DANCING INNOVATION

HOW CAN WE USE KNOWLEDGE FROM CONTEMPORARY DANCE TO ENABLE INNOVATION IN ORGANISATIONS?

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ABSTRACT

In today´s fast changing global environment, organizations in both private and public sectors are under increased pressure to continuously change and adapt in order to survive and provide meaningful services and products to their users. Innovation has therefore become an on-going effort that is not only a concern of R&D and product development departments, but rather the responsibility of all employees. Envisioning how products, services, processes, methods and business models can be constantly improved or replaced by new ones is becoming a core competence needed across the entire organization. While many organizations in Sweden have already developed a capability to innovate incrementally through continuous improvements, they often struggle to innovate radically by engaging the talent, knowledge and skills of all employees. In this thesis we look at how organizations could enable employee-driven innovation and help innovation teams move from incremental towards radical innovation by using concepts and methods from the practice of contemporary dancers.

Since there is very limited previous research available about the connection between contemporary dance practice and organizational innovation, we tried to build our own framework on a basis of empirical data. In the first study, 20 semi-structured interviews with choreographers from different countries were performed and a model with key phases, tools and enablers of the innovation process from a choreographic perspective was developed. The model was then compared with innovation management theory and empirical data from the industry to identify similarities and differences between the concepts and practices of innovation in dance on the one hand and business on the other.

In the second study the choreographic model was tested in practice through participatory action research with 27 participants from different companies and the public sector. The study explored how principles and methods from contemporary dance and choreography could be applied to enable innovation in an organizational context and the effects and limitations of using knowledge from contemporary dance to enable organizational innovation.

The main contribution of the research presented in this thesis is the conceptual framework which defines the innovation process, tools and enablers from a choreographic perspective and a proposed practical method for applying it in organizations. Several examples of how practitioners from business and the public sector experienced dance-based methods and then translated them into their own working environment to support innovation are presented.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

PUBLICATIONS

APPENDED PAPERS

Paper 1

Bozic, N. & Köping Olsson, B. (2013). Culture for Radical Innovation: What can business learn from creative processes of contemporary dancers?. *Organizational Aesthetics*, 2 (1), 59-83.

An earlier version of the article was presented at the Sixth Art of Management and Organisation Conference (York, UK, 4-7 September 2012) and published in the conference proceedings.

Paper 2

Bozic, N. & Backström, T. (Submitted). Enabling innovation competence development in groups.

An earlier version of the article was presented at the Participatory Innovation Conference 2013 (Lahti, Finland, 18-20 June 2013) and published in the conference proceedings, pp. 297-305.

Paper 3

Bozic Yams, N. (forthcoming). Dancing innovation – Using body, movement and choreographic thinking to enable innovation in organizational practice. Under review for publication in Johansson Skoldberg, U. & Woodilla, J. (Eds.). *Artistic Interventions in Organizations*.

An earlier version of the text has been accepted to the Seventh Art of Management and Organisation Conference (Copenhagen, Denmark, 28-31 August 2014).

ADDITIONAL PUBLICATIONS

Schaeffer, J. A., Bozic, N. & Backström, T. (2012). The physical space as an artifact of innovative culture - Findings in art and manufacturing industry. *Paper presented at the 28th EGOS Colloqium*, Helsinki, July 2012.

Meltzer, C., Holtham, C., Scherubl, I. & Bozic, N. (2013). *Art as process, Process as art*. London: Cass Business School, City University.

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INTRODUCTION

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Research background

The research presented in this thesis has been done as a part of two research projects at Mälardalen University. The first project was called Kaikaku in production (kaikaku meaning transformation or radical innovation in Japanese) and was conducted by an interdisciplinary team combining skills from innovation management, design and visualization, and product realization. The goal of the Kaikaku project was to explore how Swedish manufacturing companies could be supported in radical improvements and innovation, combining knowledge of researchers from different fields and taking inspiration from the practice of Japanese manufacturing companies. Participation in this project was very rewarding for me because of its interdisciplinary nature and because it brought me closer to the manufacturing industry, which is quite a contrast to the practice of contemporary dance explored in the thesis. On the one hand, the contrasts between industry and dance were confirmed in a paper that I wrote together with colleagues Jennie Andersson Schaeffer and Tomas Backström where we compared how industry employees and dancers perceive physical spaces that support or hinder innovation differently. On the other hand, I was surprised how many common elements we found when we studied what enables innovation in the creative processes of contemporary dance groups and in the approach that Japanese manufacturing companies have developed to support radical improvements and innovation, which is described in another paper discussed in the thesis. It was also encouraging to observe how practitioners from the industry mostly reacted positively when they participated in a training program called Culture and space for innovation, which was developed as a part of the Kaikaku project and served as a research study to collect data about the applicability of methods from contemporary dance for enabling innovation in organizations. The Kaikaku project was financed by the Swedish Innovation Agency Vinnova.

The second research project I have been participating in is called InnovationsGym and is focused on defining and measuring innovation competence on individual, group and organizational levels. It also aims at developing and testing different methods for enabling innovation competence development in practice, engaging students, researchers and practitioners from both private and public sectors. This project is very close to my research focus and is an interesting platform to continue testing how knowledge from contemporary dance and choreography can be used to support individuals and groups to develop their innovation competence. As a part of this project I have started collaborating with the municipality of Eskilstuna. 13 managers from the municipality already participated in the training program Culture and space for innovation and we have just started a new 1,5-year project together where we

will work more systematically with the employees in the municipality. The project is focused on developing a group of innovation leaders from across the organization and implementing different innovation projects that will improve the infrastructure and the overall innovation capability of the municipality. This project will be the main empirical study on the doctoral level of my studies. The InnovationsGym project is currently financed by the Eskilstuna municipality and Rekarne Sparbank.

An important background for understanding the nature of my research is also my previous professional experience and the fact that I have entered a relatively new research field, which connects innovation management and contemporary dance practice. Since there is very limited previous research and theory available about the use of knowledge and methods from contemporary dance in organizations, my research has been rather explorative and has aimed at developing a new model based on empirical data collected for the purposes of my research. While the choreographic model of the innovation process, tools, enablers and its application in organizations is presented later in the thesis, the next section explains how my previous professional experiences have influenced the nature and direction of my research.

1.2 The origin of my research

I started my professional career working as a management consultant at Deloitte, being involved in changing big companies and improving their organizational processes and systems. That experience made me realize that real change and innovation in organizations can only happen from within, if employees are motivated and engaged in driving the change process together with the management, experiencing a sense of ownership in the process. At that time I often felt frustrated because our traditional consulting approach was very top-down, deciding first with top management what kind of change was needed, analyzing the current state in the organization and then prescribing standardized management tools that should be implemented in the organization to improve the existing situation. I often observed that the new organizational processes, tools and structures designed by consultants did not bring any significant change to organizations because people´s attitudes and behaviors were still the same after we left, even though they were placed in another department, doing a different task or using another management tool.

At that point I became curious what other methods could reach people in organizations on a more personal level and engage them in a process through which they could become the innovators of their own working environment, shape it according to their needs, and make it more meaningful both on a personal level and in terms of reaching organizational vision. In the same period I met some artists from different countries who were working as organizational consultants, bringing artistic methods

to organizational context. When participating in their workshops I felt another level of energy and engagement of managers than I was used to in our consulting projects. I sensed there was a potential for developing new ways of innovating and changing organizations with the help of knowledge and methods from art. That inspired me to write my bachelor thesis about the way artistic methods could be used to support organizational change. A few years later I left my career in management for a year, and went to a nomadic dance academy. This experience resulted in the creation of a solo performance about the transformation that happened to me as a manager when I ended up in art.

Dance has always been my hobby and passion, which is why I became more curious to explore how it could be connected to enabling innovation and change in organizations. From my personal experience I also sensed the beneficial potential that knowledge from dance could have for organizations if it was used to support professionals to engage their body, senses, emotions and intuition to work in creative ways, especially since they are used to environments where the focus is on engaging people's minds and the rationality. This is why I decided to work more seriously with the question of how knowledge and methods from contemporary dance and choreography could enable innovation in organizations. Since there was very little research available in this area, I realized I would need to provide the framework for my study myself. A few years later this desire to connect the worlds of dance and business brought me to Mälardalen University where I started my PhD research project in which I am exploring contemporary dance practice and how it relates to organizational innovation. With my background as a consultant I have a very practical focus on developing new methods for bringing knowledge and principles from contemporary dance and choreography to enable innovation in organizational practice.

1.3 Framing the research in the crossroads between innovation management and art-based initiatives in organizations

The research presented in this thesis connects two fields of study. On the one hand, it engages the field of innovation management, with a focus on enabling innovation in organizations. The other field of interest involves art-based initiatives in organizations, with a specific focus on contemporary dance practice and how the knowledge from contemporary dance and choreography can be applied in organizational context. In this section I position my research within the two fields and try to explain why art-based methods can be used to enable organizational innovation.
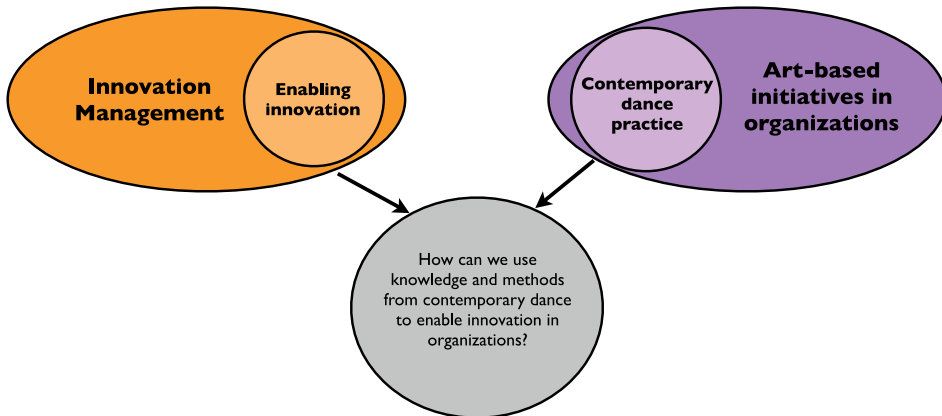
Diagram 1: Research areas

1.3.1 Innovation management

When talking about innovation management, we do not refer to the term "manage" in the sense of designing, running and controlling a predictable process of innovation from a top-down organizational perspective which follows a set of clear rules and proceeds through certain stages. Innovation management is rather understood as an emergent process of creating conditions for innovation to happen within a complex and continuously changing organizational environment (Tidd & Bessant, 2011). As some of the literature on innovation management suggests (Tidd, 2006), the newer models of innovation recognize that most innovation is messy and hard to control. This means that the more traditional innovation models which are rather linear in their conceptualization, like the wide-spread stage-gate model (Cooper, 1990), cannot explain the fuzzy logic of innovation where there will be dead ends, recycling between stages, and jumps out of the linear sequence (Tidd, 2006). The current market conditions demand another kind of learning and transformation processes that have been described by terms-such as "generative learning" (Senge, 1990) and "presencing" (Scharmer, 2009), and which are especially important for enabling innovation that has been termed as discontinuous (Utterback, 1994; Bessant et al., 2005), disruptive (Christensen, 1997), radical (McLaughlin et al., 2008) or bold (Cooper, 2011). Ideas around a more circular model of the innovation process based on theory U (Scharmer, 2009) will be presented in more detail in the theory chapter.

