journey since then”, reflected Christian Lodgaard,

Senior Vice-president (VP) of Products and Brands in Flokk (Jevnaker's meeting observations at Flokk's head office, January 28, 2020, and see Flokk, 2021).

One example of Flokk's sustainability work is the use of recycled plastics, which has increased from year to year, reaching 735 tonnes in 2020, an increase from 664 tonnes the previous year. In 2021 the company targets a further increase to 1,000 tonnes (Flokk, 2021).

Our case firm Flokk has characteristics that challenge the dominating categories of organizational change, including the assumption that change efforts are extraordinary. Here episodic change and continuous development are typical properties of daily life. Processes of change take place both in parallel and as intertwined activity streams, both as stepwise punctuated change and organizational development, both as planned and emergent development, and both in the domains of exploitation as well as exploration. All these dichotomies have their more or less separate ongoing academic conversations (see, e.g., Pettigrew et al., 2001). Relating the case to these established streams of consciousness would imply cutting the empirical phenomenon into pieces and place them in *á priori* defined entities. In our view, this would not add much to the existing understanding and knowledge of design and change management. Instead, we try to conceptualize the phenomenon of parallel or intertwined multi-tasked changes where sustainability and design are parallel to or in fact incorporated into other multi-tasked changes.

6.5 DISCUSSION: SHORT-SIGHTED OR CONTINUED SUSTAINABILITY DESIGN

6.5.1 *Tinkering and Thinking Are Intertwined*

From the early 1990s, both sustainability thinking and active experimentation have been present in the product design development of HÅG. In visits to the company's product development department, the researcher interviewed the company's first sustainability officer Kjersti Kviseth, and the supportive Carl P. Aaser, VP, head of research and development (R&D), later became VP for Environment (see Jevnaker, 1995, 2012). Kviseth, the sustainability officer, an educated industrial designer, enacted the then emergent sustainability thinking inside HÅG while having an open eye on what happened in research institutes and other knowledge-based milieus. The head of the product development department, Aaser,

a highly experienced and reflective engineer, paid attention to several concrete sustainability concerns, such as industrial materials and chemicals used in office chairs. As VP for R&D, he took initiatives for designing chairs from the outset in more sustainable ways, including experimenting with fewer parts and reducing any toxic ingredients or otherwise non-sustainable elements in HÅG's products (Jevnaker, 1995, 2012). He was also engaged in raising the sustainability aspirations beyond the standard industry levels, together with Torgeir Mjør Grimrud, HÅG's CEO and a later enthusiastic chairman. Grimrud, Kviseth, and Aaser were instrumental in installing comprehensive thinking from the very start in exemplary development projects and, more generally, inside the company culture.

This broader sustainability thinking seems to have evolved and got a new surge, such as under the regime of the current VP for products and brands, Christian Lodgaard, rather than drifted away in Flokk's later design and developments (see recurrent interviews, Jevnaker, 2012). Furthermore, it probably helped that Flokk's key managers and teams have been working recurrently crossover with manifold highly qualified and reflexive industrial designers and engineering designers, as well as environmental and usability experts, in-house as well as out of the house. One of HÅG's lead designers historically since 1974 is Peter Opsvik. This thoughtful designer and his studio team have worked highly human-centred as well as nature and environmentally conscious when co-creating in the Opsvik design studio as well as back and forth and interactively with HÅG's project design teams, leaders, and specialists. They have argued for "long-life products" and the importance of sitting dynamically in chairs adapted to man's work activities (Jevnaker, 1991, 1993, 2005, 2014; Opsvik, 2008). One highly experienced project manager of HÅG, who was an educated physiotherapist, started to work at Opsvik's studio leaving HÅG formally (Jevnaker, 2012).

Designing beyond the standards of the field involved not only creative expertise in cross-disciplinary collaborations. It involved much tinkering and thinking imaginative "what if" and "so what", as well as "why" and "where" the existing or new ways could be changed to become essential for the active sitting and good everyday use aims.

When talking recurrently with firsthand designer specialists, top leaders and managers from several functions at HÅG and Flokk and also participant-observing some external and internal meetings, we were shown actual workings with models, materials, parts, and developmental

and communicative processings of their current, recent, or past design work. Always with objects and humans in dynamic use situations, together with rich reflections. Showing tangible and explaining intangible details illuminated ways their work involved closely intertwined doings, sensings, and sayings, whether in the workshops or in special events engaging with the users' varieties of active sitting; e.g., in an office open landscape or in a chamber music group or in a multi-task home work zone, or in another design firm's studio. One of us took part in learning events both at the designer Opsvik's studio and with the whole HÅG company present. Interestingly, the meaning-making was not merely a combined social and material engagement. Design sense-making was closely entangled with revisiting and literally being *in* the material, that is, sitting actively in the models and working with re-inventing or refining potential physical movements, materials, and components, while also taking in wild inspiration. Images shown included, for example, sitting like a bird in a tree or riding on a horse in a saddle or sitting naturally on your knees. One designer or one company could not have accomplished all this alone, one of the early innovators involved in this active sitting conception reflected (Jevnaker, 1995, 2012).

Over time, this enterprise has become dedicated to sustainable design and argues they “will continue moving forward” and “have set a number of ambitious goals” to track their progress, according to its leaders actively. As argued by the current CEO, Lars Röiri (Flokk, 2021):

When designing new products, we follow long-standing circular design criteria intended to limit the environmental footprint of our products. These guide how we assemble products and the materials we use and even dictate our high quality and timeless design, making for long-lasting products.

Currently, every Flokk product is designed according to a concept they call 5III—five circular design principles on three (III) focus areas that come together to create one sustainable lifecycle (see Fig. 6.1).

Accordingly, working with combining environmental, health-centred, and resource-saving focus areas and selective design principles has become essential for this enterprise. Nevertheless, the tinkering and its thinking for the common good based on the company's mission are complex.

Flokk managers and designer allies early on took into consideration what happened also after the chairs had left the factories, in sales and



Fig. 6.1 Flokk’s principles for sustainable design (Source Flokk)

transportation, as well as how they tended to become used by end-users. Chairs could be left in locked positions, but interestingly, even a transportation employee in HÅG could explain the chairs’ embodied possibilities (Jevnaker, 1995, 2012). From own research in other settings, we know that, for example, employees in retail contribute as “silent designers” by rearranging objects and materials in outlet spaces (Brøgger & Jevnaker, 2014). This silent designer-notion refers to people who do not call themselves designer and who may be unaware of their actual designing, which may lead to malpractices (see Gorb & Dumas, 1987; Jevnaker, 2012). By contrast, the extended and highly entangled tinkering and thinking with specialist designers and design-aware teams in Flokk and its partners over time point to the often overlooked *enduring organizing* for creative, sustainable design in and between enterprises and creative groups in theory and practice (Jevnaker, 2012; see also Chapter 1).

6.5.2 *The Paradoxical Roles of Leadership in Making Sustainable Design*

Good frameworks for understanding and working with sustainable design must make it possible to understand the continuous challenges and possibilities in design. Recycling is but one strategy in contemporary views

on waste. Indeed, “blindly adopting superficial environmental approaches without fully understanding their effects can be no better—and perhaps even worse—than doing nothing”, argue McDonough and Braungart (2002, p. 59). Overall, these authors argue for remaking the way we make things, which seldom is a straightforward process. Drawing on our past research, we reflect next on the paradoxical roles of leadership in remaking design approaches.

Flokk’s company motto is “different and better”, a motto rooted in HÅG’s entrepreneurial history and design leadership culture. Designers, managers, and developers have participated in rethinking sitting (Opsvik, 2008), which means they work with innovative new products inspired by sitting and seating artefacts in moving activity, health, and the environment (Jevnaker, 1995, 2012).

Considering the leadership roles in how this company makes things, there is much to learn for all parties experiencing the dynamics enacted by particularly creative sustainable design endeavours (Jevnaker, 1993; Jevnaker & Bruce, 1999). As the Scandinavian case illustrates, it has been possible to enact severe and playful work to achieve something more like long-lived products (Opsvik, 2008) with no or trim toxic materials (Flokk, 2021).

The efforts across time and several generations of chairs turned out to be essential, although design and development projects were organized ad hoc or, to some extent, project-by-project (Jevnaker, 2012). Sustainability also required longer-term design orientation after-sales and towards a variety of contemporary and future users. Continuous design became essential even when working with several quite different external designers. Moreover, the first environmental-responsible manager reflected that perhaps over 100 ways an office chair could be improved after being first developed and launched (Jevnaker, 1995, 2012).

Furthermore, the drive to leverage eco-effective design did not come mainly from the legislation in this field. Instead, the standard legislation in several advanced industrial countries could be experienced as “a barrier” to market unique office chairs beyond existing standards at the time, according to our informants (Jevnaker, 1995, 2012).

Behind the active sitting philosophy, we could identify recurring efforts of making sense (cf. Weick, 1995) of what was being designed and developed. Also, as identified in all the involved cases, reframing the new may need to be conceived, tested, and continually worked upon and

refined (Jevnaker, 1993, 2014). Leveraging this kind of evolvement is essential because creative designing can change or shape the boundaries of many other business functions, from procurement, production, marketing, branding, logistics, and customer interactions (Jevnaker, 2012; Jevnaker & Bruce, 1999; Press & Cooper, 2003).

As happened at another furniture-making company STOKKE (see, also, Høidal, 2007), which was also involved in this active sitting experimentation in a group of designers, innovators, and business parties, the whole traditional sales apparatus was at some point replaced, and new people were recruited (Jevnaker, 2012). New middle managers and many international links and intermediate entities have, however, learned to communicate and grasp the “what” and “why” of both STOKKE’s and HÅG’s as well as Flokk’s new offerings. Interestingly, a broad ‘inaugurative learning’ (Jevnaker, 1993) into essential aspects of sustainable design unfolded recurrently in and across these organizations. Also, verbal communication and visuals such as video recording for the sustainable design help do the signalling and “talking” over time. When constituting both a co-creating intensive technology and a mediating (signalling and linking) technology, creative design may thus rightly be regarded as challenging to manage (Jevnaker, 2014). Difficult because creative design embraces many dynamic factors in human workplaces, health, and environmental concerns. As pinpointed by Atle This-Messel, Flokk’s current Vice-President Environment:

As a company and a manufacturer of high-end office seating, we are acting now. Globally, perhaps the difference we are making today is modest. Nevertheless, our mission—as our products, name, and philosophy grow increasingly familiar in the market—will help seed other initiatives and inspire others to change their behaviour.

In other words, the mission of Flokk works like a vision for growth and changing behaviours in their markets.

6.5.3 Requirements for Successful Proactive Change and Design Efforts

Change efforts tend to be reactive, discontinuous, and often triggered by a situation of organizational crisis (By, 2005, p. 370). It is to say that organizations need a clear impetus before they change. HÅG started its

turnaround with a new collaboration with a professional designer in the midst of being almost bankrupt, in the early 1970s (Jevnaker, 1995). In our Flokk case, it is however not only crisis or imperfections that trigger managers and specialists to work with changes but they are already practising proactive design innovating based on established competencies working with and seeking to articulate future user needs in mind. In fact, leading managers have shifted several times but recurrent strivings and loops of innovative and sustainable designing seem incorporated (Jevnaker, 2012) in the whole enterprising as a *formative underlying context* (Ciborra, 2009).

Here, knowledge and competence are not entirely internal in the firm but unfold interestingly through recurrent co-creation in designer-enterprise partnerships and enduring experimentation also in some designers' workshops (Jevnaker, 2005, 2012; Opsvik, 2008). These findings highlight the importance of leveraging not only sustainable design as a "thing" but rather sustainability-oriented practices in designer-enterprise relations (Jevnaker, 2012). The strivings in collaborative "design alliances" (Bruce & Jevnaker, 1998) may unfold in both temporary and enduring processes (Table 6.2).

The practices unfolding in creative, sustainable design strivings can in fact help strategically reimagine and impact multifaceted enterprise processes over time but may also be less understood in other cases (Jevnaker & Bruce, 1999).

Flokk today has enough internal knowledge, experience, and competence to discuss, evaluate, and set a direction for potential co-creating partners, and various subcontractors. They continue to experiment with several design groups, working with sustainability in action issues embedded in specific innovation projects, as well as working with concrete development aspirations over time. Managers and design specialists engage in transdisciplinary learning and future imagination as well as own history cultivation, as we could observe in design seminars at the factory in Røros and at the Oslo headquarter. The episodic changes represented with the building of new, contemporary but long-lived design furniture have become strategically oriented practices guided by a dynamic vision about future needs in the market supported by in-company competences.

Table 6.2 Sustainable designing as potential multifaceted organization practices^a

<i>Ingredients in sustainable designing</i>	<i>Organizing and engaging in temporary design projects</i>	<i>Engaging in and cultivating enduring sustainability-oriented strivings</i>
Creative scanning and exploration with design expertise, corporate people and users in varieties of settings	Enacting and exploring real-world and prototypical use situations and hunches for problems and solutions Interacting with and discussing ideas and models Articulating possible and actual sitting dynamics and their meanings	Interacting and collaborating in everyday work with stamina over time Recently “fumbling for” and articulating new meanings in and across boundaries Cultivating spaces for continued creation and philosophizing
Design tinkering with objects, materials, activities in dynamic sitting situations in social workplaces	Having a variety of expertise, parts, and models around when building and trying out combinations	Revisiting parts and prototypes when co-creating in and across several everyday work processes and functions
Reimaginative philosophising with others	Working creatively with possible new or different combinations Reimagining with wild ideas and metaphors what can become fruitful and appropriate	Enacting inspirations and steps towards improved innovations when reframing actualities and possibilities over time

^aExpanding on Jevnaker (1995, 2005, 2012)

6.5.4 *On Vision and Mission*

In the literature on strategy, organizational change, and design, we find various meanings of the expression vision. Today many organizations have both a vision and a mission statement. Most of them are unclear, do not motivate people, nor focus attention, and may not mean something to the people in the organization. Hence, most of them seem ineffective as a compelling guiding force. They are usually nothing more than a monotonous stream of words (Collins & Porras, 1991, p. 31).

Both mission and vision statements can be “*artifact concepts which are deliberately used to create purposeful, collective action. They do so by making gaps visible*” (Normann, 2001, p. 276). Vision is about an envisioned

future (Collins & Porras, 1996) and implies a gap between an imagined future state and the present state, or situation. The mission of a company expresses its *raison d'être*; why does it exist? What is the role in contemporary society related to the value-creating domain in which it participates? So, the mission describes what difference the existence makes to the context where the firm functions. Normann (2001, p. 278) discusses interrelations between mission and vision. One of his conclusions is that remembered leaders are those who had a vision formulated in terms of a mission—“*vision as mission design entrepreneurs*”.

Extending Normann's view, the leaders of Flokk and some of their long-term design thinkers will be remembered for having co-created and formulated a vision in terms of a mission. This became embedded in an enlarged sustainability societal thinking, e.g., through HÅG's former CEO recurrently stressing that “man is not created to sit” and adding images of dynamic sitting (on a horseback, etc.) and always concluding “the world needs to be refurnished!” (Jevnaker, 1991, 2012).

For Selznick (1957), an organization can emerge if it stands for values, mission, or purpose, meaningful in a larger context. However, it is not enough with a fit between purpose and values, on the one hand, and the external world, on the other. The mission is institutionalized when the fundamental values are embodied in the organization. Selznick (1957, p. 141) called “distinct competence” the ability to achieve a fit between the external world, the purpose and value, and the social organization that embodies them. We argue it is a systemic concept expressing dynamic fit between elements but this can be better understood as recurrently co-created through activities (Follett, 1924/1951; Jevnaker, 1993). It is such distinctive competence in action that energizes the proactive changes in Flokk. Flokk has found a meeting point between effectiveness and efficiency based upon tinkering and thinking, including internal and external co-creation and coordination.

Finally, how to understand this broader energizing and dynamic duration of sustainable design in a metaphorical sense? We acknowledge it is not easy to put into words how creative, sustainable design actually unfolds when becoming “multi-tasked” in the everyday concrete workings often continuing in the designer's or co-innovator's dreaming, as well as in further experiments, conversations, and eventual realizations, sometimes becoming seen as constitutive elements in organizational changes. Jevnaker (2012) used the metaphor of white ocean to capture the intense

interactions and creative breakings in design innovation. Here we have drawn on two other metaphors used in organization literature.

Energy comes from co-creating vision, mission, and values infused as meaning in the organization (i.e., from distinctive competence), reinforced by consistent managerial decisions and shreds of evidence of success “that speaks to” the organization that mission and values create appropriate results. In addition, coherence between expressed wants and actual behaviour (walk the talk) infuses energy by creating a sense of trust and acknowledgment between employees.

The *processor* metaphor opens creative thinking on how change and design processes flow and can be managed, such as sequential (batch), parallel, and selectively combined activities. However, new combinations can also be intendedly or spontaneously probed, for example, in interaction design, in complex, uncertain tinkering between companies and design groups. We propose complex and uncertain sustainable design really needs both distinctive competence and energizing in action to progress and become sustained. Interestingly, design thinking in-between HÅG and design studios became openly enlarged and could recurrently suffuse the whole Flokk.

6.6 CONCLUSIONS

This chapter unpacks the critical twin aspects of design in enterprises and design for ecological sustainability regarding design tinkering and design thinking. Grounded in our research, we also identified the importance of sustaining imaginative mission work over considerable time.

To contribute to the development of knowledge concerning organizational change, we set out to conceptualize the phenomenon of proactive design changes. We wanted answers to how contemporary change and design processes and their interplay can occur in a competitive and also collaborative economy.

In conclusion, we found that sustainable design became realized through several emergent and dynamically combined processes; e.g., both in projects and in everyday work practices. Recurrent tinkering and thinking were unfolding with design specialist studios, cross-disciplinary teams, and entrepreneurial managers, affecting also employees and collaborating partners. The specific strivings over time contributed to reimagining better and different long-lived products for active sitting. Taking in firsthand experiences from within as well as following several of the

key actors and their practices from the outside, tinkering and thinking through innovative and sustainable design strivings was no doubt entangled.

Focussing on the change-makers in Flokk, we wanted to identify and capture elements that energize and characterize change and design in such organizations. Primarily we wanted to conceptualize the phenomenon of interest, not test theories. We think we have reached a set of significant contributions to the topic:

First, in this enterprise study focussing on proactive changes, dynamic tinkering, and emergent thinking, we found that organizational technology (Thompson, 1967) was essential for understanding change and complex design processes. In this kind of industry, this unfolds, for example, in both intensely interacting design development workshops and in fast long-linked technologies from the customer order to the delivery, as in the Flokk case. It is almost unbelievable that this issue has not been a central topic in organizational change and design research.

Second, based on empirical observations, we revisited two metaphors, energy and processor, with associations to how proactive change and dynamic design can take place. In complex and uncertain sustainability-oriented design, energizing seems critical to enact, leverage, and continue sustainable innovation work. Processing can perhaps help us understand to both focus and creatively recombine our performative processes, to make sustainable design work. At Flokk, efforts started small as is common in innovation, but processing recurrently over many years with transdisciplinary expertise and leadership with other development processes and materials close to hand, helped co-create sustainability-oriented practices. These practices recently became translated into a combination of five specified design principles for three focus areas.

Third, the partnerships, as well as continuous collection and sharing of knowledge across entities through formal and informal channels are of crucial importance for creating and selecting solutions and linking activities in the direction of the dynamic understanding of their motto and mission.

We have shown that the categories of continuous and episodic change and sustainable design can be intertwined in proactive co-creating change efforts. It should be interesting to explore to which extent this is due to dynamics in the contextual situation or has broader relevance for emergent practicing.

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PART III

Advancing Theory and Practice



The Future of Knowledge Work: Working Smarter and Greener in the Age of Digitalization

Abstract This chapter investigates what forms the knowledge work design in the future on a corporate level. The future is 2030. The methodology includes 20 in-depth interviews (before and during the Covid-19 worldwide pandemic) with researchers working with these issues in the Swedish telecommunication company Telia and the Norwegian telecommunication company Telenor. These are both companies making their living from understanding the future of work on a corporate level. The difference between the two rounds of interviewing is that online homework is the actual work situation in the pandemic March–April 2020, and the interviewed believe that 50% of the work will be done online outside the workplace. The corona crisis changed the way we are working for the future.

Keywords Corona crisis · Future knowledge work · Innovation · Digitalization · Robots · Artificial intelligence

7.1 INTRODUCTION

In today's increasingly knowledge-intensive and turbulent economy, organizations are facing new levels of uncertainty and ambiguity. Many businesses must become more flexible and adaptive to the future. However,

they face an oxymoronic situation where efficiency calls for standardization and routinization (Taylor, 1911). Effectiveness calls for flexibility and innovative, creatively adapted or tailor-made solutions (see e.g., Johannessen, 2019; Krogh et al., 2000). In the literature, these considerations often are treated as separate streams of knowledge. For example, the KM literature has a bias in considering knowledge as a “thing” that should be distributed through digitalized processes, gaining efficiency through standardization (Beck, 2016). The corona crisis has given us a new perspective on the dependencies between corporations and society. The national dependencies have been more robust, and the global dependencies lesser. Globalization will probably never have the same meaning as before the corona crisis. The workplace of the future is not one concrete “thing”. Still, a creation based upon subjective speculations about the consequences of globalization, technology, and the corona crisis for how we are organizing work in the future.

According to the education philosopher John Dewey (1916, p. 102), education for perceiving changes is essential:

A society which is mobile, which is full of channels for the distribution of a change occurring anywhere, must see to it that its members are educated to personal initiative and adaptability. Otherwise, they will be overwhelmed by the changes in which they are caught and whose significance or connections they do not perceive.

The Coronavirus has recurrently closed down most countries and cities, forcing a large part of the workforce to work online. The calculation from the IMF shows that the world economy will decrease in 2020, with five percent of the BNP. We have anyhow kept the output very high during what is called the worst economic crisis since 1929. The growth in three of the world’s largest economies China, Japan, and South Korea, is still positive for the first quarter of 2020 (IMF World Outlook June 2020). For Scandinavia, the subject of this study, the first quarter showed a growth of the BNP of 0.5% (Swedish Work Institute, 2020). All this tells us that working online from home has worked well concerning handling all information-based work either individually or in virtual teams. In Scandinavia, the workforce in knowledge-based professions reported to their leaders at least every week, based in typically autonomous work with others. The leadership and management have to build upon mutual trust and not upon control. Brekke, the CEO of Telenor, announced that 50%

of all work would be done online outside the workplace. According to Brekke (2020), profit and productivity increased significantly in the first five months of 2020 due to online digital work outside the workplace at home and in virtual teams.

The corona crisis had to be handled as fast as possible with a closedown of corporate and societal activities. Solutions and capabilities were more important than professional ranks and positions. The political parties, the trade unions, and the owners cooperated in Scandinavia.

This corporate change literature is about how robots and artificial intelligence will transform working life. The purpose is to understand what the workplace of the future will be. The researchers investigating these issues are writing about substantial changes where robotics and AI will take over the work and where the society will get a well-educated elite of 20–30% succeeding and where the jobs of 50% of the people will change or disappear (Johannessen, 2018).

The literature describes the erosion of the middle class as the almost granted future (Tushman et al., 2010). While the industrial society caused the middle classes to grow and live-in greater comfort, there is much to suggest that the Fourth Industrial Revolution will decimate the middle class. The decimation of the middle class might lead to that power, and authority takes over the arena of knowledge management (Von Hippel & von Krogh, 2003). A lot of the job losses in the corona crisis will not come back, and the crisis might contribute to the faster growth of people out of work than predicted.

Robots and digital informants as well as shifting business models are causing changes in employment structures (West, 2018; World Economic Forum, 2018). Old jobs disappear, and people are out of work. The public and corporate sectors are creating fewer full-time jobs but more part-time jobs. The experience will be a disrupted and transformed work-life. These trends are a direct outcome of the transition to the fourth industrial revolution (Zuboff, 2018).

Robots, nano-computers, and information will interact with each other permeating all areas of employment. Figuratively, we imagine this as neurons communicating in the human brain. Familiarity with contexts and a direct “hands-on” contact required by traditional industrial production will be less critical. The implications for educational institutions and their educational programmes and methods are already apparent (Ziska, 2018).

The robots, nano-computers in networks and informants, will be characterized by a tripartite organization. Firstly, the market develops for robot operators who will not need background knowledge other than experience in the work they perform, i.e., they are skilled production workers and will receive the appropriate training. Secondly, the traditional knowledge professions will be developed by reinforcing and translating their knowledge base about the informants' design and development. Thirdly, new disciplines and trades have generated that model, build and maintain robotic machines, informants, and nano-computers. Robots, artificial intelligence, and informants are giving rise to such momentous changes that it is difficult to envisage how working life will develop in the future (see e.g., Dignan, 2019; Zuboff, 1988, 2019). To predict the future is anyhow difficult as the Coronavirus has demonstrated, nearly all predicted we would get the worst stock market crisis since 1929, but as of June 12th (2020) the stock market is up by 25%.

7.2 PROPOSITIONS

The study propositions are:

1. The corporate changes owing to AI, robotics, and new information and communication technology (ICT) will be smaller than anticipated and done by a step by step change with more knowledge workers than ever implementing the changes over time.
2. The Coronavirus has forced the workforce to work at home using software like zoom to communicate and cooperate. We will continue the distance work independent of the workplace, time, and geography.
3. The environmental issues will be handled more seriously both by corporations, nations, the EU, and global cooperating agencies, increasing the reduction of the global temperature and CO2 gases.

7.3 STUDY DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

The study is an explorative study using an interviewing methodology (20 in-depth interviews in total) together with the literature, along with our interpretation, imagination, and intuition. We interviewed five researchers in the future research division of Norwegian *Telenor* (The world 7th

largest telecommunication company) about their future workplace views. We also conducted five interviews at the *Swedish* telecommunication company Telia, Future work-life department (The world 12th largest telecommunication company). One of the authors (Olaisen) did the interviews in April 2019 and followed up in April 2020 (during the Coronavirus pandemic) with ten telephone interviews in Telia (5) and Telenor (5) about how the coronavirus situation changed the working life. The interviewing with corporate researchers allowed for both exploration and meaning-making. The reflection and dialogue with the Telenor and Telia researchers represent a clarified subjectivity (see Chapter 3) of a future possibility.