In the context of an unstable and fast changing environment that is characteristic for today's global market we thus prefer to use the word "enabling" innovation (Peschl & Fundneider, 2012) rather than "managing" innovation. We believe that innovation in organizations happens through an emerging dynamics between management

and employees, where management provides enabling conditions for employees to innovate, and employees from across the organization take a proactive and highly engaged role in making innovation happen, participating in all phases of the innovation process (Høyrup, 2010). The theoretical background of emergent innovation (Peschl & Fundneider, 2008), enabling innovation (Peschl & Fundneider, 2012) and the idea of people playing a central role in innovation processes will be further explained in the next chapter. The concepts of employee-driven innovation (Høyrup, 2010 & 20012; Kesting & Ulhøi, 2010; Kristiansen & Bloch-Poulsen, 2010) and participatory innovation (Buur & Matthews, 2008) will be presented.

Within the focus of enabling innovation through bottom-up employee-driven processes our research looks at how we can help organizations move from the "lean" mentality and incremental innovation towards creating conditions for employees to create more radical innovation. This being said, we do not see a conflict between innovating incrementally and innovating radically, but would rather emphasize the importance of combining the two. The ability to innovate in our opinion integrates the capacity to move between different dualities, such as exploration - exploitation (March, 1991), action – reflection (Schön, 1983), divergence – convergence, and autonomy – integration (Backström, 2013). This capacity should be an integral part of individual and team competence across different departments and supported by structures and culture on the overall organizational level. Such reasoning is in line with the concept of contextual ambidexterity and differs from the other three modes of balancing exploration and exploitation, which propose to separate them on an organizational, temporal or domain basis (Lavie et al., 2010). Since our understanding of radical (or discontinuous/ disruptive) innovation is not predominantly technology-driven, as some other authors might have see it (Christensen, 1997), we do not think that only people with specific expert knowledge can contribute to discontinuous innovation. On the contrary, we see an increasing amount of radical innovation happening through changes in organizational processes and structures, which is for example supported by the whole field around business model innovation (Osterwalder & Pigneur, 2009). Consequently, we suggest that all employees, even if not directly working within R&D or other departments traditionally connected to new technology and product development, can drive smaller and bigger organizational changes and contribute to both incremental and radical innovation.

Our research within Kaikaku and other research projects shows that many organizations in Sweden today are already competent in creating lean organization through continuous improvements and incremental innovation but struggle with developing the competence for radical innovation. This is why there is an increasing demand from industry and even the public sector to develop entrepreneurial skills and behavior among employees in order to create more discontinuous innovations in the future. Characteristics of such behavior described in innovation management literature are

often related to risk-taking, curiosity, the questioning of existing norms, autonomy, tolerance for ambiguity, probe and learn experimentation, the observation of new trends and market signals, and contacts with external world (Bessant et al., 2005; Dyer et al., 2008). To enable this kind of behavior among employees, more flexible and open objectives, decentralized and informal structures, and strong collaboration through diverse teams that have both internal confidence and external support by the management are needed (Daniels, 2010; Dobni, 2008; McLaughlin et al., 2008).

A part of developing innovative behavior and building competence towards radical innovation among employees is also their connection with a wide network of external partners that need to be engaged in innovation initiatives to bring in new knowledge, perspectives and other resources. In our view, innovation is not something that happens within an organization as a closed system, but rather through a wide network of collaborations among various actors within and outside of the organization. In this sense our research is close to the concept of open innovation (Chesbrough, 2003) and underlines the importance of diverse groups connecting employees across organizational departments and various external partners in innovation initiatives. Diversity in innovation teams stimulates divergent thinking (Olsson & Florin, 2011) and contributes with a wide pallet of knowledge and skills that are valuable for innovation processes. Organizations most typically engage their closest external partners, such as customers, suppliers, research institutions and other stakeholders in their innovation efforts. But lately the practice of identifying and attracting interpreters from a larger variety of fields (such as design, art, science, technology, anthropology and others) has been stressed as an important factor for enabling discontinuous innovation in organizations (Verganti, 2009). It is in this interaction of diverse actors, crossing intentions and different perspectives that unexplored questions emerge and new meanings are created (Buur and Larsen, 2010).

In short, our research within the field of innovation management is positioned around the issues of enabling organizations to move towards the capacity to innovate more radically through emergent, collaborative, employee-driven innovation processes in close interaction with different actors from outside the organization that can contribute to organizational innovation capability.

1.3.2 Art-based initiatives in organizations

But what kind of role can art-based initiatives play in enabling collaborative employee-driven innovation and helping organizations become more radical in their innovation efforts? First, let us look closer at what art-based initiatives are and then explore their connection with innovation. According to Giovanni Schiuma (2009) an "art-based initiative is any organizational and management intervention using one or more art

forms to enable people to undergo an art experience within an organizational context, as well as to embed the arts as a business asset. It is primarily and fundamentally an experience-based process involving and engaging people both rationally and emotionally through either active or passive participation." (p. 3)

Lotte Darsø (2004) talks about four different ways of applying art in organizational context. The oldest and the simplest form is to use art as decoration by buying artistic works and exhibiting them in the working environment. The second level is to use art as entertainment, for example by inviting artists to perform at different types of business events or by giving employees free tickets to participate in artistic events in their free time. The third form of applying arts in organizations is to use the knowledge of artists to help employees develop skills and competences in specific areas, such as teambuilding, communication, leadership, problem solving and innovation. The last and the most complex way of using art in organizations is when organizations integrate art on a strategic level and through a long-term collaboration with artists enable processes of transformation. This can happen on different levels, such as personal development and leadership, culture and identity, creativity and innovation, and others (ibid., pp. 14-15). Since our research explores how dance-based methods can enable people in organizations to innovate, and create a culture for radical innovation, we are interested in the last two levels of using art in business that Darsø (ibid.) describes, namely competence development and strategic transformation. The research presented in this thesis is mainly focused on using dance-based methods to enhance innovation competence development on individual and group levels, while our future research will look into the use of dance-based methods for enabling strategic transformation on the organizational level.

But how can we argue that art-based interventions in organizations can be used to enable employees to develop their competence for innovation and transform organizational culture towards more radical innovation? Austin and Devin (2003) claim that since business became more dependent on knowledge to create value, and knowledge work adds value in large part because of its capacity for innovation, work became more like art. Managers should thus look at how artists work and be inspired by their collaborative models instead of applying the more traditional management models in order to create economic value in the new century. Adler (2006) suggests in a similar manner that the increasingly changing complex and globally interconnected environment demands from companies not only to continuously improve existing products and processes but also to constantly create innovations. While artists have always relied on their creativity as a core competence that has helped them continuously break with existing patterns and create newness in their artistic work, managers have traditionally not paid attention to developing such a competence. There is thus an opportunity for managers to learn from arts how they can develop innovation capabilities in organizations (ibid.). Or as Schiuma (2009) says,

organizations of the future need to be creative, proactive and continuously changing, which they can achieve by engaging the imagination, passion, and energy of their employees. Artistic methods can be an important source for organizations to develop these innovation capabilities (ibid.). Organizational interventions inspired by art have become quite popular and several researchers have started documenting and studying the beneficial effects of using knowledge, principles and techniques from art to stimulate creativity and innovation in business (Austin & Devin, 2003; Adler, 2006; Barry & Meisiek, 2010; Berthoin Antal & Strauß, 2013; Buswick et al.; 2004; Guillet de Monthoux, 2004; Darsø, 2004; Ladkin & Taylor, 2010; Schiuma, 2009). Notions such as "creative economy", "artful management", and "leadership as art" are attracting an increasing attention among academics, practitioners and policymakers (Koivunen, 2012).

If we look more closely at art-based initiatives in organizations, we can see that they produce a wide range of effects on organizations, but many of the effects are very closely related to enabling organizational innovation. As Berthoin Antal and Strauß (2013) describe in their study, managers discover that it makes sense to generate organizational innovation by using innovative methods from the arts. Their review of 268 academic, practitioner and policy publications on arts and business, and social impacts of the arts in organizations and society (ibid.), contains evidence of art-based initiatives from 205 organizations of different sizes and from diverse sectors. Based on their analysis we can identify eight impact categories that art-based initiatives have on organizations: seeing more and differently, activation, collaborative ways of working, personal development, organizational development, artful ways of working, relationships and strategic and operational impacts. When we look more closely at these eight categories, we see that most of them are related to enabling innovation. For example, the impact category of "seeing more and differently", which was the category that appeared with the highest frequency (117 times) as an effect of artistic interventions in their study, was described as helping participants become more aware of things around them through reflection, making them question taken-for-granted routines, and enabling them to get new perspectives or widen existing ones. All these qualities are important aspects in innovation processes. The same goes for the second most frequently encountered impact category labeled "activation", which was mentioned in 114 cases in their study. Activation means that art-based initiatives usually inspire, stimulate and energize employees. They enable them to tap into their feelings, bodily ways of knowing, and help them experience and express emotions in new ways. All this helps them think differently and guides them in decisions and actions, stimulating them to do things in new ways, trying out new approaches and dealing with uncertain situations. These are again all important competences related to innovation. The same goes for the impact category "collaborative ways of working", which explains how art-based initiatives help teams improve and deepen their communication and collaboration skills, and thus stimulate innovation. Improvisation

skills are also often mentioned in art and business literature (Barrett, 1998; Crossan, 1998; VanGundy & Naiman, 2003; Olsson, 2008) as something that organizations should learn from artists to deal with unpredictable business environments and to develop their innovation capabilities. They can help employees shift from sequential planning-then-doing to simultaneous listening-and-observing-while-doing approach (Kamoche et al., 2002).

In the study of Berthoin Antal and Strauß (2013) it seems that managers and employees who engage in art-based initiatives in general care more about how these initiatives influence the potential for innovation in the organization than about their effect on more hard-core operational factors, such as productivity and efficiency. This can relate to the trend that managers are switching their attention from the classical management parameters focused on optimization of existing operations towards looking for new sources of business renewal and innovation. But it is probably also connected to the natural strengths of the arts and artists´ skills which are closer to the areas of creativity and innovation than optimization and efficiency. Artistic knowledge and methods can thus become an important source for organizations to develop their innovation capabilities and move from incremental towards more radical innovation. Since art-based initiatives have a very strong impact on the individual level, moving people out of their comfort zone, engaging them in self-reflection, personal development and encouraging them to explore new ways of thinking and acting (Schiuma, 2009), they can become an important enabler of employee-driven innovation. And by facilitating a change in people´s attitudes and behaviors they can contribute to the transformation of the whole organizational culture.

As mentioned above, the research presented in this thesis explores the crossroads between the fields of innovation management and art-based initiatives. But within art-based methods my specific interest lies in contemporary dance, questioning whether and how it could be used to enable innovation in organizations. Such enabling could happen both on the level of supporting people to develop and improve their competence towards more radical innovation, but also on the level of helping create an organizational culture for innovation in the long term.

The specific interest in contemporary dance and choreography is on one hand connected to my personal interest in the field and experiences of being actively engaged in it for several years. On the other hand, I see a gap in the existing literature on art-based initiatives where it is very hard to find evidence of how knowledge and methods from contemporary dance practice could be applied to enable organizational innovation. Other art forms, such as theatre, visual art and music are much more commonly mentioned. Chandler (2012) indicates that dance could be used as an analogy to question work practices and uses metaphors from dance to relate to organizational questions, such as rhythm, and non-verbal communication. But in

my research I am not as much interested in using dance as an analogy or metaphor to explore organizational innovation, as I am interested in looking more closely at the practice of contemporary dance groups and see whether and how the concepts, methods and principles from their work could be applied in organizational practice to enable innovation. My focus is thus on changing existing practice in organizational innovation processes by using knowledge from contemporary dance. Compared to other forms of art, dance is most closely involved in exploring the human body and movement in relation to time, space and a wider social, cultural and political context. Since business has predominantly focused on engaging people on the cognitive level in their work, especially when it comes to knowledge workers who are focused on innovation, I would like to explore what would happen if employees would become more aware of engaging their body, movement, feelings, and intuition in creative ways in their innovation processes. I believe that contemporary dance and choreography can offer a rich spectrum of concepts, tools and strategies that could help practitioners in organizations develop more innovative behavior and create structures and culture for enabling radical innovation. I propose that dance-based methods have a potential to drive organizational innovation by affecting people from within – how they feel, move, perceive, behave, think, and collaborate with each other.

1.4 What is innovation?

Since "innovation" is a central term in my research, I would like to present my understanding of innovation and some specific aspects of innovation that are important for this thesis. The first definition of innovation was coined by Schumpeter in the late 1920s (Hansen & Wakonen, 1997). He stressed the novelty aspect of innovation, which could be a new product, method of production, organizational structure or market (Ibid.). Crossan and Apaydin (2010) made a systematic review of literature on organizational innovation and their definition of innovation covers most of the key elements that are repeated in different innovation definitions. They define innovation as "production or adoption, assimilation, and exploitation of a value-added novelty in economic and social spheres; renewal and enlargement of products, services, and markets; development of new methods of production; and establishment of new management systems. It is both a process and an outcome." (p.1155)

If we simplify their words, we can say that *innovation can be a process or an outcome that has a novelty and creates value*. Both the novelty and the value are defined very broadly. This definition is close to my understanding of innovation, but since it is very broad, I would like to narrow it down to some elements of innovation that are in focus of my research. First, my focus is on *innovation as process*, because I am interested in designing processes that can enable people to innovate. I think the outcome is also

important, but my interest lies in the process since I believe the process to a large extent influences what the outcome will be. Second, my focus is on *people-driven innovation* that happens through collaboration *in groups.* I believe that people are the key resource in innovation and they need to feel engagement and ownership as drivers of the process. At the same time I think most innovation challenges today are too complex to be solved by individuals, so innovating through a collaborative process in a group of diverse people that can contribute different knowledge and perspectives to the process is key to innovation. And third, my focus is on the *creative practice of making*, a concept inspired by my research of the creative practice of dancers. The creative practice of making relates to innovation as experiential activity that happens when people engage in repetitive iterative cycles between exploration and reflection. In exploration they are focused on action while experimenting with new ideas, trying them out, engaging their creativity, improvising, and taking risks. In reflection they take a step back from the doing to become aware of what is happening in the process, to question and evaluate what they created through exploration, and to make decisions for the next step in the process. This helps them move forward in the innovation process. An essential part in the creative practice of making is that people are involved as a whole, engaging their body, mind, intuition, emotions and will through the making. Innovation is thus not just an intellectual or cognitive process. People increase their ability to innovate over time, as they continuously engage in and develop their creative practice of making. As their practice develops, they can move from innovating through small improvements towards innovating more radically.

If we summarize the different elements highlighted above, we can say that innovation is understood in this thesis as: *a people-driven process that emerges through the creative practice of making value-added novelties in groups*.

1.5 What is contemporary dance and choreography?

"Contemporary dance" and "choreography" are also terms often referred to in this thesis, which is why I would like to share some thoughts on their meaning. At the same time I would like to stress that there are no commonly agreed upon definitions and some surveys among practitioners in the field show that there are almost as many different definitions of contemporary dance and choreography as there are people active in the field.

A very basic and general definition of contemporary dance would be the one provided by Wikipedia, which says that: "contemporary dance is a popular form of dance which developed during the middle portion of the twentieth century and has since grown to become one of the dominating performance genres for formally trained dancers throughout the world, with particularly strong popularity in the U.S. and western

Europe. Although originally informed by and borrowing from classical, modern and jazz styles, it has since come to incorporate elements from many styles of dance." (Accessed on 15th January 2014 from http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Contemporary_dance)

What needs to be added to this definition for a basic introduction of the term contemporary dance is that although the movement of the body still represents an important aspect of research material in the work of contemporary dancers, it is not fixed or limited to established movement patterns or techniques but rather focused on a continuous search for new forms and dynamics. Another important aspect missing in the Wikipedia definition is that contemporary dance is not only questioning the form of movement but also how it is staged for the audience. Contemporary dance performances are thus showed in a wide variety of conventional and nonconventional stages (such as theatres or public and private places), and often experiment with new ways of establishing relationship between the artist and the audience.

For the purpose of my research I would like to use the definition of contemporary dance developed by choreographer and dancer Gregor Kamnikar (2012), who proposes that contemporary dance is the art of creating movement with a critical attitude of questioning our understanding and experience of the world. His definition stresses three aspects that are at the core of contemporary dance practice – body (movement), explorative creation and critical reflection. All these elements are important for my research about innovation processes in organizations and will be further discussed later in the thesis.

When looking for different definitions of choreography I found an interesting study done by the internet magazine for dance, choreography and performance called Corpus. In this study they invited 100 established artists, theoreticians, curators and critics from the field of contemporary dance to define what choreography means today. The answers reveal a very colorful pallet of different proposals on the meaning of choreography, highlighting a variety of issues that choreography is dealing with today.

For the purpose of my research I would like to quote the definition provided by Tim Etchells, which is rather simple but includes the main aspects that are often present in different definitions of choreography and thus provides a minimum common point of departure into further exploration of the term. He defines the term choreography as "organization of movement in time and space." (Accessed on 30th January 2014, from http://www.corpusweb.net/answers-0107.html)

Etchells' definition introduces the basic concepts of body/ movement, time, space and composition that are the core elements of choreographic work and were mentioned also by choreographers interviewed in my research study. These terms

are thus included in the choreographic model of innovation process stages, tools and enablers that is presented and discussed later in the thesis.

1.6 Research purpose and questions

To conclude this section about the framing of my research field I would like to summarize the purpose of my research and present the research questions explored in this thesis.

The overall purpose of my research is to explore how we can use knowledge and methods from contemporary dance to enable innovation in organizations.

The research questions explored in my licentiate thesis are:

RQ 1: How do contemporary dance groups work in their creative processes?

RQ 2: How does the creative process of contemporary dancers compare to established models of innovation process in organizations?

RQ 3: What are the key enablers for innovation in contemporary dance groups?

RQ 4: Are there similarities between enablers for innovation in dance and industry?

RQ 5: Are methods for enabling innovation in dance applicable in organizations and how?

As it is seen from the list of research questions, RQ 1 and 2 are exploring the topic of innovation process, RQ 3 and 4 the question of innovation enablers, and RQ 5 how dance-based methods can be used to enable innovation process in organizations. To answer RQ 1 and 3 we had to primarily look at the empirical data collected about the practice of contemporary dance groups in the first study, which was a series of semi-structured interviews with choreographers. To explore RQ 2 and 4 we had to compare our data from the first study with theories from innovation management and empirical data from the industry. Insights into RQ 5 were provided by empirical data from the second study, which integrated both fields of research and tested dance-based methods in order to enable innovation in organizations. Table 1 gives an overview of different research questions divided by topics and data source.

Division of research questions by topic		Division of research questions by source of data	
Innovation process	RQ 1, RQ 2	Empirical data from contemporary dance practice - Study 1	RQ 1, RQ 3
Innovation enablers	RQ 3, RQ 4	Innovation management theory and empirical data from industry compared to Study 1	RQ 2, RQ 4
Application of dance-based methods in organizational practice	RQ 5	Empirical data from Study 2 – integrating both fields	RQ 5

Table 1: Overview of research question divided by topics and data source

The exploration of research questions relies to a large extent on empirical data from my own research, which is due to a lack of existing research and literature connecting contemporary dance practice and innovation management in organizations.

1.7 Contribution of research to theory and practice

The aim of the research presented in this thesis is to contribute to both theory and practice. The first study, done through a series of 20 semi-structured interviews with choreographers and dancers, suggests a new model of innovation process inspired by contemporary dance practice. It also identifies different enablers and tools from choreography that can be used to support people going through an innovation process and strengthening their abilities for radical innovation. Both contributions can be interesting for the field of innovation management research where there is a need to further develop existing innovation process frameworks in order to adapt them to discontinuous innovation and populate them with concrete tools and enabling mechanisms (Bessant et al., 2005).

The second study responds to a need from the industry and the public sector, which are looking for practical methods that can help them develop the innovation competence of their employees, creating a more innovative work environment and moving towards the capacity to innovate radically. The study tested how concepts and methods from contemporary dance and choreography can be used for this purpose and thus offers some concrete examples of tools and methods for enabling innovation on individual and team levels that are inspired by choreographic practice.

The results of both studies contribute also to the field of art-based initiatives in organizations by filling the missing gap in research about the use of concepts and methods from contemporary dance practice in organizational context. The evidence from the second study shows how practitioners from different kind of organizations are able to make sense of and use choreographic methods in their own work and what the limits of dance-based methods are in the context of enabling organizational innovation.