7.4 CORPORATE FINDINGS FOR THE FUTURE OF 2030

Based on this study, we have in the following concluded the interpretive results from Telenor and Telia. The findings are:

Artificial Intelligence (AI) and robotics will be an incremental revolution introduced step by step.

The Coronavirus has reorganized work as online work at home, and a more significant part of the online work will organize as online digital work at home and virtual teamwork.

Video conferences have come to stay, giving less business travelling.

Greener national supply-chains will partly replace the global supply chains.

The workforce will be more disciplined and loyal, have better competence (knowledge, skills, and attitudes), and more women as middle managers and top managers.

The incentive system will be based more upon an internal corporate pipeline.

The corporations will take a more energetic responsibility for greener solutions and the climate.

The households will be using more reused goods, travelling less, and have a greener living focus.

Researchers in both companies state the need for knowledge about different future scenarios, a dynamic understanding of the market, and the importance of corporate and professional networks.

7.4.1 *The Scenarios for the Future Less Critical in the Corona Situation*

The future scenarios describe “continuing as before”, “the worst scenarios”, and “the best situations” and the consequences of these scenarios. The scenarios are the *eye towards the future* every company needs. The interviewees in April 2019 were sure that scenarios for the future would be an essential tool. However, in April 2020, the interviewees have changed to thinking that scenario of the future might be a harmful tool overwhelming the creativity and situational action-based solutions.

None of the corporations had an eye or scenario for the corona situation and they had no scenarios to meet the virus at the time. The workers managed through online homework and collaboration with all tasks. The work performed through self-confidence, engagement, new solutions, and the spirit “you do what you have to do in this situation”. The corona situation had no planned scenario in these corporations but demand a whole new condition to be solved without a planned script.

7.4.2 *Leadership and Organizational Structure*

The corona crisis demands conditions for online work at home. Especially in the large cities in Scandinavia, a large proportion of jobs are characterized by information and knowledge work. The findings before and under the corona crisis correlated since we found that a more involving, engaging, and democratic leadership would also be needed to let more women and men working at a distance to handle the double working dilemma with two jobs, children, and old parents. The corona crisis allowed online home-working than ever experienced—more than eighty percent of the information- and knowledge-based work done at home in Scandinavia. We got more equalness between managers and employees where the managers had to be interested in the situation at home. The corona situation has changed the organizational structure forever, showing that work to some extent can be handled independently of place and time. Solutions and self-confidence became more important than rank, position, and age. Human curling leadership became more important than control and governance.

7.4.3 *Societal Usefulness and Market Dynamics*

A dynamic understanding of the changing market is needed, including delivering greener and smarter products and services. There will be different aspects of the market, and there will be a reused market supporting the sharing economy. There will be a high-end delivery on demand for the most advanced solutions where the key employees form the future together with key customers. The communication here will be a bottom-up connection both to the eye-of-the-future department and the top management group. The corona situation required not a market understanding, but somewhat operational management where the solutions were the key to survival. Implementing an interest rate cut for their bank customers was crucial not only for the customers but also for the society in itself. The link between the usefulness both for the community and the market and the employer became essential.

7.4.4 *Networking*

Networking platforms have many individuals, team, corporate, and professional networks relating to each other. The systems will both be including and excluding members. They are grounded in these three premises—scenarios, dynamic markets, and networking platforms, the chapter elaborates on why and how they may unfold in the future work organizations. The corona situation proves the use of networking technology like never before. The platforms work entailed use of new and old software. The corona case proved that networking is essential for any private and public institution. Under the corona crisis, people handled both new hardware and software according to their needs.

7.5 IMAGINING THE FUTURE CORPORATE SYSTEMS

In other words, the ongoing changes and images of future work related to dynamics also in corporate systems, their everyday practicing. Work-relevant themes of meaning-making that recurred in our study interviews are listed below.

7.5.1 *The Future as a Part of the Supply Chain*

The problem for future work is the need for bottom-up knowledge, sideways understanding, management strategy, and organizational coordination, where the project teams work in collaboration. The successful organization will be an organization combining top-down for efficiency, bottom-up for innovative market solutions, and sideways team working.

The technology as experienced during the corona-pressed situations is creating collaboration between workers in thousands of homes, helping each other find solutions, and helping customers and students get their services.

7.5.2 *The Future Workplace*

The robotics and AI will surely be more advanced, but neither the way of working nor the way of organizing and manage work will change much in the years to come. The processing of information will be an even more critical work task either in itself or integrated into every work task. Every knowledge worker will have to try to see and think through what will be happening today and tomorrow. The past, present, and future will merge into a practical reality. There will be dynamic scenarios together with the corporate, team, and individual networks. Those grasping and understanding the situations working in professional and organizational systems will be the winners. They will be the bottom-up needed for organizations' success, even when still working in a top-down hierarchy delivering products and services through a global logistics. The consumers are already prosumers in services like banks and shops and for IKEA like products. As it looks like the presumption will continue to get even lower prices, but there will also be a reaction promoting that the local small and green is beautiful.

The employees in the foreseeable future in this kind of portrayal will be working smarter and greener, accepting new technology like robotics, and digitalization AI solutions. Zooming into what is already in the making, according to informants in Telenor and Telia, we may capture brighter and darker sides, which both are worth unveiling. The darker side of the corona situation is the high unemployment rate and whether the unemployment rate will stay very high due to AI and robotics solutions in the production of goods and services. The US Fed stated on June 11th that the US's unemployment rate would stay at 10–15% during 2020.

7.5.3 *Education*

The workforce will be better educated than before, and in Scandinavia, half of the population will at least have a bachelor's education in 2030. The women will be significantly better educated than men, and the women's education level will result in more women as middle and top managers. The executive training will be mainly internal, securing a tailor-made education for the corporation. Lifelong learning or re-education will be the situation for all employees. The corona crisis has documented that top-down executive management is not what is needed. What is required is self-confidence for mastering the case and learning by doing. Learning by doing created a culture of collaboration, participation, and engagement. Executive teaching should change to learning by doing and action-based learning following corona experiences. Our findings indicate that internal executive education will be growing while formal external executive education will be in less demand.

7.5.4 *Attitudes*

The workforce will have knowledge, skills, and attitudes defined as competence. The attitudes are critical for the performance and changes. Loyalty, trust, engagement, and discipline will be even more essential than today. Our findings indicate that discipline in performing according to expected standards will be an essential part of the employment and delivery process. Online work from home requires another kind of discipline than at work. According to our findings, there are more significant differences in discipline and delivery during the corona crisis than expected. Those over 50 deliver better than expected, and those less than 30 deliver less than expected. The older workforce has better discipline during the corona crisis.

The working hours will be more flexible with the possibility of working at different sites and hours. A disciplined work routine will be more critical, with more flexible hours and more distance work. To both keep and recruit professionals with these attitudes will be necessary. Employees will have to be able to govern their availability to avoid 24/7 burnout and stress.

7.5.5 *Teamwork*

The employees will be working more in teams, either on-site or virtually. The collaboration will be a critical success factor (Schein, 1993). Solutions and results will be a reward in itself where the team will be more rewarded than today. The conclusion is that more knowledge-based employees perform on itself but are more satisfied with a team performance reward. Solution-oriented team project working people will be necessary.

Social and emotional competence will be in higher demand for mastering collaboration and communication at all levels. The teams will be more diverse, consisting of more nationalities, and many of the units will be virtual teams working globally. For the corporations, it will be more important to get a synergy of all global knowledge worker resources. The corona crisis has shown that global video conferences are working, and there will be less travelling and more local virtual teams in the future.

7.5.6 *Less Travelling Working Smarter and Greener*

The interviewed (in April 2020) labelled the corona crisis as the death of regional, national, and global flying. They believed that virtual teamwork and online zoom conferences would replace more than 50% of the work flights overnight. Between Oslo and Stavanger, Bergen and Trondheim, there were 20 flights daily until March 12, and then only two flights daily as of June 12 (2020). There will undoubtedly be a significant decrease in domestic and international flights since the digitalization has created the tools for online work without travelling.

7.5.7 *Organizational Structure and Project Work*

The project organization form will dominate with less permanent organizational forms and more short-term organizational forms. Most of the work is temporary projects in teams and working groups. A smaller part of the corporation organizes permanently, and a more substantial part organizes as projects and task forces. The best project leaders will be used in different projects (see also Chapter 4) and will learn to develop and discover new project leaders. The corona crisis has organized the work as project work delivered from home reporting milestones in the projects every week. Knowledge work in the future organized as temporary projects with a leadership group formed as a temporary task force.

7.5.8 *The Pipeline*

There will be an administrative and a professional pipeline not only to the best management but to secure that the professionals have their career pipeline. A question is whether managers will be recruited more through internal success and less through external success. The corporations expect to make a pipeline where all employees are working their way through the corporation, managing themselves and others. To recruit and help people learn is expensive, and the corporate leaders intend to make a lifelong pipeline for wanted employees either they are working their way through the professional pipeline or the managerial pipeline. There will be entrepreneurial and innovative corporations in the company circulating employees through creative work sites. The corona crisis has proved the need for a loyal and disciplined workforce. The best way to secure a loyal and disciplined workforce is regarded to be through internal recruited pipelines which get higher responsibilities during many years in the corporation.

7.5.9 *The Working Landscape*

There will be no (or less) single offices, but shared workspaces for manifold sharing and collaboration. The workplaces will encompass aesthetic dimensions including artistically based zones for inspiration and embedded digital interaction tools. Art management will include well-decorated and inspiring workplaces. The corporations will support online work from home through hard- and software, making the workplace “a great place to come” for knowledge sharing, social gathering, meetings in knowledge-intensive corporations.

We may add here that one of the large Scandinavian IT-consulting firms in fact have found it very productive to reorganize their weekly work pattern entirely, with about three days working effectively from home and then two days interacting more fully collaboratively in a dedicated manner in shared spaces at the headquarter. This seems to be an essential change propelled by the prolonged pandemics, but also other forces (e.g., digitalization, urban commuting time, and office space cost-cutting). At the same time, most production and service companies will have their larger work-related value chain as before.

There will be more single women and single men working while there will, at the same time, be more possibility for parents concerning day-care and flexible hours through online homework. The link between the workplace and the home workplace is expected to be more reliable. The delegation of work tasks and digitalized solutions will allow more employees to work from their homes. The working landscapes will include any kind of networking, allowing task collaboration and professional updates and social issues. The global workers might not need to physically meet to have excellent cooperation through their technological networking platforms. The corona crisis has even demonstrated a well-functional zoom socializing eating tapas and drinking wine. Our data indicate higher participation than ever in home zoom meetings and socialization zoom events. More people than ever during the corona crisis are streaming cultural events discussing the events afterward in zoom meetings. According to our data from Telia and Telenor, the amount of streaming in Scandinavia in March 2020 tripled. The corona crisis created another work and cultural landscape. Temporary or permanent? Nobody knows.

7.5.10 *Working Greener*

The employees will be working greener, travelling less, and thinking greener and smarter in all service and product production, according to these future work perspectives. The critical professional story will include working smarter and greener. There will be no (or less) parking spaces. People will as much as possible, be walking, biking, and travelling through public transportation. The Coronavirus has for a period stopped all distance moving domestic and foreign. The driving distance for cars in Norway sunk in March with 65%, and public transportation in Denmark sunk with 54% in March. The worldwide consumption of oil is reduced by 38% from March 2019 to March 2020. The reduction in oil consumption is more significant than the total oil production in Russia and Saudi Arabia. The CO₂ reduction is noticeable and might keep up since Scandinavia's working life has functioned satisfactorily without travelling. The video conferences and zoom conferences have worked well and will probably keep on after the Coronavirus. The paradox is that the corona crisis gave us a greener world. Temporary or permanently? We certainly hope for a permanently greener world.

7.5.11 *Future Incentive Systems*

The incentive system will change to be less individualistic and more team and project oriented. The project team might get incentives according to the short- and long-term results—a transformation from individual to collective team rewards. Innovative solutions, learning by doing, and deliveries in time will be more rewarded than rank and positions. The paradox will be to form an incentive system giving more innovation and creativity together with a more disciplined and loyal workforce.

7.5.12 *Leadership*

The employees may need more leadership (follow up and directions along which to work) and less management (control), but work may unfold in virtual and distributed ways. The leaders must both be charismatic and visionary and have authority. To be able to tell the corporate story of the future, pictures and animation will be an essential leadership attitude.

Change and transformation leadership will be more important than transaction leadership. The top management team will be a temporary task force trying to enable the task force to be more innovative. Leadership in the corona crisis has been a balance between giving directions and less control. Balancing leadership and management might be the critical success factor in the future?

7.5.13 *Living Greener*

The households will be using more reused goods and more short-travelled produce and goods. We may reduce professional travelling, and there will be a sharper focus on local and regional issues. The internet trade might increase upto 50%, and internet trading reduces the need for shopping malls. During the corona crisis, net shopping increased by 40%, and a more significant part of shopping will remain net shopping. The new working generation in Scandinavia has a significant focus on greener living and will focus on their working and network environments.