THEORY

② THEORY

In the theory chapter only a handful of selected theories that support my understanding of innovation, innovation process, and innovation management are presented. In the introduction I positioned my research within innovation management around the concept of enabling innovation and my specific focus on innovation as a people-driven process that emerges through the creative practice of making value-added novelties in groups. Theories presented in this chapter thus provide theoretical grounding for my specific focus and understanding of innovation management and innovation. First, since I talk about the importance of emergence and enabling in innovation processes, the terms emergent innovation and enabling innovation are explained. Second, theory U provides a framework for the innovation process that is close to my understanding of circular, open-ended and holistic principles in the innovation process, involving people on different levels and thus providing conditions for change in their attitudes and behavior that can enable radical change and innovation. To conclude, some theories supporting a people-driven approach to innovation will be presented to show the centrality of people, their collaborative group effort and the active participation of employees from across the organization in innovation. I will return again to the theories presented in this chapter in the last part of the thesis, where I will discuss empirical results in relation to theory and research questions.

2.1 Emergent innovation and the concept of enabling

Peschl and Fundneider (2008) developed the concept of *emergent innovation*. They talk about five different levels and strategies in the innovation and knowledge creation processes. As we move from level one to level five, the complexity increases and the type of innovation we engage in changes, moving from incremental towards radical and in the end emergent innovation. The first level is called "reacting and downloading", which is the simplest way of reacting to change. On this level we rely on our existing solutions, knowledge and behavior patterns that we simply "download" and repeat as a way of dealing with change. The second strategy is called "restructuring and adaptation", and is closely linked to incremental innovation. In this case we slightly adapt and change existing knowledge and patterns by improving and optimizing them. The third level is about "redesign and redirection". On this level we take a step further and explore existing patterns of thinking and perception as a starting point of becoming able to take different standpoints and create new knowledge. The fourth strategy is called "reframing" and is the basis for radical innovation. On this level we step out of our deep assumptions and reframe existing knowledge by changing our mental models. The last, fifth, level is called *"re-generating"*, profound existential change and *"presencing"*, and is connected to emergent innovation. Here the change

is not only cognitive or intellectual, but touches more fundamental questions of finality, purpose, heart and will, and is thus existential. An emergent approach to innovation does not focus on learning from the past but rather on being completely open and present to sense the potential and see what could be possible in the future (ibid, p. 105). In emergent innovation *"the goal is to be very close to the innovation object and at the same time completely open to what wants to emerge out of the surrounding, out of the organization, its humans and its knowledge"* (ibid, p. 105). The existential level of the person, organization or society is brought into a status of inner unity/alignment with itself and with its future potential as well as with future requirements (ibid, p. 105).

From Peschl and Fundneider´s (2012) perspective, to bring any kind of profound, radical and emergent innovation about, the notion of *enabling* is crucial. Enabling is seen as the opposite of managing innovation (ibid.). Since managing well is connected to keeping things under control, innovation that aims at destabilizing and changing established routines can be seen as an enemy in an organization. Managers are thus not likely to be enthusiastic about integrating innovation processes in their daily routines, unless they can make them predictable and fit them into their procedures and processes (ibid.). This attitude of control is connected with the assumption that innovation processes can be produced or controlled like any other organizational process. But in reality, even less complex organizational processes can be controlled only to a certain level, while reality is quite complex and often surprises us with unpredictable events. If we wanted to control and manage innovation processes by using rules and recipes, we would actually be contradicting ourselves because it is not possible to produce profoundly new knowledge and innovation from a process of applying existing rules and recipes (ibid.).

The concept of enabling in the context of innovation relates to "providing a set of constraints or a facilitating framework for supporting innovation" (Peschl and Fundneider, 2012, p. 45). Enabling is a *question of attitude* and is related to a certain way of thinking and acting in which we are prepared to give up control and let things develop (ibid.). This does not mean that we are passively waiting for innovation to happen but rather that we create enabling structures for innovation (ibid.). The attitudes of enabling underline the importance of openness, reflection, and the ability to radically question ourselves, being ready to let go of existing patterns of thought and behavior. Furthermore, observation and listening, patience, availability/ perceptiveness and the ability to wait for the "right moment" and follow the flow of reality are important (ibid.). Besides the specific attitudes and values, a supportive environment is needed for innovation, which Peschl and Fundneider call *enabling space* (ibid.). Enabling space is based on cultivation, facilitation, incubation and enabling rather than on the regime of control and forced change (ibid). Space in this case is defined very broadly, as a *"container providing a set of constraints that holds it*

together and gives it a minimal structure and dynamics*" (ibid, p. 49). Enabling space is multidimensional and integrates a variety of factors, such as architectural, social, cognitive, emotional, and technological ones, with the aim of supporting innovation (ibid.).

The concepts of emergent innovation (Peschl & Fundneider, 2008) and enabling space for innovation (Peschl & Fundneider, 2012) are important theoretical resources in my research and close to my understanding of innovation, since I look at organizational innovation as an emergent process and at organizations as complex dynamic systems (Sawyer, 2005). In this context I understand innovation not as something that can be controlled but rather as something that can be enabled. The attitudes that Peschl and Fundneider describe as key aspects of enabling innovation are very close to the artistic practice of contemporary dance groups that is explored in my empirical studies. Also their idea that radical innovation cannot happen only on the basis of existing rules and recipes, but by engaging people on different levels (body, mind, emotions, will) and tapping into future possibilities rather than learning from the past is very similar to the improvisational work of contemporary dancers.

2.2 Innovation as process - Theory U

Since I refer to innovation as a process, it is important to explain what kind of theoretical ground I use for understanding the innovation process. There are many different approaches to and theories of innovation processes. A model that has been widely applied in companies is the so called "stage-gate model" (Cooper, 1990; 2008), which can be seen in Diagram 2.
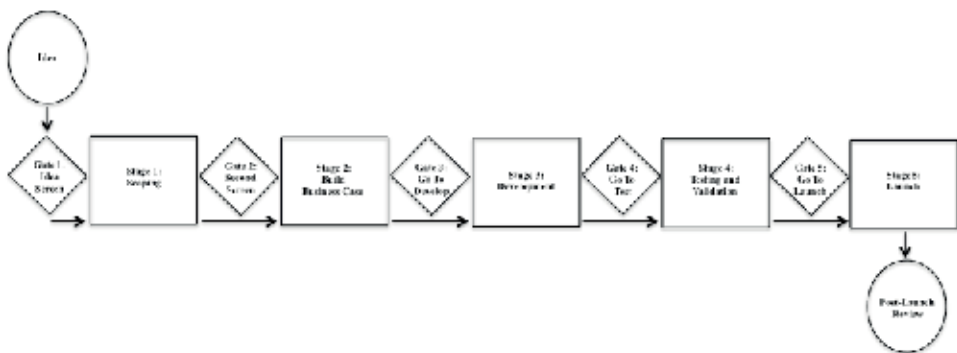
Diagram 2: Stage-Gate Innovation Process, Adapted from: Cooper (2008, p. 215)

Another model often used in innovation management practice, teaching and research is Tidd and Bessant's (2011) model, which distinguishes between four steps in the process: search, select, implement and capture, and is visualized in Diagram 3.
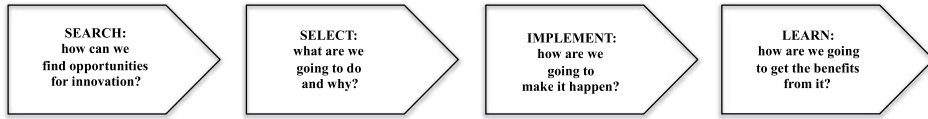
Diagram 3: Innovation process, Adapted from: Tidd and Bessant (2011)

As we can see, both models presented in Diagrams 2 and 3 are visualized in a linear sequence of four or five stages, following each other. Below we will present another model from theory U by Otto Scharmer (2009) that is a bit more circular, open-ended, emergent and people-driven. It explains how radical innovation and change can only happen if people are engaged in the process on different levels (mind, heart, will) and if "presencing" or a shift in a place from which they operate as individuals and community occurs. This model is closer to my research and the artistic practice of contemporary dancers than the more traditional frameworks used in innovation management theory and practice (Cooper, 1990; 2008; Tidd & Bessant, 2011). Although it is not often used as a reference in innovation management theory, it builds on widely known research done by Senge (1990) around the concepts of "generative learning" and "learning organizations". In his later work Senge further developed these concepts together with Scharmer and some other colleagues and defined the idea of "presence" (Senge et al., 2004). More details about the theory U model and an explanation of my reasons for using it in the present study will follow. The process represented in Diagram 4 is used within theory U (Scharmer, 2009) to explain profound change and innovation processes on different levels: individual,
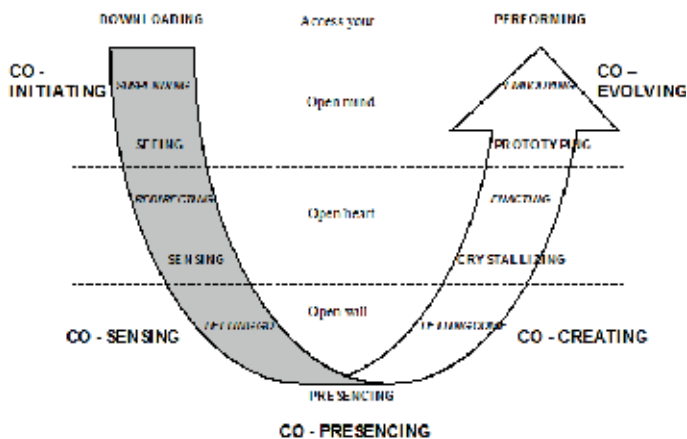
Diagram 4: Innovation process, Adapted from: Scharmer, C. O. (2009, p. 45)

group, institution, and global systems levels. The process consists of five moves: co-initiating, co-sensing, co-presencing, co-creating and co-evolving (ibid.). Since our perspective on innovation focuses on the group level, we will explain the innovation process according to the theory U through a group perspective.

In the *co-initiating phase*, a common intent and a feeling of the group are built. This is the beginning of the innovation process, where a core group of people who want to make a difference and bring about innovation together is formed. In this phase a common purpose and intention are developed, the people that will be a part of the process are invited to participate and the way the process will be used is discussed. A group feeling of trust and safety must be created for everyone to be able to open up, suspend habitual patterns and voices of judgment, listen deeply to each other, and see things with fresh eyes. By suspending judgments, the group is able to see the objective reality they are up against, including some basic facts. In this phase it is important to understand the bigger picture or context of the problem. If the task involves developing a new product, we might conduct trend-spotting, engage with customers, do ethnographic studies of users, etc. – perform any activities that will help us see the problem at hand with fresh eyes.