7.6 DISCUSSION

The telecommunication corporations Telenor and Telia, like most of the literature reported, have no clear opinion of the future defined as 2030. There is an insecurity with a lot of options or possibilities. Perhaps working people will be continuing to do more of what people are doing

Table 7.1 Identified aspects of reimagining future knowledge work changes

<i>Aspects of reimagining future knowledge work</i>	<i>Following continuously: close eye on the future</i>	<i>Working with developing situations: potential coordination</i>
Engagement	How many will/can continue to work productively from home or other places than the corporation?	Are there possibilities for productively combining work places in use (e.g., at home and in office)?
Imagination	In what ways do specialists work smart in diverse places?	Can both knowledge workers and managers dedicate some necessary days for creative, smart interaction?
Integration	How are essential changes incorporated in differentiated work?	How can managers and knowledge workers reinvent their work practices to work greener and smarter?

today. Most of the technology development and AI literature are saying the opposite.

Accordingly, it seems insufficient to just map the future or make a few alternate scenarios once in a while. We will discuss two future-oriented practices below (see Table 7.1).

First, it seems fruitful to keep a “constant close eye on the future”, as we have identified in the two rounds of study interviews with researchers in Telia and Telenor. Secondly, we also propose to “work with the developing situation” in order to make potential creative integration, for example, of apparently opposing views, as suggested by business management scholar Mary Parker Follett (1941/2003).

7.6.1 *A Close Eye on the Future*

As acknowledged by the telecommunication researchers interviewed, the future changes will include further digital industrialization of knowledge work with data-accumulation and control systems at all levels (Susskind and Susskind, 2016). Through the phase of robotics there will be many people without work, which may press down the wages (see, e.g., Jevnaker & Raa, 2017). Globalization and worker migrations will make

the competition for a job stronger. The corona crisis and other emergent forces (e.g., region and nation-related conflicts) might impact globalization and the ways influential nations are dominating global production. The high unemployment rate in the corona crisis might last owing to the use of AI and robotics in the production of goods and services. The unemployment rate in Scandinavia tripled from 4 to 12% in June 2020, and in the USA, UK, France, Japan, Italy, and Spain, the unemployment rate also passed 12% in June 2020 (IMF, 2020; Swedish Workforce Institute, 2020). These unemployment rates and even higher rates might be permanent. According to Telia and Telenor's future research, as much as 50% of the unemployed will never be back owing to AI, Robotics, internet trading, and less demand, especially for travelling services. The long-term economic changes as well as the corona crisis might have given the world a long-time unemployment rate.

On the other hand, the more technology and AI-based the economy become, the more "knowledgeable employee" may be called for by corporations and public institutions. The corporations will require people with knowledge (i.e., excellent education), skills, and the right attitudes. The robotics and AI might give a working market where there will be a higher demand for perhaps one-third of the knowledge workforce. Half of the workforce might provide the world with manual production and services. However, the corona crisis showed how manual goods and service deliveries as well as health and care services also were essential for businesses and the society.

7.6.2 Potential Integration Through Working with Developing Situations

Among the complex developing situations discussed by researchers interviewed, some emergent images recurred. For example, Telenor's solution will be a blue global corporate world producing and delivering less than today with a green world taking care of the climate and the reuse of goods. A yellow human world is taking care of public services. A yellow world with humanity and dignity, together with a green world, might be a utopia. A red world with smaller entrepreneurs and corporations delivering front-end innovation technology and changing the power of the large corporations might be a solution. To have and have not may get a new meaning. Yet, both collaboration and competition among a variety of service companies may evolve.

Productive work with loyalty, discipline, trust, and engagement will still be in high demand. Project organizing and agility have been working well for a generation, and there will be less and less permanent organizational structure, as already suggested by Mintzberg (1979).

There is one-sided literature describing the coming changes as a revolution for the way people are working and organizing (Dignan, 2019). The more empirical research work from researchers living the differences tells us about a future very much like the situation today. There are a few changes in the development of more giant global corporations with more power and more employees. The concentration called the “blue development” by Telenor and Telia might come to a halt after the corona crisis.

Against these conclusions might be the future researcher’s evaluation of the consequences of the corona crisis. The researchers all hold the possibility that the corona crisis might potentially be the end of modern “globalism”, as we know it. The value of local, regional, and national togetherness might come out of the corona, and other emergent forces. The researchers believe that corona has formed permanent changes both in the way we are working and making all the physical exchanges in the global situation less attractive and may also lead to a permanent drop in global trade focussing upon local, regional, and national solutions. The researchers however believe strongly that the interconnected world will be strengthened as a benefit for almost all of us also with a one-world orientation for a greener future.

7.7 FUTURE FRAMEWORK

Keeping a close eye on the future work, uncertainties and new dynamics abound. The future looked bright during the first interview round (April 2019) and less bright the year after (April 2020) from the perspective of the two leading Scandinavian telecommunications corporations. The corporations and societies will gradually adjust step by step towards 2030. The consequences of AI, robotics, and information technology are regarded to be manageable, from our informants’ viewpoints. Scandinavia already works as a testing ground for new technology and knowledge-intensive products/services due to its high penetration of education, distributed wealth, technological adoption, and expected trust and discipline. The individual qualifications are increasing for knowledge (formal

education)—experiences and, most of all, the right professional work attitudes. Social and emotional skills for teamwork will be even more critical. The Scandinavian working arena will have more than 50% women as middle managers and 30% as top managers.

The key corporations will be those implementing AI-and robotics-based products and services. The problematic issue for future work is thus the need for bottom-up knowledge, sideways understanding, and senior-based creative strategy and organizational coordination of project teams working in collaboration at work and at home and in virtual teams. The Coronavirus might have changed the way we are working forever. The optimistic view of the future in April 2019 has changed to a more realistic view in April 2020. Disciplined and loyal knowledge workers are working for years in the corporate pipeline also in the future, but in what ways may the corporate work-life attract new generations? What the researchers in Telia and Telenor call “the long roads corporate man and woman“ are “bred and trained in the same corporation” as “a part of collaborative virtual teams” with “a stronger corporate control and governance”. The fear of a more significant proportion of unemployed knowledge workers has come to stay. However, in some Nordic regions, lack of relevantly skilled people may increase, which is beyond the present study to reflect upon (e.g. in health care, building industry and related services, agriculture, marine industries, etc.).

The main finding is the slow change in Telia and Telenor towards a real knowledge worker using more of his/her working time to significant knowledge issues. The framework for the future will be ordinary people achieving extraordinary results owing to their combinations of education, skills, and attitudes, as well as becoming part of the right project. However, it will also be creative specialists (“talents”) and entrepreneurial groups meeting on digital platforms or in workshops, cafes, coworking spaces, and elsewhere, in and across organizational boundaries. The future of knowledge work is giving people the opportunities to deliver excellent results and rewarded for these results as a part of their team. To make ordinary people, as well as talents, produce extraordinary results in teams is still the future of knowledge work even if the whip of a disciplined and loyal workforce has come to stay. Our prediction of the future in this chapter is however based upon knowledge-intensive corporations.

7.8 CONCLUSIONS AND THE WAY AHEAD

The study has concluded that robotics and AI will be more advanced, but the way people are working and how people are organizing work will change in the years to come triggered by several factors including the corona crisis. We are already into the digital age where AI and robotics will be further introduced step by step as an incremental revolution.

Working both with a close eye on the future and being creative with the evolving situation seems essential. We will continue to work more online from our homes and outside the corporate workplace (see also e.g. Smith et al. & Accenture, 2021). The digitalization of work has come to stay and enterprises such as Telia and Telenor will continue to organize half of the work outside their official workplaces. The professional travelling may be significantly reduced or influenced by allowing the employees to use video conferences and virtual teams. We might work smarter in the digital age where the ongoing fusion of technologies is blurring the lines between the physical, digital, and biological spheres. And yet, team leaders strive with reimagining the concrete development organizing. We will be more concerned about finding greener solutions both for corporate work and for private living.

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Towards the Dynamic Arts of Reimagining Sustainable Organization

Abstract How and why can attractive sustainable organization emerge that is engaging with both humans and nature in deeper integrative manners? This conceptual chapter is investigating how collective knowing develops in arts and organization contexts using artworks by unconventional painters such as Edvard Munch and Håkon Bleken as examples of this process. The necessity of art is giving us a societal meaning of the process of knowing or a scripted story for a deeper undertaking based upon the dynamics of ideas and knowledges in artworks. The reflection and dialogue based on art might contribute to creating something potentially sustainable for institutions as well as citizens. The chapter develops a theoretical framework and theory for how this might work. Dynamic art, design, and innovative processes are processes where the past, the present, and the future melt together in surprising and potentially influential ways.

Keywords Sustainability thinking · Arts management · Knowledge management · Collective knowing · Knowledge sharing · Creativity · Innovation

8.1 THEORETICAL INTRODUCTION

This chapter adopts a view that artwork can offer significant ways of experiencing and knowing that they can become of practical interest for business and society. “Action, though it may have a definitive beginning, never, as we shall see, has a predictable end”, according to Hannah Arendt, 1958/2000, p. 175). The artwork at the University of Oslo, exhibited initially in Berlin, became significant for manifesting Edvard Munch’s paintings as a lasting value for Society (Ydstie, 2011; see Chapter 5).

As already contended by the philosopher David Hume (1739/1969), exciting experiences are fundamental for human understanding. Wittgenstein (Brockhaus, 1990) found in his *Tractatus* that the language including the unsaid was the key to understand the relationship between human beings. He expanded this to music and painting giving an insight into what in particular formed human beings. Wittgenstein (Hacker, 1986) found that music and art gave a deeper lasting understanding of the human mindset. What you cannot talk about you have to be silent about or how is this to be understood? Moving music may be difficult to express and for Wittgenstein this is the unrepresented knowing. Kant (Warburton, 2011) formulated the importance of art and music as a part of the educated mindset. Bourdieu (1993) expanded this into the *habitus* of the educated class where translating art, design, and music into a way of living is important. The educated middle class or the professional class or the creative class have accepted art, design, fiction, and music as a way of being. The class gives art, design, and music cognitive authority in their daily lives and the expressions have then interpretation and model power as a kind of glass the world is observed through (Foucault, 2001).

However, a rich understanding of human knowledge and experiential capacities has tended to become lost in mainstream management studies, control of knowledge is stressed rather than its creation (Von Krogh, 2000). The process of working greener and smarter through new practices requires time for reflection, learning, and knowledge sharing (Jevnaker, 1993; Olaisen & Revang, 2017). The slowness in adapting to emerging ecosystems might be found in hierarchical, top-down management systems not allowing ordinary people to deliver extraordinary results based upon art, new cultural, and social meanings.

Dewey (1934/1980) concluded that all learning happens through experiences where you are participating both through what you are doing

and through all your senses (see Chapter 5). The reflection and dialogues in teams give new mental models of the reality and if exposed to art directly or indirectly this will influence upon the models. Equinor (earlier Statoil) is the largest buyer of contemporary art in Norway and Olaisen (2003) found that the art in all the meeting rooms influenced upon both reflections and dialogues giving a more holistic and friendly atmosphere. Olaisen (2003) and Jevnaker (2005, 2012) supported the activity perspective given by Vygotsky (1934 and 1986). The activity perspective describes a form of scaffolding where a dynamic collaboration of impressions and images creates a changed form of reality.

Art may also contribute to *magica* either as an incremental or radical innovation in products and processes (Jevnaker, 1993). *Magica* is a dynamic process driven by tacit knowledge where the process is unknown, but the result is visible through the creative artefacts and their performative results like, for instance, design and architecture (Jevnaker, 2005, 2014; Olaisen & Revang, 2018). Chaos might also give *magica* (Jevnaker, 1995). The importance of art for our daily lives and leadership is difficult to understand but is a part of collective and individual knowing as a foundation for our professional being (Gombrich, 1986). The theory of art, design, and architecture tells us that the past, present, and future are melting together in sustainable solutions (Osterberg, 1998). Sustainable solutions are needed for businesses and societies (see Chapter 1).

8.2 THE PROBLEM

We will in this chapter investigate how collective knowing develops in art and business contexts giving us an expanded meaning of the process of knowing in practice. Our primary interest lies in how collective knowing develops based on art and culture experiences. Related research questions are what kind of understanding we share, what means are used to enable this development and at what pace this development takes place. We also need to account for the simultaneous existence of less-known aspects or even non-knowing, when facing new or unfamiliar matters or concepts.

To illuminate arts as ongoing practices of knowing and non-knowing, we draw on works in two periods of the painter Edvard Munch. Born in Norway, Munch worked and exhibited in several European countries, he self-reflected in both visual artworks and poetic texts and took part in public exhibitions and debating with others. Although being met with much scepticism, he created seminal works for the future.

By addressing arts as a practice of both collective knowing and non-knowing in performances of high interest for society, our chapter seeks to contribute to the future of businesses for society. The implication of art as practice in the knowledge process in businesses is an ambitious task, but we aim to find a theoretical framework for how this works and to state our point of view.

The remainder of this chapter first explores modes of knowing and forms of representability as two fundamental notions in the art as practice. The chapter then describes the emergence of particular artistic ways of illuminating and gaining new perspectives on collective knowledge. We are anticipating that the modes of knowing and non-knowing are resonating with ongoing individuated and collective processes in art and business. The knowledge dynamics of art and business and an expanded dialogue might thus give meaning both to arts and business.

8.3 METHODOLOGY

We base the methodology of the chapter on an exploration of clarified subjectivity concepts. We are exploring the concepts of knowledge together with the concepts of art and business. Our concepts are sensitizing seeking directions along which to look as opposed to definitive concepts seeking already predefined directions (see Chapter 3). We are further exploring the connections between art and businesses. We are not explaining the connections. We are instead using logic and clarification through our argumentation. We define this as a clarified subjectivity as opposed to pure subjectivity. Our methodological support is found in Feyerabend's book "Against methodology" (1993). Feyerabend argues that any pure falsification and a pure logic process will destroy any creativity or novelty in any science. We are not falsifying anything, but instead exploring possible directions along which to look for art and business. We draw on examples from unconventional artists like Edvard Munch. He explored new ways of painting and printing throughout his lifetime and became influential for international art practices as well as for arts concerning business and society. Munch's art practices are thus of interest for both arts and business.

8.4 MODES OF KNOWING

Rather than talking about types of knowledge, we will discuss ways of knowing as it is our perception that understanding is an always ongoing process. Types of knowledge only provide us with a snapshot of this

process and thus give a static image of expertise. Hence, our modes of knowing model consists of a fluid scale from non-representable knowing to non-representative making the knowledge into representable knowing, where the boundaries between the aspects or levels are unclear, as will be elaborated below (see Table 8.1, and Fig. 8.1, later).

Representability refers to what degree knowledge creations become visualized or externalized and represented in texts, art, and metaphors. We have chosen to name three knowing modes. One is named “non-representable” knowing, which refers to the fact that it is impossible to represent. Another is named “non-represented”, which means that through specific processes or means it is possible to externalize parts of the knowledge. Finally, “representable” knowing is externalized and represented in art and texts, videos, or other media. We can refer to, explain and help transfer, or progress this knowledge through different

Table 8.1 The different modes of knowing in art and business^a

<i>Knowledge perspectives</i>	<i>Individual</i>	<i>Collective group or organization</i>
Expressive theories Unfolded origins Non-representative tacit knowledge	Immanent Subjective Original Human “Core”	Latent Unique Core (possibly distinguished) competences Access to talented people
Transformative theories Interplay and co-creation Experience as creation Representative knowledge	Creating Experiencing Feeling intelligence Participating	Performative as process and product Encounter in communication Enlivened experience in a collective
Mimetic theories Influencers Representative knowledge	Absorbing Imitating role models Rehearsals	Sharing intentions, exemplary works Copying with others Inspiration and imitative exercises
Non-knowledge and ignorance theories Non-representable tacit knowledge	Not-sensing Overlooking Imagining from invisible sources	Blindfolded organizing Performing outside the standard operating procedures Sharing situations of new or unfamiliar practices

^aExpanded from Jevnaker (1993, 1998, 2014)

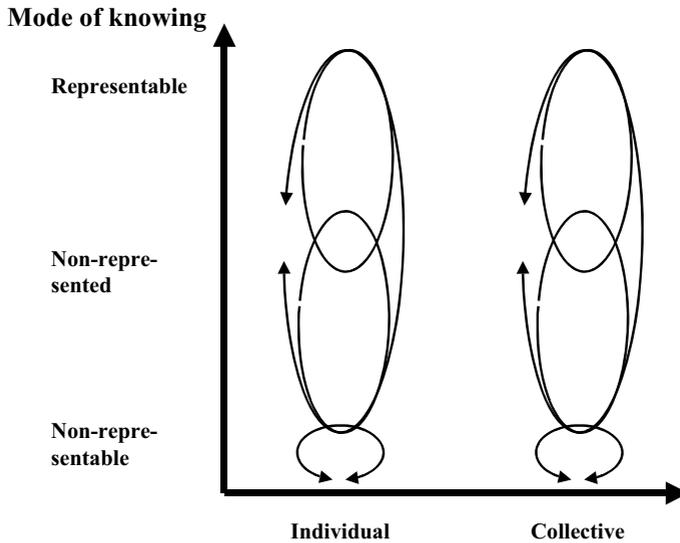


Fig. 8.1 Modes of knowing (Adapted from Olaisen and Revang [2018])

forms of representations. Representable knowledge is the junior professional knowledge used in any training and is the foundation for the superior professional knowledge incorporating knowledge, experiences, and attitudes into own wisdom as an artist, designer, or leader.

Non-representable and non-representative knowledge might also be labelled *tacit* knowledge, and the representative knowledge might be labelled *explicit* knowledge (Polanyi, 1958, 1966/1983). The tacit aspects of the knowledge process are challenging to explore. To explain the process towards the concrete result might be impossible both in art and business. Rotating professional roles and observation might give others the possibility to deliver similar results or knowledge about the imitation of the tacit process. To master a complex knowledge practice (doing) inventively may be far more challenging, which thus affects the organization (Jevnaker, 2014 ; Tsoukas, 2005). The management process is also tacit in the way that we cannot say what works in different situations. When Thompson (2019) summarized management to “all you need is love” that also pinpointed the subjectivity of what works in management. The processes of love, emotions, and intuition are indeed

working, but how and when to use them remains a part of the tacit experienced way of leadership. There are also composition rules to follow and learn in art practices, but how to make them into high art remain a tacit process. Take the process of simplification of anything. There is nothing more challenging and difficult demanding professional knowledge, experiences, and attitudes in all crafts, art, and businesses. The Japanese artist making the sea wave made it in a couple of hours, and it is spread all over the world as better than the reality (Gombrich, 1986).

8.4.1 *Non-Representable Knowing*

Non-representable knowing is a mode that individuals or groups develop over time and that cannot be made fully explicit. Non-representable knowing itself thus takes place as individuals or groups gain experience, but it remains non-representable. Examples of non-representable knowing on an individual level are intuition, imagination, and emotions, although we may of course talk about our ideas. Yet, it may not be easy to express why we make a particular decision, but our “gut-feeling” tells you that it is the right thing to do either you are in business or in arts.

We define non-representable knowing as “What we do not know that we do not know” and “What we do not know that we know”. We will be striving to work with this knowing/non-knowing, which involves tacit and less articulable aspects, but from any great piece of art and a great piece of science and innovation, we know that suddenly one day we feel that we see the light.

8.4.2 *Non-Represented Knowing*

The scale of representability flows on towards non-represented knowing. This mode resonates with the (aspects of) tacit knowledge that Nonaka and Takeuchi (1995) saw as transferable through observation. It can be regarded as implicit or incorporated know-how and is a result of experiences and learning that individuals, groups, or societies have cultivated. Studying manuals or texts do not lead to this non-represented knowing—it also requires practical experience. Orr explained this mode of knowing as “both the ability to do things without being able to explain them completely and also the inability to learn to do them from a theoretical and a craft understanding of the task” (1990, p. 170).

8.4.3 *Representable Knowing*

Towards the end of the scale, we find modes of knowing that we are more easily expressing or representing. We may communicate representable remembering through art, texts, symbols, and products. It recognizes that individuals and collectives rapidly can share and exchange. An example of representable knowing is what we are expressing in this chapter. What we can read is however only a snapshot of our knowing. Hence, we see one state of our work printed on chapter, whereas it may have developed somewhere else—on paper, in our computer or in our mind. These snapshots may be an art exhibition, a piece of literature, a business decision, a service, or a product.

We define representable knowing as “What we know”. This explicit knowing might be communicated as state-of-the-art knowledge and explained.

Figure 8.1 illustrates the modes of knowing that we have discussed above. The model visualizes how the different styles interact with each other and how they can shift from one degree of representability to another. As we can see in the figure, non-representable knowing only tangents the other modes. The little interaction intends to illustrate that the non-representable style of understanding has an impact on the different patterns, but it is difficult to shift it into more representable modes. The style impression has an impact on any piece of art. We experience it as the art of Edvard Munch or Håkon Bleken (see later sections). How do we make it non-representative and representative for businesses?

The ellipse with an arrow on each end illustrates that knowing can shift in both directions, e.g., both towards, from, and within a mode. There is a tacit and an explicit part of individual and collective knowledge. There is a dynamic relationship between tacit and explicit knowledge. Missing in the figure are the linkages between individual and collective knowledge. This is the linkage that we would like to explore next.

8.4.4 *Knowing and Non-knowing as a Collective Activity*

Sharing or appreciating unfamiliar knowing is not necessarily something that happens. From common sense, observations, and articles we can conclude that shared knowledge is a result of a long and continuously ongoing process of uncertainty, conflict, needs, and wants. There must be some prerequisites for collective intelligence to take place (Weick &

Roberts, 1993), and there also seems to be a need for a matter, means, or tools that enable shared knowing. What these are and how they support shared knowing is the next thing we will try to establish.

Blackler (1995) argued that knowing both in art and businesses are purposive and object-orientated, which could limit specific knowing merely to clear aims. The existence of a purpose—whether articulated or habitually taken for granted—may be beneficial when seeking to enable the actual sharing of knowledge. A purpose does however not just arise out of nowhere. There must be a context or a situation which identify a need or desire for knowledge.

Even experts may tend to stay in their current position doing more of what they have been doing before although they may have the possibility to explore the anomalies or unexpected phenomena. Kuhn (1970) describes how scientists are doing whatever they can to keep their paradigm as a normal science even if the paradigm is outdated.

Art may thus help us appreciate the knowledge gap and non-knowing but how? Through the socialization of art and businesses, we may get art to talk to us in a different way giving our business more creativity and an ability to walk in another direction. The Art which we are appreciating talks to us in a different language than our professional reality. Individuals are often not aware of their own, deeply rooted, assumptions until a situation occurs where the assumptions surface and are made conscious in an interaction between individuals. Taking part in interactive and unfamiliar situations can create an opportunity for non-representable knowing to move into other known modes.

8.5 EXAMPLE: MUNCH'S ART PRACTICES

Given that new or different high-performing perspectives are necessary to develop business and society; how can valuable new art practices be created or learned? In the following, we shall draw on research and arts-based texts grounded in art practices of Edvard Munch (1863–1944), an internationally renowned painter and graphic artist born in Norway. Munch worked for more than sixty years and produced a rich variety and quantity of paintings and prints. He is most famous for a few of his iconic paints such as *The Scream*, *Madonna*, *Vampire*, and *the Sick Child*. *The Scream* has become one of the most iconic images of world art, and one of the four original versions was sold at Sotheby's in 2012 for a price of 120 m USD.

Beyond Christiania, Norway's capital city (later renamed Oslo), Munch came to spend time in nearby regions, and he painted and sought inspiration outdoors. He travelled especially to Germany and France which offered artistic stimulations, places to exhibit, cafés, friends, as well as enemies. Interestingly, the provincial town Christiania had artists like Henrik Ibsen, Edvard Grieg, Gustav Vigeland, Ludvig Karsten, Arne Garborg, Knut Hamsun (later Nobel prize winner), Harald Sohlberg, Nikolai Astrup, and Bjornstjerne Bjornson (later Nobel prize winner). Many of them travelled extensively. All of them were in opposition to the accepted paradigms within their arts. The contemporary European art, literature, and classical music were through them present in Christiania. Explorers like Roald Amundsen and Fridtjof Nansen and new industrial businesses were also forming the city. Art, literature, music, and businesses were transforming Christiania into a new democratic nation striving to find an identity. Art, music, and fiction became an important part of this identity. Christiania was a liberal place of reflections and dialogues protected by a liberal constitution and out of control by Stockholm (Slagstad, 1998). The whole of Europe was waiting upon a new Ibsen play every second year in the 1880s and 1890s. The shock of Nora leaving her husband to realize herself without children and a husband was debated for years (Aarnes, 2001).

Hamsun's "Hunger" and Garborg's "Peace" were regarded as top European fiction (Brynhildsen, 1973). The shock of Munch's expressive paintings started a debate about if "these sick paintings" really represented art (Stang, 1977).

8.5.1 *Vignette 8.1 The Life Frieze*

Several of Munch's most famous paintings—called *The Life Frieze*—reveal inner states of anxiety and illness and they are often linked to what has been called the symbolism period, which also inspired German expressionism. Particular anxiety and strangeness associated with *The Scream* (1893) originated in Munch's walk outdoors in Oslo and a sudden moment of visual and emotional impressions. It is however not an explicit self-portrait, or another recognizable person portrayed when walking in the sunset. Instead, it is depicted through a highly abstracted man or creature's apparent scream coming towards us in the scenery where the whole landscape is in a whole disturbing move. Munch himself recalled that he had been out for a walk at sunset when he suddenly sensed "an infinite scream passing through nature" (Stang, 1977).

8.5.2 *Vignette 8.2 The University Paintings*

The Aula decorations and Laboratory materials enable us to revisit an artist's work as well as his reflexive writings. Munch was breaking away from the Greek assumptions of what and how to portray in mural decorations and worked hard to find other radical ways of representing knowledge and non-knowledge. The works are a part of expressive German art. The expressionism is evident in Munch's decoration of the University Hall. Munch, who had gained fame in 1892 through his "scandal" exhibition in Berlin, discussed his drafts with German art friends and presented them at the exhibition in Berlin 1913. Highly acclaimed, they contributed to ensuring Munch the commission of decorating the University Hall. He created his paintings between 1909 and 1916 dedicated to representative and non-representative knowing of the past, present, and future melting together in a search for the unknown light. When there is no earlier example of what is happening like today's digitalization process there is a kind of dynamic *magica* as found in art (Vygotsky, 1934 and 1986).