The next move in the U-curve is *co-sensing*, where observing and sensing are crucial. Sensing means that the group can see collectively with depth and clarity, engaging the body, all senses and an open heart - accessing and activating deeper levels of emotional perception. In this way the group becomes aware of the collective potential and emerging opportunities. When people open their heart and show their own vulnerability, a deeper level of connection in the group is created and a real dialogue happens. The attention is redirected from "exterior" to "interior", or from the object to the process. People start to see how their own actions contribute to the problem at hand and begin to sense how they are part of the issue explored in the innovation process. In this way the group can see how collective patterns are being created from within and not caused purely by external forces. Telling stories about team experiences and personal turning points can be useful at this stage of the process to facilitate the phase of opening up to each other.

The following move in the process is called *co-presencing.* In this phase the group members need to let go of all the non-essential old aspects of self, surrender to the unknown and open up to new aspects of their highest future potential. They need to answer two essential questions of creativity: Who is my Self? and What is my work? (my purpose in life). Once the group crosses this threshold, it starts to operate with a heightened level of energy and as a vehicle for the future the group members feel wants to emerge. This point is also a distinctive point in theory U compared to other theories of learning, like Kolb´s (1984) learning cycle or the double-loop learning by Argyris and Schön (1995), which are based on the idea of learning from

experiences of the past. Theory U talks instead about learning from the future that emerges from our highest source of creative potential. This is because radical change and innovation demand a discovery of new possibilities that we do not know yet, so they cannot happen by learning only from existing solutions. In this phase we need to let go of the fear of uncertainty, connect with our deepest source of intuition and creativity to access our authentic purpose and self (our open will) and let our highest future possibility emerge. In this phase we experience a profound shift, a change of the place from which we operate. An important part of presencing is a heightened state of awareness, the feeling of being and losing the boundary between yourself and the bigger system. People experience that they see more and experience more of their selves in the state of presencing. The concept of presencing is close the state of *flow* developed by Csikszentmihalyi (2008).

The fourth move in the U-process is *co-creating*, where we crystalize the future vision and intention by envisioning the new future that wants to emerge. In this phase we redirect from inner vision to exterior action, through prototyping solutions for real needs in real time. This means we explore the future by enacting the new solutions. The idea of prototyping is known from design practice. Prototyping does not come after the analysis, but is part of the sensing and discovery process where we explore the future by doing, trying out different solutions relatively fast, and learning from experimentation. An important part of prototyping is repeated practice – to do it again and again, so it becomes a part of our work on a daily basis. Another aspect of prototyping practice is to be really attentive and seize the opportunities and ideas when they come to us, because they might not appear exactly when we expect them to. In the practice of prototyping all three forms of our intelligence are engaged: head, heart and hands/body. Making a prototype means you can show up something that is not finished yet but which will allow you to elicit feedback and take you to the next improved version.

The fifth and last move in the U is *co-evolving*, which means that we review what has been working and what not in the prototypes the group has developed and decide which prototypes might have the highest novelty and added value for the innovation challenge at hand. To do this evaluation we often need to involve different stakeholders in the process. In this way we connect the prototypes with the highest potential with institutions and players that can take them to the next level of implementation and scaling. In this phase we start to perform and embody the new actions, practices and infrastructures developed through the previous steps of the process so they start to become embedded in the daily operations of the group.

Theory U is in general close to my understanding of the innovation process, so I would like to expose a few aspects that it integrates and which are not present in more

traditional definitions of the innovation process, such as Cooper´s (1990) or Tidd and Bessant´s (2011), but are important for my research. One aspect is the phase of co-initiating in the innovation process. If a group is going to innovate together and engage in exploration and experimentation, a certain enabling space needs to be created first. Since people are usually not used to working in a very creative and explorative way in their everyday routines, it is not likely that they will suddenly become extremely experimental when entering an innovation process. First, they need to have a feeling of a group and common purpose, and they need to understand the bigger picture or context of the challenge they want to work with. They also need to create passion around the challenge they will explore and build trust in each other to open up and be ready to take risks and explore together. As Peschl and Fundneider (2012) claim, a certain set of attitudes needs to be nurtured to enable innovation. And the group might need also other enabling structures to innovate, such as enabling physical space, time, resources, support from management, etc. So the phase of co-initiating through creating the right mindset and enabling space is crucial for innovation to happen later in the process. Another reason why theory U is used for understanding innovation processes in this thesis is that it presupposes a shift in the place from which we operate as part of the process. Any profound innovation in an organization, like change in organizational culture, demands change from within – change in the attitudes and behaviors of people. And we believe that for most employees who will try to develop their ability to innovate and move beyond everyday incremental improvements towards more radical innovation, this kind of shift will be needed. To open up, engage all aspects of self (mind, heart, body, will), and let go of old behavior patterns in order to allow the new ones to come, is thus part of enabling employees to develop their practice of innovating. And last but not least, the U process has the shape of a curve, and suggests an open and circular process based on emergence, rather than on planning and control. There are no clear gates for quality control defined or deliverables specified and expected by 'gatekeepers' at each gate to decrease risks like those of the stage-gate model (Cooper, 1990). These ideas are also close to contemporary dance practice.

A critique of theory U would nevertheless be that it is still quite fluffy and difficult to understand from the scientific perspective. As a practitioner I can join a very wide global community that resonates with the theory U approach and uses it in their practice, but as a researcher I believe that some parts of the theory, like the phase of "presencing", need more research and a clearer definition in the future.

2.3 People-driven innovation

Apart from highlighting the process perspective in my understanding of innovation, I also defined innovation as a people-driven activity where collaboration in diverse

groups, and bottom-up participation and engagement of employees from across the organization are important. Below some theories that support the people-driven aspect of innovation are presented.

A new field of research close to learning theories has recently developed around the concept of *employee-driven innovation* (Høyrup, 2010 & 20012; Kesting & Ulhøi, 2010; Kristiansen & Bloch-Poulsen, 2010). The key questions explored in employee-driven innovation are how the employees who are learning in the workplace produce innovation and what organizational conditions facilitate learning and innovation in organizations (Høyrup, 2012). This approach sees learning and innovation as very closely interwoven processes and employees learning at the workplace as the raw material for employee-driven innovation. The idea behind employee-driven innovation is that innovation today should not be limited to special innovation or R&D departments but should become embedded in the daily work activities across organizations (ibid.). Employees are an important but often overlooked resource for innovation because they possess highly context-dependent operational knowledge acquired over time, often have unutilized creative potential and relevant network contacts outside the organization that can help them generate valuable ideas (Høyrup, 2010). But for employee-driven innovation to happen we need to create the right organizational conditions. One of the conditions needed is to decentralize the responsibility for planning and executing work down to operative and cross-sectional ad hoc teams that can form and dissolve in a flexible way according to the needs of the organization (Høyrup, 2012). Employees must also have the possibility to engage external experts, institutions and partners that can bring the knowledge and resources needed in the innovation projects (ibid.). This means that employees need to have a high level of autonomy and ownership of the work activities. Employees from any organizational level, including shop floor, can take initiatives to propose, develop and implement new ideas. Innovation is thus understood as a bottom-up process. This does not mean that employee-driven innovation excludes the role of management. Managers can help coordinate and systematize innovation processes initiated by employees or invite employees to participate in innovation processes. We can thus say that both bottom-up and top-down approaches are part of employee-driven innovation (ibid.)

The concept of employee-driven innovation is close to my understanding of innovation as a people-driven process in which people are the key resource and need to feel the ownership of the process. Since the focus is on innovation as a process that should start from within an organization, the employees are the key resource that organizations need to use and develop to enable organizational innovation. In contrast to many theories that focus on innovation as a new product or technology development process that happens within specific organizational units working with innovation, I believe that in the future innovation will become a core competence

that will have to be distributed across the organization. The challenge of the concept of employee-driven innovation is, though, that many organizations still use traditional hierarchical organizational forms that are very far from enabling employees to innovate in their daily work. According to a European study conducted by Lorenz and Valeyre (2005), the Netherlands and the Nordic countries have much better preconditions for practicing employee-driven innovation than Southern European countries where traditional organizational forms with low levels of learning and innovation are still dominant. This means that for employee-driven innovation to be spread globally, many organizations will need to work with changing the organizational culture and structure before employee-driven innovation can become a reality. Sweden, though, has good preconditions for developing employee-driven innovation in organizations due to its tradition of participatory management practices. Experience from our research projects where we collaborate with both private and public sectors demonstrates that many Swedish organizations already try to expand their innovation competence beyond their innovation, R&D or product development departments and instead use employees across the organization as an important resource for organizational innovation.

Another theory that supports the people-driven aspect of innovation is the theory around *participatory innovation*, which is being developed by a group of researchers in the Participatory Innovation Research Center SPIRE connected to the University of Southern Denmark and lead by Jacob Buur. SPIRE started to organize annual international conferences on participatory innovation PIN-C where researchers from around the world meet and exchange experiences. Buur and Matthews (2008) define participatory innovation as innovation driven by people, not experts. It is based on a democratic idea that comes from the Scandinavian workplace tradition, where "ordinary" people can contribute to innovation based on their existing practices and needs. Participatory innovation projects thus take people´s practices and needs as a starting point of the innovation process, in which employees (company developers) and users collaborate and together develop new products and services (ibid.). Innovation is thus the novelty that comes about through local interactions between people with different intentions and creates new meanings (Buur and Larsen, 2010). This meeting of crossing intentions and new themes that emerge when different perspectives in the group collide are crucial for innovation to happen in a group conversation (ibid).

Leonard and Sensiper (1998) also talk about the importance of group collaboration and diversity for innovation. Diversity brings a richness of tacit knowledge that different people possess and that can only be shared through group collaboration. Diversity and collaboration in groups stimulate people to communicate and further develop their mental models, life examples, physical skills and unrecognized patterns of experience which they draw upon when innovating (ibid.). Backström and Olsson (2010) also claim that diversity is central to creativity in groups because different

ways of thinking can contribute different ideas and perspectives, which stimulates the dynamics and creativity in a group. This is why it is not surprising that innovations in organizations are increasingly being developed in diverse groups that form around innovation challenges and engage both employees from different organizational departments and external partners, such as researchers, suppliers, customers and other stakeholders that can contribute the knowledge needed in an innovation process. This means that organizations need a flexible structure that allows the emergence and disappearance of innovation teams around challenges that organizations face at different points in time. The employees who share common vision, values and attitudes can provide the basis for integration that is needed for innovation groups to function, while external partners and the changeability of groups contribute to diversity and fresh perspectives that are needed to enable innovation.