8.6 TOWARDS THE DYNAMIC ARTS OF REIMAGINING

Given that new and better thinking and deeper work are necessary to develop business and society; how can valuable new practices be learned? From Munch's art practices, we can learn how the continued experimentation as well as the shared context and situations matter in nontrivial ways. His difficult childhood did not merely harm this artist, which resonates with Csikszentmihalyi (1996); Munch found several ways of creatively dealing with and transgressing the dark sides when he painted and repainted *The Sick Child* in a close-up more direct fashion that broke away from the conventional images.

Knausgård (2017) underlines that Munch is expressing the closeness of the death itself. Interestingly, the contemporary Norwegian painter Håkon Bleken—who also experienced a challenging childhood and ambiguous relation with his father—also excels by zooming in on the dark sides including painting his dying father and mother in close-up, unconventional ways. In an interview Bleken explains how pace was an enabling factor; in fact, he painted very quickly with few broad strokes to *avoid* the conventional assumptions. In retrospect, he felt it had opened up for a better portrayal (Bleken, 2018). He also feels that painting fast

gives a better expression of the Holocaust, the Utøya, and the Middle East tragedies. The fastness is not representable, and non-representative knowledge was becoming representative to paintings that question the essential existential situation for how we are willing to meet the tragedies of today and yesterday. Bleken paints them as ever existing situations we always have to handle. Bleken paints the climate crisis as an invitation to recreate businesses and societies as sustainable ecosystems. The black death is meeting the blue survival. Bleken represents the optimism and a positive psychology. The darkness in his mindset and material art creation anyhow translates into optimism in his audience. This form of scaffolding contributes to learning and reflection upon the holocaust and the climate crisis (Finborud & Ugelstad, 2018; for more background on Bleken, see, e.g., https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/H%C3%A5kon_Bleken).

Looking afresh at Munch's Scream painting reveals that the human creature approaching has the mouth wide open and with hands running up quickly as in a shocking inner state to embrace the head. The agonized face in the middle of this painting has become an iconic image of art seen as symbolizing the anxiety and uncertainty of modern man. What we are seeing makes us scream. Screaming is a dynamic way of behaving since it opens up a reflection of why we are screaming.

We are moving from individual to collective knowing and vice versa. Munch engaged in various relations with significant others including art buyers, museum directors, art exhibition directors, other painters and writers. The arts circles and their café encounters offered some highly skilled and engaged people recurrent possibilities to share and debate contemporary artwork. Munch's way of evoking another presence in a variety of daily situations breaks with earlier artistic practices, for example, making a crowd appear ugly and hostile rather than beautifully painted. In this manner, the artist opens up for another proximity and even darker sides of human encounters. This darker side compares to Bleken's darker sides and presents an engaged art talking to us and confronting us with a life and death situation that does not leave us.

8.6.1 Opening up for New Assumptions and Models

There are individual and shared mental models (Kim, 1993). In a socialization process, an individual's conceptions, understanding, and mental models change. However, the redefinition of the individual mental models

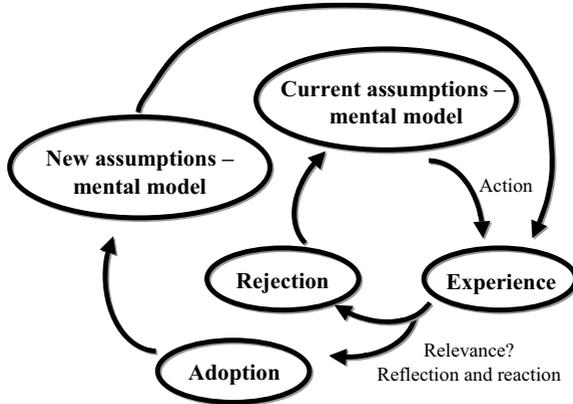


Fig. 8.2 Development of new assumptions and mental models (Adapted from Olaisen and Revang [2018])

can only take place when the individuals face a situation that is relevant to them (Richmond, 2000).

Trying to make mental models representable may however not be easy. It may also be an uncomfortable process because by expressing our deeply rooted assumptions we also expose them to critique and revision. Blackler (1995) argued that it is incoherencies, inconsistencies, and conflicts that offer learning opportunities. By facing incoherencies, disagreements, and disputes an individual is exposed to alternative assumptions and can thereby choose to adopt these or stick to the old ones. Bleken and Munch might give assumptions on sustainable and engaged businesses (Fig. 8.2).

8.6.2 *Communication, Language, and Metaphors*

Weick and Westley stated that “language is both the tool and the repository of learning. It is the critical tool for reflection, both at the inter- and intra-personal level. Also, language is a social phenomenon or stated differently, learning is embedded in relationships or relating learning is an inherent property not of an individual or an organization, but rather resides in the quality and the nature of the relationship, between levels of consciousness” (1996/1999, p. 196). From Munch, we may learn that both visual arts and poetic language can support individuals

and collectives to make their knowing representable. When the Christiania Bohemians were talking with each other, writing and painting, some of their knowing/non-knowing became expressed and materialized. Their art became a manifest in a variety of ways of representing and non-representing knowing. Moving into non-representable knowing also means that metaphors (see Morgan, 1986) partly determine the future collective knowing; “Metaphor is not merely the first step of transforming tacit knowledge into explicit knowledge; it constituted an important method of creating a network of concepts which can help to generate knowledge about the future by using expressions from any existing knowledge” Nonaka (1994, p. 21). These expressions are a part of Munch and Bleken’s paintings.

8.6.3 Observation and Imitations

Figure 8.3 illustrates the dynamics of knowledge between individuals and collectives and within a collective. The ellipses with the arrows in both

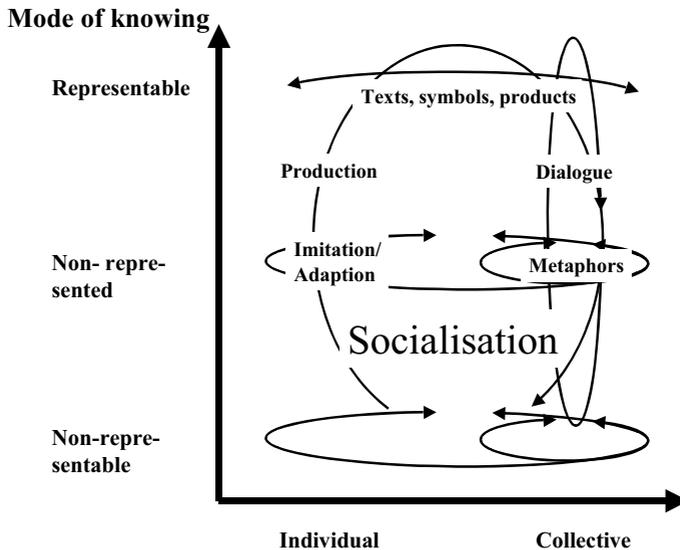


Fig. 8.3 Knowing as a collective project activity (Adapted from Olaisen and Revang [2018])

ends visualize knowing moves within as well as between the modes and organizations. As in Fig. 8.1, non-representable knowing serves as a basis for the other knowing styles, since it filters what impressions, alternative assumptions, and mental models that a group adapts.

In Fig. 8.3 we also find the means or tools that enable and support the link between individual and collective knowledge. Socialisation contributes to all modes of knowing but is especially crucial for non-represented and non-representative knowing. We have illustrated this with the horizontal ellipse that connects individual knowing to collective non-represented and non-representable knowing. Socialization contributes to both individual and collective knowledge since it provides a context within which both personal and shared mental models and doings (practices) are challenged. For example, painting outdoors side by side with other painters, the young Edvard Munch assembled not only seminal experiences but also gained constructive feedback, exhibition news, and philosophical reading suggestions (he was not operating in a vacuum, as a lone genius). Furthermore, the young Munch and art companions for some time even hired an atelier together, sharing space and a bold instructor (Christian Krohg), who also as art critic helped initiate the new generation including Munch to a wider audience (see Naess, 2004).

Socialization and dialogue also give individuals an opportunity to develop and share metaphors and stories, which links non-represented knowing to non-representable knowing (illustrated by the vertical ellipse that flows through all three knowing modes). We use art and texts as a means of distributing metaphors and stories. However, because documents are static, only a one-way link is enabled, from representable to non-represented knowing. Dialogues, on the other hand, allow the interactive development of a story. In Fig. 8.3, the line that links the individual to collective representable knowing illustrates this.

The question often posed is if art can change the world or the actual behaviour. The traditional way of thinking is that art cannot transform businesses and society. Ideas and concepts can only do this transformation. We propose that art – like the monumental works of Munch – may also be converting or even help constituting community, such as in a symbolic, aesthetic as well as ethical sense (see Strati, 2021). The conversion might be instantly or continuous. The Life magazine photo of the American soldier killing a pregnant woman in the Vietnam war changed the attitudes instantly (Olaisen, 2003). The Munch Scream describes the anxiety of modern times anytime (Stang, 1977). Picasso's Guernica

changed the way we were and are looking upon the Spanish Civil War (Gombrich, 1986). Art is in transit between the non-representative and representative and might of this reason change an individual and collective perspective. Bleken's picture "Living the sales" shows the "best" in life is to save money on every seasonal sale. Having seen it, we reflect upon our life. We are concluding that art certainly can change perspectives, attitudes, and behaviour. The design process opens up for the configuration of something new and different based upon professional knowledge from many fields (Jevnaker, 1993, 2014) and the performance of tacit knowledge (Olaisen & Revang, 2018). This might be a form of non-linear or interactive learning process and may happen in chaotic or structured environments (Jevnaker, 1995).

8.6.4 *The Pace of Sharing Knowledge: A Proposed Conceptual Framework*

What we have not accounted for hitherto is the pace at which knowing takes place. Knowing takes place and is shared at a different speeds depending on what mode it is in, which means that we use and, on the individuals, involved. We can for example almost instantly share representable knowing, whereas non-representable knowing can take years to share.

All knowing takes place over time but at what pace is determined by how well the individuals know each other and what kinds of means they use to support recognizing. Our understanding is that the more time individuals spend together, the faster the pace at which knowledge becomes collective. On the other hand, a problem can be that after a while collective non-representable knowing becomes so strong that it may be difficult for the group to adopt new assumptions and mental models.

Finally, the pace at which knowing shifts between the different modes depends on the circumstances under which knowing takes place. If the knower is contributing necessary ingredients or a leader in a collective, it is more likely that knowing is adopted than if the knower is at a lower level or working in unrecognized enclaves of the organization. Art may influence what we think about the knower. In Fig. 8.4, we have illustrated the dynamics of knowing within a team and between individuals and organizations.

The greyed-out lines in the figure illustrate that there are no absolute ends on the scales. In a new team, it takes some time to get to know

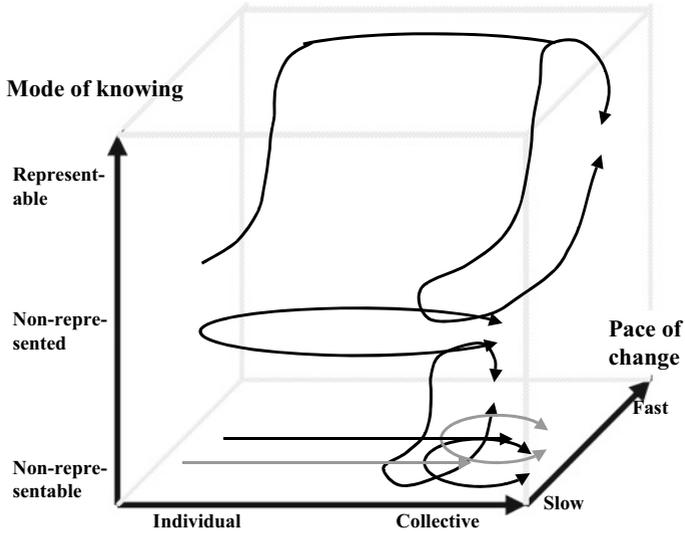


Fig. 8.4 Pace of change within a collective and between individuals and collectives (*Source* Jevnaker and Olaisen [2019]; Olaisen and Revang [2018])

each other, define the individual roles, and develop a shared culture and maybe shared reflections. The black circle in the lower right corner illustrates this. With “shared” we do not mean that people think similarly, rather they may share engagements in related actions (Richter, 1998) and discourses (Jevnaker & Raa, 2017). Further, at this early stage of the establishment of a team, the influence of new members is faster than it is when the team becomes more established. The lack of a strong-shared culture makes it easier to influence the development of a collective culture. The black line that goes from individual to collective non-representable knowing illustrates this. The lower grey line, on the other hand, demonstrates that, once the team culture is becoming established, the team tends to be sceptic towards new ideas and assumptions, which also makes it slower to change. As team members get to know each other better the pace of non-representable knowing is somewhat faster than in new teams.