Människor
som inspirerar
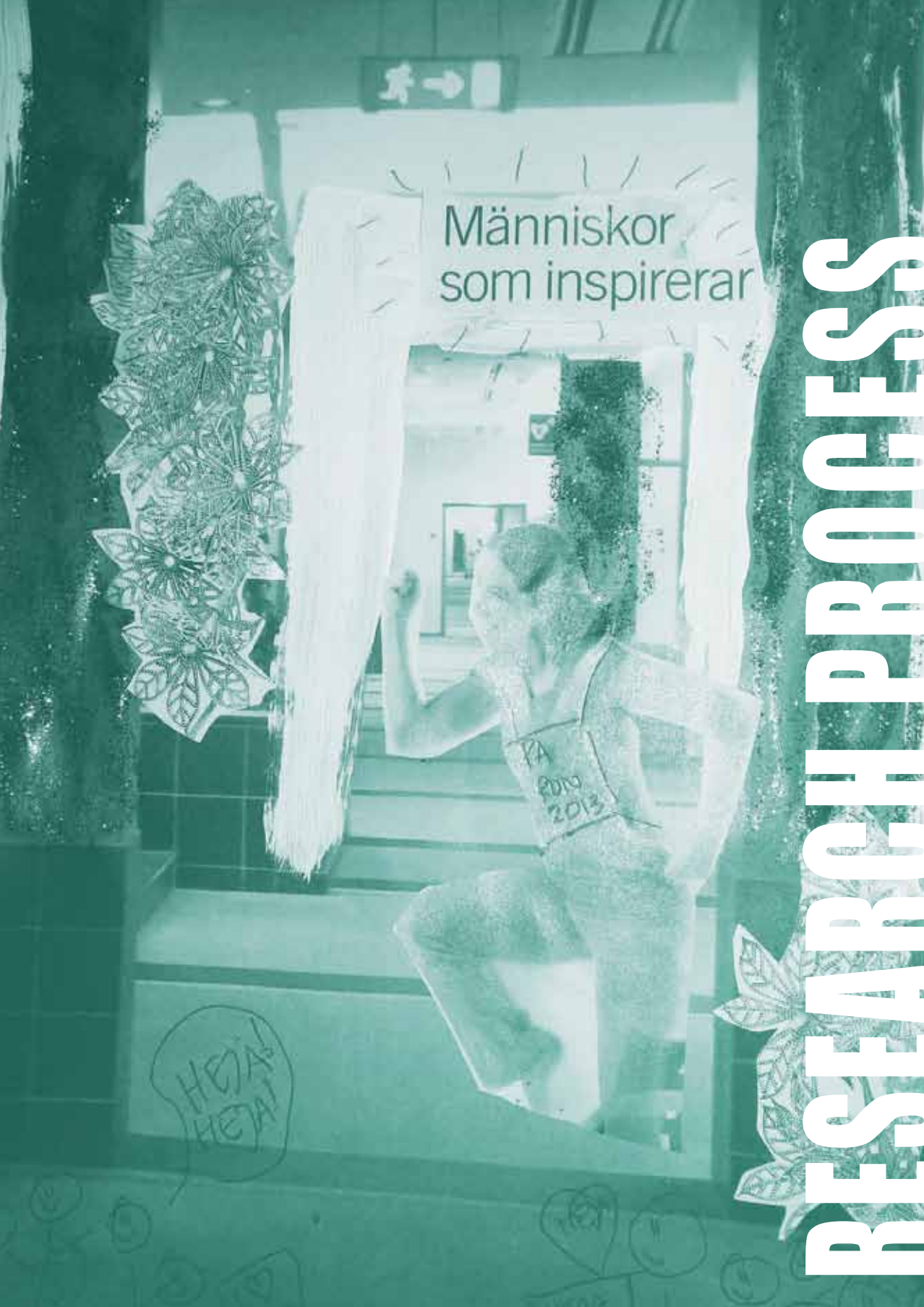
RESEARCH PROCESS

③ RESEARCH PROCESS

The purpose of this chapter is to explain how the research process evolved in time and to justify why a specific research methodology was chosen.

Due to a lack of existing studies that would give an overview of the creative processes of dancers and their relation to organizational innovation, I decided to first make *a series of semi-structured interviews with dancers and choreographers* to gain a better understanding of their practice. The method of semi-structured interviews was chosen because it is useful for collecting a diversity of experiences and for investigating complex issues, behaviors and opinions (Longhurst, 2010). But also because it allows interviewees the freedom to express their views in their own terms, while still providing reliable and comparable qualitative data (Cohen and Crabtree, 2006). What I was hoping was that interviewing 20 different choreographers would provide a broad view of the creative processes of contemporary dance groups and the open format of interviews the chance to dig into interesting issues that would surface during the interviews and might relate to innovation.

Interviews were done with dancers who had several years of professional experience both as dancers in the performances of other choreographers and as choreographers. The experience in choreography was important to understand how they as leaders enabled creativity and innovation in their processes and what kind of role they took as leaders. Their experience as dancers was on the other hand important to understand how they experienced creative processes when working for someone else (like employees in organizations). I tried to interview dancers from different countries to collect a variety of views. In order to avoid influencing their answers, the interviews had a flexible format with very few predefined questions of an open and broad nature. At the beginning a set of potential sub questions that could be used in the interviews was prepared but after a few interviews were done I realized that it was more interesting to follow the flow of the interviewees and ask spontaneous follow-up questions in relation to the concepts that seemed most relevant to them. The purpose of collecting data in this way was to gain an understanding of dancers´ practice through their own eyes and influence their input as little as possible through my pre-existing assumptions as a researcher.

Throughout my research process, conducting a literature study was an important parallel activity. Since I have previously worked in the field of innovation and entrepreneurship and also studied the field of art-based initiatives in organizations, I had some knowledge about the two fields before entering my PhD studies. Nevertheless, the study of literature both in the field of innovation management and art-based initiatives in organizations deepened my knowledge and helped me understand

how contemporary dance practice could be related to organizational innovation. In particular, this connection might help us answer questions such as how we could enable employees to innovate and create a working environment that promotes more radical innovation. When studying the literature in innovation management, I searched for different key words like innovative mindset, innovation leadership and innovation culture. Conversations with other research colleagues helped me reflect on what should be the central concepts in my study, especially when trying to create a link between innovation management and contemporary dance practice. At the beginning I was looking at the concept of innovative mindset, but I soon realized that it is not just the way dancers think that is interesting to link to enabling innovation in organizational context, but also the way they act and collaborate in groups. During my research process I also explored the concept of innovative organizational culture for some time but then realized it was hard to compare with contemporary dance practice since dancers mainly work on a project and free-lance basis rather than within an organizational context. This made me stick to the concepts of innovation process and different enablers that can be used to support people when innovating through collaboration in groups, which could be applied in both business and dance contexts.

While I was studying the literature, it was very useful to engage in discussions with fellow researchers in the Kaikaku project, which helped me understand how dancers work with innovation in comparison to workers and managers in manufacturing companies. As the result of the first study that was done through semi-structured interviews and a literature review, we co-wrote three papers with the colleagues from the Kaikaku project. In the first one we developed a framework of contemporary dance practice, and how it relates to issues of organizational innovation and a culture for radical innovation. In the second paper we compared how dancers perceive physical space that enables and hinders innovation in comparison with manufacturing workers. And in the last one we compared how dancers enable innovation in their creative processes with how Japanese manufacturing companies enable radical improvement and innovation. Based on this comparison we developed a model with six enablers of collaborative emergent innovation processes in groups.

As a result of a deepened understanding of contemporary dance practice and enablers of collaborative innovation processes in groups, I decided to take a step forward and conduct a *second study* in order to *explore if methods for enabling innovation in dance were applicable in organizational practice*. Having previous experiences in business consulting and training I felt experienced enough to *develop a practical method* together with different choreographers and test it in a group of practitioners from business and the public sector. Since the focus of my study was on developing practical knowledge in cooperation between researchers and practitioners through cycles of experiential learning, it was conducted following the pragmatic approach within

participatory action research (Johansson and Lindhult, 2008). Participatory action research (PAR) stresses the importance of a shift from doing research about an object to doing research together with those who are affected by it, engaging them as active participants in the research process (Holstrand, 2012). Reason and Bradbury (2001, p. 1) define PAR as "a participatory, democratic process concerned with developing practical knowing in the pursuit of worthwhile human purposes...It seeks to bring together action and reflection, theory and practice, in participation with others, in the pursuit of practical solutions to issues of pressing concern to people, and more generally the flourishing of individual persons and their communities". My study was conducted in line with this definition, bringing together practitioners and researchers around a common issue of interest (innovation), with the focus on a participatory learning process through which a practical method for enabling innovation in groups would be developed and participants would be able to explore how it can be used to develop innovative solutions for their own challenges at work.

Since I have never systematically used dance methods in the business context before, I decided to conduct an initial test study together with the choreographer Dejan Srhoj in Slovenia, where we organized a process of four half-day workshops and an evaluation discussion with a group of 20 practitioners from different fields of practice: companies, NGOs, art, health and research institutions. The workshops were done over a 2-week period. Based on the insights and positive feedback from the test study I then designed a half-year learning process in collaboration with five different choreographers and my colleague from the Kaikaku project Jennie Andersson Schaeffer. The process was organized as a course at Mälardalen University and was called Culture and space for innovation. 27 practitioners participated in the course. 12 came from different companies (ABB, Volvo CE, Leine & Linde and Outokumpu), 12 were from various parts of Eskilstuna municipality (health, education, social work, culture, HR, economic development, etc.) and 3 were researchers from our university. The course consisted of six full-day workshops and different types of homework that participants and facilitators did in between every workshop. In the fashion of participatory action research, both facilitators and participants in the process engaged in action through exploration and reflection. The data was collected through reflection stories, which were written both by participants and by facilitators after each workshop and which were shared with all participants in the process. According to Lindhult (2012), in participatory action research there should be an on-going process of reflection by participants, documenting what is happening and reflecting upon it, for example through reflection diaries. This is why we used reflection stories as a way to document how participants were experiencing the process, to collect data about their learning, and to see whether and how they were applying new knowledge in their daily work practice. Based on the analysis of reflection stories a book chapter was written, describing the process and method we were testing, specific tools that were translated from dance to business contexts and reflections of participants on

how they used and adapted the tools from workshops in their daily work practice. In this way we tested whether knowledge and methods from contemporary dance practice can be applied in organizations to enable innovation.

Table 2 gives an overview of how different studies that were part of the research process connect to research questions and publications discussed in the thesis.

STUDY	METHOD	RESEARCH QUESTION	PAPER/ BOOK CHAPTER
Empirical study 1: 20 semi-structured interviews with contemporary dancers and choreographers	Semi-structured interviews	1) How do contemporary dance groups work in their creative processes?	Bozic, N. & Köping Olsson, B. (2013). Culture for Radical Innovation: What can business learn from creative processes of contemporary dancers?. Organizational Aesthetics, 2 (1), 59-83.*
Literature study	Literature study	2) How does creative process of contemporary dancers compare to established models of innovation process in organizations?	Bozic Yams, N. (forthcoming). Dancing innovation – using body, movement and choreographic thinking to enable innovation in organizational practice. Under review for publication in Johansson Skoldberg, U. & Woodilla, J. (Eds.). *Artistic Interventions in Organizations*.
Empirical study 1: 20 semi-structured interviews with contemporary dancers and choreographers	Semi-structured interviews	3) What are key enablers for innovation in contemporary dance groups?	Bozic, N. & Backström, T. (Submitted). Enabling innovation competence development in groups.**
Empirical data from Japanese industry (Yamamoto, 2013)	Review of 65 case studies	4) Are there similarities between enablers for innovation in dance and industry?	

STUDY	METHOD	RESEARCH QUESTION	PAPER/ BOOK CHAPTER
Empirical study 2: "Culture and space for innovation"	Participatory action research (data collected through reflection stories and questionnaires)	5) Are methods for enabling innovation in dance applicable in organizations and how?	Bozic Yams, N. (forthcoming). Dancing innovation – using body, movement and choreographic thinking to enable innovation in organizational practice. Under review for publication in Johansson Skoldberg, U. & Woodilla, J. (Eds.). *Artistic Interventions in Organizations*.***
* An earlier version of the article was presented at the Sixth Art of Management and Organisation Conference (York, UK, 4-7 September 2012) and published in the conference proceedings. ** An earlier version of the article was presented at the Participatory Innovation Conference 2013 (Lahti, Finland, 18-20 June 2013) and published in the conference proceedings, pp. 297-305. ***An earlier version of the text has been accepted to the Seventh Art of Management and Organisation Conference (Copenhagen, Denmark, 28-31 August 2014).			

Table 2: Connection between research studies, methods, questions and publications.

In the next two chapters the two studies that were conducted as part of the research project are described in more detail. Each chapter contains a description of the research methodology and the empirical results of the study in focus.

(4.) STUDY 1: SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEWS WITH DANCERS

4.1 Methodology

"A semi-structured interview is a verbal interchange where one person, the interviewer, attempts to elicit information from another person by asking questions. Although the interviewer prepares a list of predetermined questions, semi-structured interviews unfold in a conversational manner offering participants the chance to explore issues they feel are important" (Longhurst, 2010, p. 103). Compared to structured interviews, which follow a predetermined and standardized list of questions following a certain order, the interviews in the first study included only four very wide open questions.

The first question asked the dancers to describe how their creative process from idea to new performance in a group usually looks like. The second question was about how the group members think, act and relate to each other in order to support the process of creating a new performance. The third question was about their understanding of the role of the choreographer in the creative process and the last one about the tools and exercises they use in order to support the creative process. In line with the logic of semi-structured interviews (Longhurst, 2010), I tried to stay open to what the interviewees were saying without being judgmental, carefully paying attention to what seemed important elements for them in their creative process. I posed extra questions around the concepts they exposed as important to gain a deeper understanding of what they meant and why these concepts were central to them. In order to create an intimate and comfortable environment where interviewees would feel open to share, we usually chose informal and neutral places, such as cafés that were easily accessible, allowed enough intimacy and were not too noisy.

As Holstein and Gubrium (1995) say, an interview is an active, two-way interactional informational street, a meaning-making conversation. And this is the kind of environment I tried to create by the setting and my way of conversing with the interviewees. Out of 20 interviewees 60% were women and 40% were men, representing 8 different European countries. Their average age was 35 and they had been working as choreographers for 13 years on average. Interviews lasted on average one hour and 15 minutes. Table 3 gives an overview of basic data about interviewed choreographers.

Female	Male	Average age	Average years of experience as choreographer	Country of origin
12	8	35	13	Argentina (1) Bulgaria (1) Germany (1) Macedonia (1) Portugal (1) Serbia (1) Slovenia (7) Sweden (7)

Table 3: Overview of basic data about interviewed choreographers

Two common and important ethical issues in interviews - confidentiality and anonymity (Longhurst, 2010) were considered in the interviewing process. Participants were assured that all the data collected would remain secure, confidential and anonymous unless they desired otherwise. All participants have also received transcribed versions of their interviews and were given a chance to add any comments they had. They were told that the material from interviews would be used in different scientific publications and those who expressed an interest received copies of those publications once they were written.

After the interviews were transcribed, the data was analyzed in a fashion inspired by grounded theory (Glaser and Strauss, 1967) in the sense that we let the empirical data direct the analysis and that all the data was treated as equally important from the start so our framework could emerge from the data. Each interview was read several times, key words and concepts were identified and eventually tagged as categories when they appeared more than once in different interviews. These categories were then ranked by the number of times they were mentioned in different interviews, and subcategories were ascribed to the bigger categories. After analyzing how different categories related to each other, categories were grouped in five main groups and tagged with macro categories. In this way a conceptual framework about the creative practice of contemporary dance groups progressively emerged based on analyzing empirical data from the interviews.

I would like to mention some limitations in the data collection that might have influenced the results of the empirical study. The first limitation is that all choreographers that were interviewed work and live predominantly in Europe and therefore represent a specific view of contemporary dance and work principles within the field. It is also important to note that the way interviewees were selected was connected to the fact that they work in Sweden (where I am based) or that they participated in two events

in which I took part - in the international contemporary dance festival PLESkavica in Ljubljana, Slovenia, in June 2011 and in the annual meeting of Nomad Dance Academy, which took place after the festival PLESkavica in Ptuj, Slovenia. Nomad Dance Academy is an education, research, production and promotion program that aims to contribute to the improvement and professionalization of the contemporary dance scene in the Balkan region. All the choreographers I interviewed are free-lance performers and choreographers and work on a project basis in different countries. This means their views might differ from the bigger and more institutionalized dance groups that employ dancers for longer periods of time and thus work with the same group over several years. But there are rather few institutions like that in the contemporary dance field, where the free-lance way of working is predominant, so most dancers and choreographers move from project to project, working with different groups of collaborators. I also interviewed only those dancers who are also choreographers, so the view might be different if I interviewed dancers who only work as performers in others' artistic pieces. All the choreographers who were interviewed, though, have experience of working as performers in others' projects and also act as dancers and performers in their own performances. Almost none of them assume the traditional role of choreographer as someone who is directing from the outside. They rather see themselves as co-creators of their artistic work, which they usually develop in collaboration with other artists they invite in a creative process. Although there are some limitations in the selection of interviewees, I believe that the interviewed choreographers represent a wide and rich pallet of experiences and views, genders and age groups, coming from different cultures and all of them having professional and educational experiences of working in different European countries.

4.2 Empirical results

In this section, empirical results from the interviews with dancers that describe how contemporary dance groups work in their creative processes are presented. They are summarized in a framework that represents the key elements of contemporary dance practice. These elements describe the way dancers think, act, collaborate and create enabling structures in order to move from ideas to the creation of a new performance. The five macro categories in the framework pictured in Diagram 5 are: improvisation, reflection, personal involvement, diversity and emergent supportive structures. Each of the five categories is represented in a certain color and is further divided into a set of subcategories.
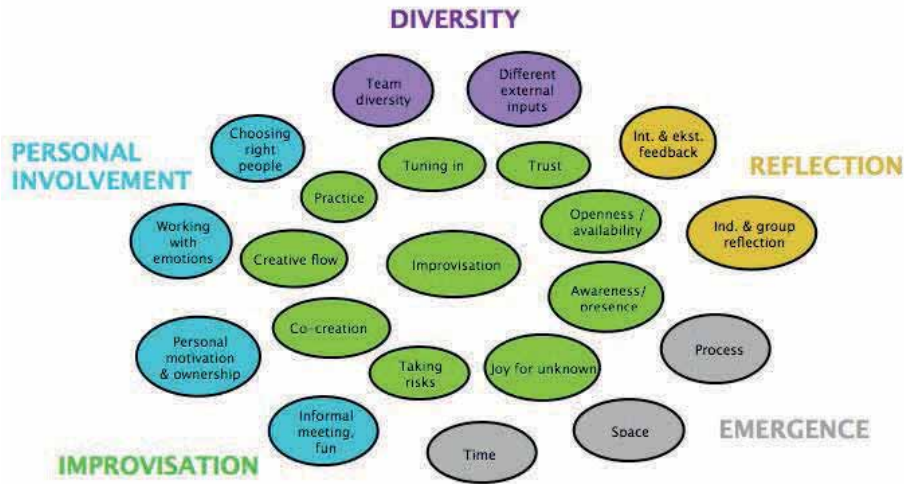
Diagram 5: Key elements of the practice of contemporary dance groups

In the following, each of the five categories is presented with a short description and quotes from the interviews with dancers. Since all interviewees have a similar profile we treated them with equal importance. The quotes cited below are chosen to explain each category through the choreographers' own words. This is why I tried to keep them as close to the original transcriptions as possible, and only minor changes were made in order to adapt them from spoken language and make them more readable in written language. If a (sub)category is represented by more than one quote it is with the purpose to highlight several aspects within the same (sub)category. A more detailed analysis of the data from interviews can be found in the article written by Bozic and Olsson (2013).

4.2.1 Improvisation

Improvisation was the only concept that was mentioned by all choreographers interviewed in the study as an important part of their creative process and thus became the central concept in the framework. By improvisation we mean that the choreographers interviewed sometimes use improvisation in order to create performance material during the creative process and they also sometimes improvise on stage as a part of their performances. But most of all we are describing improvisation as a way of thinking, acting and collaborating in the group as a key strategy of working during the creative process. The improvisational way of working is based on certain principles that dancers described as an important part of their practice, and are represented by different subcategories in Diagram 5. The following quotes from interviews explain some ideas behind these principles from the view of the interviewed choreographers.

Tuning-in

"People usually have so much other stuff on their mind when they come to work that it is really important to first bring them in connection with themselves. This is why we either do some meditative work in the beginning or have a warm-up class with super physical work. It depends on what kind of process we are focusing on."

"I always do some opening up exercises so people can open up and become susceptible to other levels of themselves. You have to do the warming up for a while in order to start feeling your body and becoming connected with people on another level. A different kind of relation becomes possible, and people start to have more trust."

Trust

"It is important to trust the idea and the other. It is important because it gives you a sense that you are there for a reason and that you can discover something together, or that you can share a moment of not knowing. Otherwise, if there is no trust, you don´t feel like sharing all the hesitations, questions, and doubts."

"Trust is very important, but at the same time trust is the trickiest thing because the curious thing with trust is that once you lose it with a person, you cannot gain it back."

Openness

"In the beginning I leave things quite open, and I like the feeling of things being revealed from this sense of nothingness, to actually start to have a perspective on things I have never positioned myself towards in a clear way."

"I go to studio without any idea and then I see what happens and I respond to what happens. I respond to what is going on in my life and in my writing and in the studio... I´m working in the way that I really follow what my needs are, which means I can come in and write for an hour or read or drink coffee or I come in and start jumping because I really need to move. It looks very different every time and there is no structure to it."

"In performance work there is an empty space that is very obvious. I don´t know if this exists in any other kind of work, maybe painters have the same idea of emptiness. There is the idea of emptiness that should be filled with yourself, with your world. And for me it´s very important to keep this emptiness, to keep a layer of this emptiness always present in the process."