8.7 CONCLUSIONS

Firstly, we identified three similar modes of knowing in art and businesses. The non-representable knowledge is what we do not know that we do not know and what we do not know that we know. We can thus not make the knowledge representable, but suddenly we will know that this is the painting, the book or the innovation to be made. Non-representative knowledge is what we do not know. We are still able to see or feel or make a kind of representation. Munch made multiple sketches and recurred to motives. Exhibiting his Aula-oriented paintings in Berlin contributed towards a beneficial dynamic reimagining something sustainable. Representative knowledge is what we know and how we can represent the knowledge through a piece of art, a book or a product. In the making, we revisit our tacit knowing and non-knowing and explore their boundaries further in process and product. A piece of art might then start as well as nurture the process of a business idea or an innovation.

Secondly, we recognized that what makes thinking interwoven in a piece of art exciting and influential is that it challenges our assumptions in some significant way. The piece of art or theory talks to us in a way which we can use in our daily life. Art melts the future, present, and past into one reality and gives an opportunity for relearning and new perspectives. Collective knowing are ideas and concepts that a collective and its allied interests engage in and develop over time, and that guides and give meaning to actions and organization in a specific context.

However, collective knowledge with its implicit shadowing also needs confrontation and illumination of possibly veiled non-knowing of dark or ignored sides to test and renew our assumptions of true beliefs. We have revealed that art practices and their collective apprehension can become contested and transformed into new meanings of societal importance, as exemplified in the paintings of Munch and Bleken.

Thirdly, the boundaries between individual and collective knowing are blurred, and it is difficult to determine how they affect each other. Everyone has individual mental models but we move about in highly sensuous bodies in often shared landscapes. We participate in social worlds and share assumptions, ideas, and reflections in action with others. This implies that art unfolds and travels between individuals and groups and can make the leaps involved in reimagination.

Arts in its ancient sense of moving onwards with *techne*—skills, practical wisdom (*phronesis*), and also with a creation of moving value,

poesis—is vital for making original or innovative work. As illuminated in the artworks discussed in this chapter, reimagining activity can unfold with all this in surprisingly significant combinations and can thus bring forth something that is giving deeper value to human action.

Finally, art might also start a process of business and societal responsibility looking at for example the Håkon Bleken's picture of the tragedies of Utoya, Holocaust, the Middle East, and the Climate. Art represents a form of its ecosystem where Bleken's tragedies and Munch's *Aula* pictures (University of Oslo Assembly Hall) with its central Sun might be triggers to start thinking about sustainable practices in learning institutions and enterprises for society. These ecosystems are today represented in the way that we know that we are reaching a global warming crisis (Sachs et al., 2022), but we do not know how to recreate organization and businesses with eco-friendly systems and by that contribute to the survival of the earth. Art might thus be one of the dynamic factors for a sustainable process.

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INDEX

A

Abrahamson, E., 32, 33

action

creative, 9, 19

leadership in, 19, 20

research, 4, 15

activity

perspective, 159

practical, 96

scientific, 63, 64

adoption, 34, 35

non-adoption, 37

aesthetic

experience, 96

forms of art, 102

agility, 32, 33, 41, 78, 152

Alvesson, M., 63

ambiguity, 137

Arendt, H., 5, 19, 158

argumentation, 60, 64, 80, 99, 114, 160

Aristotle, 7, 14, 45, 97

art

as experience, 101, 103, 104

dynamic, 167

for society, 106

museums, 94, 95, 98, 101, 102, 105

necessity of, 158

of forming, 166

of knowing, 101, 159, 174

of performing, 165

thinking, 106, 167, 171

artificial intelligence (AI), 139–141

artist, 95, 99, 101, 102, 104, 105, 160, 163, 167, 168

aspirations, 115, 121, 126

attitudes, 68, 76, 77, 79, 80, 85, 107, 118, 141, 145, 151, 153, 162, 163, 171, 172

attractive

destinations, 104

places, 104

B

Beck, U., 138

becoming, 4, 66, 104, 128, 168, 173

Berger, P., 67, 69

Bergson, H., 7, 12

bias, 40–42, 61, 62, 89, 138

Bijker, W., 39
 Blackler, F., 165, 169
 Bleken, H., 164, 167–170, 172, 174, 175
 Blumer, H., 57, 59, 65, 99
 bottom-up, 46, 143, 144, 153
 boundary/boundaries
 firm, 21, 114
 object, 58
 organization, 19
 organizational, 153
 Bourdieu, P., 158
 Brundtland, G., 2
 bullshit, 39, 49
 manager, 39, 49
 Bunge, M., 58, 62, 63
 business
 enterprise, 6, 13, 112, 113
 idea, 51, 174
 model, 21
 modernity, 44, 45, 48, 51
 mysticism, 49, 51
 spirituality, 5, 39, 44, 48
 strategy, 41
 virus, 32, 33, 36, 45, 48, 51

C

capabilities
 individual, 138
 organizational, 140
 character, 8, 12, 66, 97
 Chia, R.C.H., 4, 13
 Ciborra, C.U., 112, 115–117, 126
 Clark, T., 34
 co-design, 116
 Coghlan, D., 15
 cognitive, 80, 85, 87, 88, 158
 collaboration, 5, 12, 19, 118, 121, 126, 142, 144–148, 151, 153, 159
 collective knowledge, 14, 44, 160, 164, 171, 174

Collins, J.C., 127, 128
 competence, 14, 83, 118, 126, 128, 129, 141, 145, 146
 conatus, 8, 97
 concepts
 as anchor points, 57, 65
 definitive, 57, 65, 66, 69, 99, 160
 sensitizing, 57, 66, 69, 81, 99, 160
 consonance, 57, 62, 63
 contrary, 37, 103, 104
 Cooper, R., 125
 coordination, 128, 144, 153
 corona
 crisis, 138, 139, 142, 143, 145–149, 151, 152, 154
 situation, 142–144
 virus, 140, 141, 148, 153
 courage, 8, 97
 cradle-to-cradle, 116
 cradle-to-grave, 116
 creative breakings, 19, 129
 creativity
 and learned abilities, 14
 constrained or not, 112
 differences, 115, 152
 Crozier, M., 77, 80
 Csikszentmihalyi, M., 5, 19
 culture
 consensus-oriented, 88
 democratic, 76, 84, 88
 curating, 102, 103
 curiosity, 66
 customer, 20, 21, 23, 117, 118, 125, 130, 143, 144
 Czarniawska, B., 38

D

de Bono, E., 5
 Deduction, 66
 de Geus, A., 4
 de Jonge, C., 8–10, 98

Design

alliances, 126
 and change, 113, 120
 and sustainability, 18, 19, 112–114
 approach, 118, 124
 as intertwined, 39, 114, 116, 120, 122, 131
 as parallel, 112, 114, 120, 129
 as sequential, 129
 changes, 114, 120, 126, 129
 circular, 122
 criteria, 112, 122
 development, 18, 112, 113, 118–121, 124, 126, 130, 140
 entrepreneurs, 128
 groups, 21, 123, 126, 129
 ideas, 18, 23, 37, 115, 117
 innovation, 13, 18, 19, 114, 118, 126, 129, 130
 leadership, 113, 115, 118, 124, 130, 159
 management, 21, 23, 112, 115, 116, 120
 mission, 39, 125, 127–129
 practices, 12, 18, 112, 113, 126, 130
 principles, 119, 122, 130
 processes, 112–115, 126, 129, 130
 professions, 140
 projects, 19, 124, 126, 129
 prototyping, 18
 research, 19, 101, 113–115, 124, 129, 130
 studio, 119, 121, 122, 129
 teams, 121, 123
 thinkers, 128
 thinking, 112, 113, 115–117, 120–123, 128, 129
 tinkering, 112, 115, 116, 121–123, 128–130
 without Borders, 21
 designer

relations, 118, 119, 126
 designing
 and meaning, 12
 chairs, 121
 distinctiveness, 12
 products, 119, 122
 services, 23
 sustainable, 15, 112, 115–118, 121–126, 128–131
 the art of identity, 12
 Dewey, J., 6, 21, 94–96, 99, 105, 106, 138, 158
 dialogue, 119, 141, 159, 160, 166, 171
 digital, 46, 100, 104, 105, 139, 150, 153, 154
 digitalization, 33, 41, 44, 46–48, 144, 146, 147, 154, 167
 Dignan, A., 140, 152
 disciplines, 3, 23, 56, 57, 140
 dissonance, 57, 62, 63
 distinctive/ness, 12, 18, 128, 129
 Dreyfus, H.L., 14
 Dreyfus, S.E., 14
 Dubois, A., 23
 Dumas, A., 12, 13, 123

E

eco-effective, 124
 eco-efficient, 115, 116
 ecological
 business, 20, 22, 61, 113
 thinking, 7, 10, 22, 95–97, 113
 economic, 10, 16, 22, 95, 138, 151
 activity, 18
 eco-philosophy, 7, 23, 97
 eco-sophy, 8
 Eisenhardt, K.M., 69, 101, 119
 endeavours, 4, 11, 12, 23, 124
 Engwall, L., 33
 enterprise

action, 3–5, 13, 19
 business, 6, 13, 112, 113
 human, 6, 7, 22, 95, 96
 sustainable, 6, 13, 115, 122, 123,
 175
 entrenchment, 37, 52
 entrepreneurship, 20
 entrepreneurship, 20
 ESG system, 22
 Ethics, 10, 45
 evolution, 117, 118
 exhibition, 94, 98, 99, 101, 103–105,
 107, 119, 159, 164, 167, 168,
 171
 experience
 creative, 13, 23, 94, 102, 103
 imaginative, 21, 94–96, 99, 105
 wild-life, 10, 98
 experimentation
 active, 120, 125
 constant, 106
 continued, 167
 exploitation, 13, 118, 120
 exploration, 13, 59, 81, 99, 106, 118,
 120, 127, 141, 160

F

falsification, 60, 62, 98, 160
 fashion, 106, 167
 metaphor, 32, 36, 49, 50
 theory, 32–34, 37, 46, 49, 50
 feedback, 171
 Feyerabend, P., 160
 Finborud, L., 168
 flexible workplaces, 33, 41, 50
 Flokk, 17, 112, 117–126, 128–130
 Follett, M.P., 4, 13, 128, 150
 Foucault, M., 78–80, 90, 158
 foundation, 4, 35, 39, 42, 44, 46, 62,
 159, 162
 philosophical, 5

framework
 philosophy, 59
 science, 59
 societal, 32, 45, 65
 French, J.R.P., 78, 80

G

Galtung, J., 57, 59, 62
 game concept, 77
 Glaser, B.G., 58, 82
 Gombrich, H., 159, 163, 172
 Gouldner, A., 34
 green
 bonds, 22
 business actions, 22
 creative, 6, 23
 envy, 6
 paradox of, 22
 stocks, 5
 unfinished, 102
 Green Thinking Hat, 5
 greenwashing, 6, 116
 Guillet de Monthoux, P., 94

H

Hacker, N.M., 158
 HÅG, 118–125, 128, 129
 Hansen, M.T., 14
 harm, 38, 106, 113, 167
 harmony, 58, 68, 84, 87
 helpful, 9
 Holt, R., 4, 13
 Hume, D., 158

I

ideas
 adopted, 34–36, 43, 45, 50
 alternate, 18, 38
 dormant/dormancy, 35, 38, 42,
 44, 52

- handling, 34, 35, 37, 39, 43, 44,
 50–52
 in action, 5, 174
 incubation, 37
 management, 12, 14, 21, 23,
 32–40, 44, 46, 50, 51, 57, 66,
 115
 mutation, 38, 39, 51
 new, 12, 13, 32, 34, 36–38, 46,
 49, 173, 174
 of inclusion, 21, 95
 peripheral, 14
 replication, 37–39
 sustainability, 3, 16, 21, 33, 44, 46,
 51, 94
 the world of, 45
 travelling, 12, 16, 18, 32–40, 42,
 45–51
 ignorance, 3, 12, 13, 21
 imagination, 14, 61–63, 95, 96, 105,
 126, 140, 163
 imaginative, 6, 9, 21, 22, 94–96, 98,
 99, 104–107, 112, 121, 129
 imagine, 57, 139
 impact, 3, 9, 14, 32, 37, 42, 51, 94,
 95, 98, 119, 126, 151, 164
 in-depth interviews, 62, 82, 140
 induction, 66
 influence, 50, 51, 78–80, 86–89, 159,
 172, 173
 innovation
 economy, 129
 green, 22, 151
 journey, 11
 management, 15, 32
 processes, 18, 22, 114, 130, 159,
 174
 projects, 126, 149
 studies, 15, 32
 work, 3, 11, 13, 19, 117, 130, 163
 workings, 13, 18, 19, 112, 118,
 126, 128
 innovative enterprise, 3, 4
 integrity, 96
 interaction, 3, 67, 95, 125, 129, 147,
 164, 165
 interconnectedness, 9, 12, 95
 International Monetary Fund (IMF),
 138, 151
 intersubjectivity, 68
 intuition, 61–63, 66, 98, 140, 162,
 163
- J**
- Johannessen, J.A., 139
 Johannisson, B., 20
 joy, 7–9, 97, 98, 104
 and pain, 106
- K**
- Kanter, R.M., 113
 Kim, D.H., 168
 Knausgård, K.O., 167
 Knight, F.H., 62
 know
 know-how, 14, 44, 163, 175
 know what, 5, 13, 58, 61, 66, 76,
 118, 164, 174
 know why, 14
 knowing
 art of, 12
 collective, 94, 103, 106, 159, 160,
 168, 170–174
 modes of, 98, 160, 161, 164, 171,
 174
 process of, 159
 tactit, 5, 14, 58, 159, 163, 170,
 174
 knowledge
 accumulation, 57, 62
 aspects, 150, 162, 163
 creation, 96, 158, 161
 defined, 61, 67, 145

disciplines, 23
 gap, 76, 165
 management, 23, 57, 59–66, 68,
 76, 94, 116, 120, 139, 144,
 158
 non-representable, 58, 161, 162,
 174
 non-represented, 161, 163, 171
 of art, 95, 99, 103, 159, 160
 personal, 4, 14, 44, 79, 87
 philosophy, 59, 94–96
 representable, 58, 161, 164, 168,
 172, 174
 sharing, 34, 60, 94, 96, 105, 107,
 130, 147, 158, 165
 specialists, 153
 types, 58, 160
 work, 58, 65, 139, 140, 142, 144,
 146, 150, 153, 167
 Kotter, J.P., 83, 113
 Kuhn, T., 56, 57, 60, 64, 65, 165

L

laboratory, 102, 105, 167
 Langley, A., 114, 115
 Lazonick, W., 4, 13
 leadership
 as co-creation, 19
 as participative, 124
 defined, 41, 61
 distributed, 118, 149
 temporary, 76, 146, 149
 trust-based, 33, 41, 42, 44, 46–48,
 50, 51
 value-based, 33, 41, 42, 44, 46–48,
 50, 51
 learning
 action-based, 145
 by doing, 145, 149
 capacity, 14
 experiential, 35, 43

inaugurative, 125
 interactive, 172
 lifelong, 145
 organizational, 25
 process, 158, 172, 175
 purpose, 21
 living company, 4
 living project, 4

M

management
 field, 15, 23, 68
 idea, 12, 14, 21, 23, 32–40, 44,
 46, 50, 51, 57, 66, 115
 practice, 4, 33, 37, 76, 112, 115,
 158, 163
 managers
 middle, 125, 141, 153
 top, 141, 145, 153
 managing, 90, 147
 Matthew effect, 65
 maturation, 37
 McDonough, W., 115, 124
 Merton, R., 65
 micropolitics, 76–80, 82–90
 mindset, 158, 168
 Mintzberg, H., 152
 mobilizing invisible assets, 21
 modes
 the mental modes, 95
 the natural, 96
 the social, 58, 95
 the technological-physical, 95
 Morgan, G., 62, 63, 117
 mountain/mountaineering, 7, 10, 23
 multi-perspective, 11
 Munch, E., 99, 102, 103, 105–107,
 158–160, 164, 165, 169–171,
 174
 Munch's painting(s)
 Alma Mater, 106

Aula/University Hall, 100, 104,
106, 167, 175
History, 107
the Life Frieze, 166
The Scream, 99, 165, 166
The Sun, 99
museums
art, 94, 98, 100–105
Henie-Onstad, 99, 100
Kistefos, 99, 101–105
Munch, 99, 105
National, 99, 100, 103
mutation, 36, 39, 42
mysticism, 48, 49

N

Naess, A., 6–10, 12, 14–16, 23, 94,
97, 98, 104–107
nature, 3, 5, 6, 10, 15, 32, 66, 98,
101, 106, 121, 169
Nonaka, I., 60, 79, 80, 106, 158,
163, 170
Nordhaug, O., 14
Normann, R., 127, 128
normative, 5, 51, 64

O

observations, 15, 67, 120, 130, 164
Opsvik, P., 113, 121, 122, 124, 126
Organizational change, 113, 114,
117, 120, 127–130
organizational integration, 12, 13, 19
Organizations
flat, 84, 88
hierarchical, 88, 90
Organizing
sustainable, 4
orientation, 12, 22, 56, 63, 68, 69,
124, 152
Orlikowski, W.J., 114
Orr, J.E., 163

P

pace, 159, 167, 172, 173
pandemic, 100, 101, 104, 141
Papanek, V., 16
paradigm
accepted, 64, 166
action-based, 67
alternative, 66
clarified subjective, 58, 67
empirical (variance-related), 58, 66
harmony vs conflict, 58
identification, 59
Kuhn on, 56, 64, 165
materialistic political, 58, 67
research, 56, 58, 64, 66–68
scientific, 64
paradox/paradoxical, 117, 124, 148,
149
of green, 22
parallel, 38, 89, 102, 103, 112, 114,
116, 118, 120, 129
Parrilli, M.D., 15
persuasion, 79, 80, 86, 88
Pettigrew, A.M., 120
philosophy
a Deweyian view, 6, 21, 94, 95
a Naessian view, 97
an Aristotelian view, 8
a Spinozian view, 7–10, 97, 106
ecological, 7, 94–98
experiential, 94
for experiencing, 94
for greener, 6, 158
for process, 6, 7, 94, 95, 97, 99,
112, 113
for sustainability, 15, 23, 94, 112,
113
frameworks, 59
inclusive, 12, 94–96
knowledge, 15, 23, 59, 94–96
lessons, 105
Naess on ecology, 7, 8, 23

- Naess on Philosophy T, 10
 - of art, 95, 96
 - of knowledge-creation, 96
 - of life, 10
 - of science, 7, 59
 - of sitting, 124
 - pragmatist, 6, 21, 94, 95
 - sustainable, 12
 - pioneering, 3, 9, 23, 112
 - place, 2, 10, 16, 23, 42, 60, 98, 105, 114, 120, 130, 142, 147, 150, 159, 163, 164, 166, 169, 172
 - Planet, 9, 16–18, 116
 - pluralism, 15, 57, 68
 - pluralistic, 59, 69
 - poetic, 102, 104, 159, 169
 - Polanyi, M., 5, 14, 162
 - Popper, K., 60, 62
 - possibilities, 5, 7, 9, 10, 17, 19–21, 23, 94, 96–98, 105, 117, 123, 127, 149, 150, 168
 - potentiality, 9, 98
 - power
 - coercive, 78
 - expert, 78, 83, 87
 - formal, 19, 76–80, 82–88
 - games, 86, 88–90
 - incentive, 78
 - informal, 76–80, 82–88, 90
 - information, 78, 87
 - legitimate, 78
 - model, 76, 78, 80, 81, 90, 158
 - to, 1, 3, 8, 9, 12, 19, 78, 79, 84, 86, 97
 - with, 19
 - practices
 - and everyday doings, 112, 129, 143
 - best, 89
 - concerted, 94
 - emergent, 4, 13, 16, 18, 129
 - exhibition, 94, 98, 101, 103, 159, 168, 171
 - green, 22
 - living, 4, 7
 - recurrent, 8, 13, 101, 116, 126, 129, 168
 - skilled, 168
 - premises, 9, 114–116, 143
 - presencing, 103
 - Press, M., 125
 - process
 - of knowing, 159, 160
 - philosophy, 6, 7, 94, 95, 97
 - thinking, 5, 7, 11, 18, 23, 94–96, 104, 112, 129, 130, 175
 - profit, 16–18, 116, 139
 - project management, 21, 33, 41, 50, 76, 81, 87, 89, 90
 - defined, 76
 - project manager, 76, 82, 83, 85–89, 121
- R**
- reimagination, 1, 3, 5, 6, 23, 69, 174
 - reimagine, 11, 13, 126
 - relational knowledge, 79, 87
 - relationship, 39, 68, 78, 158, 164, 169
 - replication, 36–39, 42
 - research
 - approaches, 35, 40, 59, 68, 101, 119, 124
 - criticism, 62
 - data, 13, 15, 40, 50, 62–65
 - data collection, 15
 - domain, 34, 56
 - falsification, 62, 98
 - findings, 50, 57, 64, 66, 77, 81, 87, 101
 - hypothesis, 15, 34, 40
 - methodology, 40, 56, 58, 68, 77, 81, 98, 140
 - observation, 13, 15, 67

- paradigms, 56, 58, 64, 66–68, 114
- phenomenon, 68, 101, 119
- pluralism, 57, 68
- problem, 19, 60, 113
- propositions, 57, 60, 62, 140
- reflections, 35
- sentences, 62, 63
- responsibility, 40, 141, 147, 175
- responsible, 2, 64, 68, 113, 124
- revolution, 139, 141, 152, 154
- Ross, W.D., 14, 45
- Røvik, K.A., 32, 34–36, 39
- Ryle, G., 14

- S**
- Scarborough, H., 34, 50
- Schein, E., 146
- Schumpeter, J.A., 20
- Scream, 99, 103, 106, 165, 166, 168, 171
- Selznick, P., 128
- Sevón, G., 52
- sideways, 144, 153
- Silent Spring*, 3, 23
- sketches, 102, 174
- Smith, A., 18
- Smith, C.S., 104
- spirituality, 94
 - business, 39, 44, 48
 - human, 5
- Stang, R., 166, 171
- Stensaker, I.G., 68, 114, 119
- strategies, 43, 46, 63, 94, 98, 100–104, 111, 115, 116, 123, 127, 144, 153
- Strati, A., 171
- Sturdy, A., 33
- subjective, 58, 60, 64, 67, 81, 138, 161
- subjectivity, 58, 68, 69, 162
 - clarified, 58, 67, 99, 141, 160
- Susskind, D., 150
- Susskind, R., 150
- sustainability
 - bond, 22
 - design, 15, 18, 19, 112–116, 118–121, 124, 126, 128–130
 - enlargening, 21
 - goals (SDG), 2, 4, 16, 22, 111, 113
 - ideas, 3, 16, 21, 33, 44, 46, 52
 - pillars, 16, 17
 - principles, 119, 130
 - shrinking, 21, 22
 - work, 8, 17, 33, 65, 99, 112, 113, 120
- sustainable design, 112, 115–117, 123–126, 128–131
- Swan, J., 34, 50

- T**
- tacit knowledge, 60, 159, 161, 162, 172
 - misunderstood, 14
 - Polanyi on, 5, 14, 162
- Taylor, F.W., 138
- technology
 - ICT, 116, 140
 - manageable, 152
 - mediated, 118, 125
 - networked, 143
 - pooled, 20
 - relations, 15, 66
 - revolutions, 139, 152
- Teece, D.J., 20
- Telenor, 21, 33, 35–42, 46–51, 138, 140, 141, 144, 148–154
- Telia, 33, 35–42, 46–51, 141, 144, 148–154
- tensions, 12, 13, 18, 19
- theory
 - as *theoria*, 5
 - buzz words, 33

defined, 57, 62
 dormancy, 36, 38, 42
 ideas, 12, 13, 18, 32–34, 36, 37, 46–50, 57, 66, 174
 immunity, 36, 39
 incubation, 36, 37, 39, 42
 infection, 36
 infectiousness, 36
 metaphor, 32, 34, 49, 50, 117
 mutation, 36, 38, 39, 42, 51
 processes, 18, 34, 36, 44, 50, 56, 114, 159
 recipient, 36
 variants, 50
 Thompson, J.D., 130
 Thunberg, G.E., 2, 14
 tinkering, 112, 115–117, 120–123, 127–130
 top-down, 46, 144, 145, 158
 Törn, 20, 21
 Tornebohm, H., 56, 57, 59
 transparency, 33, 41–44, 46, 50, 51
 travelling ideas, 12, 32–35, 37, 38, 40, 45–51
 Triple Bottom line (3BL), 17, 18
 Tsoukas, H., 4, 12, 14, 114, 115, 162
 Tushman, M., 114

U

uncertainty, 5, 77, 78, 80, 84, 89, 106, 137, 152, 164, 168
 and risk, 5
 uncommon, 117

unconventional, 14, 160, 167
 United Nations (UN), 2, 4, 16, 23

V

Van de Ven, A.H., 11, 19, 56, 66, 117
 viral feature, 35, 43, 44, 51

virtual teams, 33, 41, 46, 50, 138, 139, 146, 153, 154
 virus theory, 32, 34–36, 42, 46, 50
 vision
 creative, 9, 98
 imaginative, 9, 96, 98, 104
 new, 16, 98
 visionary eye, 98
 Von Hippel, E., 139
 Von Krogh, G., 14, 68, 158
 Vygotsky, L., 159, 167

W

wake-up call, 1, 23
 Weick, K., 4, 113, 114, 169
 Wenger, E., 15
 West, D.M., 139
 Whiteman, G., 8–10, 15, 98
 Wittgenstein, 158
 work, 4, 5, 8, 13, 17, 19, 20, 23, 33, 39–41, 44, 46–48, 51, 58, 64, 65, 82, 85, 88–90, 96, 98–100, 102–107, 112–114, 117, 119–122, 124–127, 129, 130, 138–150, 152–154, 159–164, 167, 171, 175
 working landscape, 147, 148
 workplace, 33, 41, 46, 47, 50, 125, 138–141, 147, 148, 154
 World Commission on Environment and Development (WCED), 12, 16

Y

Ydstie, I., 158
 Yin, R.K., 101, 119

Z

Ziska, F., 139
 Zuboff, S., 139, 140