Awareness/ presence

"It is a kind of awareness that brings something that you cannot produce if you are too much aware of yourself."

"Improvisation is more about physical presence, not so much about the observation of movement. It has to do with observation of reality, a real impulse for the things."

Joy of the unknown

"I like improvisation a lot. I think it is the purest form of dance and the most magical part of dance. Because things happen that you don´t plan and expect and know in advance."

"Improvisation is at the core of my work because I like not knowing what is coming next."

Taking risks

"If there is risk involved, it is great! I mean, consciously taking risks. Taking risks is exciting, it is playful, it is going out of yourself, not being you but being the other. For me this is the risk and that´s why I need to feel safe in the environment I work in so I can throw myself into something."

"For me creativity is risky. If I don´t risk anything I will never gain access to something that requires creativity to deal with it."

Co-creation

"I always work with artists like me, people that have their own ways. I never work in hierarchy that would give different positions to people."

"Sometimes I follow what another person or the situation needs and sometimes I feel that I have to give the structure or impose a little bit the idea which I have."

Practice

"I am working based on the concept of practice, going every day to the studio, the space and then creating my own little movement practice. So the research or the questioning is going on all the time, both on a theoretical level, in writing and on a practical level. I feel that the projects or performances that are coming out are like pictures, photographs, moments of the process and there are people coming in or going out that are all part of the same work."

"Lately my work is oriented around what I call practice. For me practice is practicing an artistic event. I don´t have any more rehearsals, performances, premieres, or events, it is just practice. Meaning that even when I am on stage I am practicing what it means to work in that kind of conditions and meaning that I can do it anywhere, in any terms, with anyone."

4.2.2 Reflection

The next main category in the framework of the creative practice of contemporary dance groups presented in Diagram 5 is reflection. Dancers see their creative process as an iterative process in which they constantly shift between generation and exploration of new ideas through improvisation and reflection about the material they created. These shifts might take several turns within each day or even hour. Reflection helps dancers move forward towards the final product in the creative process. It is practiced both individually and in the group in order to look back at improvised material and understand what happened, why, and what this means to the dancers. An important part of reflective practice is also giving and receiving feedback.

"For me creativity has also to do with cognition or ways of reflecting. It always has to do with producing and being able to reflect, whether I can reflect on your reception of what I have done or on what it means to me."

"We work a lot with feedback, so we watch each other and then we give feedback. We are exchanging a lot."

"Art doesn´t happen without reflection. The key is that it is not just reaction, it is reflection - and this is a condition for art to happen."

4.2.3 Personal involvement

Artists are usually personally engaged in their work to a great extent and do not distinguish clearly between themselves as artists and as private persons. One aspect of this personal involvement in their work is a very careful *choice of people* they invite into their creative processes. Personal involvement in work is also related to seeing *emotions* as an important input into the work process. Being aware of emotions, accepting them and then transforming them into creation contribute to the creative process and help the group move forward and not get stuck in the process. A high sense of *personal commitment, motivation and feeling of ownership* is also part of the personal involvement of dancers in their work. They expect everyone in the group to devote themselves to the process and feel that the work is theirs. *Informal*

meetings and having fun together is another aspect of dancers' personal approach to work. The boundary between work and private time often gets blurred and the group working together on a project often feels like being in a family situation during the period of creative process, spending a great deal of time together both inside and outside the studio.

"Selection of people is super important because for me everything else depends on people - the form the process will take, the dance and movement form, what the performance will become."

"I am really interested to collaborate with people who are super independent and super creative and innovative. Or even people who are very crazy, almost uncontrollable, but somehow I manage to find a ground for a dialogue and exchange with them. I get most inspired by people and I learn the most from them. The more people are themselves and the more radical they are in their own thinking, the more curious I get."

"Among dancers or performing artists things happen on different levels, because it is very physical and also emotional, because it takes you as a whole, it has to take you as a person. It is funny how physical action can bring you to this state where things just pop out."

"In many cases it happens that emotions are used for the process, for the project, so you have to be careful that this is not abused. I think you need to be ready as a performer to transform emotions into your artistic process and creation. You have to accept emotions and in some way use them. But then it is a big question how you do that, but still respect yourself and not hurt yourself. So that you don´t become a machine for creating emotions, but that you are a human being."

"I think that motivation is very important. How you motivate yourself or how you ask each other to be motivated without anyone animating anyone, because this animation can be also ok, but it works just for a very short period of time. It is important to know how to put the wood on fire..."

"For me making a show is my life. Whatever life outside of this process is irrelevant, at least during the time I´m creating, but usually also during other parts of the day and during the night this is the only thing I´m thinking and talking about. During the night I don´t sleep so much. I think about my work, waking up and taking notes. It is a complete obsession."

4.2.4 Diversity

Besides improvisation, reflection and personal involvement, the fourth key element in the creative practice of contemporary dancers is diversity - both *diversity within the team* or dance group and *diversity of inputs through connection with the outside world* in the creative process. For example, inviting external people into the process to give feedback on material that has been created is an important part of the process. It is also common for dance groups to integrate a diversity of activities that are seemingly unconnected to the work process but importantly contribute to it by giving fresh insights. Such activities might be going together to see a movie, reading texts together, watching another performance or simply changing the work environment.

> "I am always interested to invite people from other fields in the research process. That is really fun for me - to see how other practices or other theoreticians think about topics and to find a way to connect."

> "We learn so much from thinking in such a different way and from this confrontation of how I understand you from your position and how I can work from your position. Creative process then becomes a learning process because you learn so much when you enter other strategies that people use and you would never ever have thought of using them before. So you start to be in a permanent state of surprise."

> "The group has always some connection with the external world and this brings new insights in the process. It is also important that somebody from outside comes to see the work and gives you feedback but this somebody has to be very carefully chosen because you are doing something very specific and fragile which is still in development and you have a lot of doubts about it."

> "It is really nice when there is a release from the situation in the studio and the group goes together to another space because you can really transport the focus, what you are concentrated on to other places and you see relations in everything and that is really nice because it might import material that you can develop later on in the studio."

4.2.5 Emergent supportive structures

The last category in the framework is represented by *emergent supportive structures*. This means that support structures like *time, physical space, and process or composition* continuously adapt to the needs of the group in each specific moment of the process. They cannot be exactly planned and controlled in advance, but change organically during the process. At the same time choreographers use these structures

as important strategic elements in their choreographic thinking. Changing timing, space or process composition can importantly influence the creative output, so playing intentionally with these elements is essential to the creative work of dancers.

Space

"Space is crucial, in a way according to how your physical space is, your process is. It means you change and adapt according to the space, and the movement that you generate is different, and the setting is different and the structure you are able to generate is different. Because if you work in a very reduced space also the movement you generate is completely different than if you work in a big space or if you work in a space full of things."

"I would say space is extremely influential in what you do and how you frame things. The space where you work gives you a certain freedom or closeness, so it´s extremely important where you create."

Time

"You have a day or two when you are really productive and then always there is days when you just feel so empty because you gave everything before. So you have to consider that there will be maybe three very productive days and then maybe four days you shouldn´t even work, maybe you should just do something for the body, train the body, or just be together with the group to think about it because you can´t be productive all the time."

Process

"I shifted from production to process focus, from production based thinking or the market economy, to accepting that I need to provide for myself and my own process a possibility that this can have a guaranteed continuity. So there are no real stops, like one show will go into another show because something stayed unresolved. It is always that what you have done before opens up something new, a new direction, a new field of exploration. But you can stay permanently connected to the process and you can permanently make small innovations that can then become a method and a bigger innovation in some sense. It is impossible without this to create a new language, new strategies, because it takes time and work to do that."

STUDY 2

5. STUDY 2: DEVELOPING AND TESTING A PRACTICAL METHOD THROUGH PARTICIPATORY ACTION RESEARCH

The second study performed in my research process was focused on developing and testing a practical method in which knowledge and methods from contemporary dance and choreography would be used to enable innovation in organizations. In the next section both the methodology and the empirical results of the study are described.

5.1 Methodology

According to McNiff and Whitehead (2009, p. 20), the overall intent of action research is to learn and the purpose of the research is to improve the future by acting on the present. Herr and Anderson (2005, p. 54) similarly connect the goals of action research with generating new knowledge to achieve action-oriented results and to educate both the researcher and participants. These were also the goals in the second study where I aimed at developing a practical method that would enable practitioners from organizations to innovate, combining knowledge from innovation management with principles and tools from the creative processes of contemporary dancers. The goal of the process was that both participants from organizations and researchers would learn together, create new knowledge and improve their own practice by generating action-oriented results. For practitioners from organizations that meant to develop knowledge around innovation, increase their competence to innovate and to create an innovative working environment for their teams. For the researchers and facilitators that meant to develop their competence to enable innovation in groups and develop a practical method for enabling organizational innovation by using knowledge from contemporary dance.

Following the principles of participatory action research (PAR) (Holstrand, 2012) both researchers and practitioners actively participated and collaborated in the research process. The research process was organized as an emergent process with on-going adaption. I was the main person responsible for the design and facilitation of the process, while my research colleague Jennie Andersson Schaeffer, who was co-responsible for the course, mainly focused on the aspect of physical space for innovation in the process, which is her area of research. She facilitated one of the six workshops in the course that was focused on the physical space for innovation, while I designed and co-facilitated the other five workshops together with the five choreographers/ performing artists that I invited to collaborate in the course. During the process Jennie and I supported each other and gave each other feedback on how we were experiencing the process. We also discussed other aspects, such as for instance how we would collect and analyze data. We first sketched a basic framework

for the research process. The whole process would last six months and be divided in six full-day workshops, approximately one per month. We invited different companies that were at that time participating in the Kaikaku research project to participate in the process. Two of those companies – Volvo CE and Leine & Linde decided to participate, each with a small team of 3-4 employees. Other organizations were approached and invited into the process. In the end 27 practitioners from different companies and the public sector participated in the study. Approximately 44% of participants came from manufacturing companies and 56% from the public sector. Apart from Volvo CE and Leine & Linde, two other companies were part of the study: ABB and Outokumpu. 12 participants came from various areas of work within Eskilstuna municipality (health, education, social work, culture, HR, economic development, etc.), and three were researchers from our university. 67% of participants were women and 33% men. Participants were of different ages between 27 and 60, and had different levels of responsibility within their organizations. More than half of them had some sort of management role. It was important that everyone participated voluntarily and not by an order from the top management. It was also encouraged that smaller teams from each organization participate rather than individuals, which would allow them to support each other in testing the tools they experienced and developed in workshops in their daily work practice. Although the research process was organized as a university course that participants could get credits for, it was communicated clearly that it was at the same time a research process and that it was based on the active participation of everyone. Table 4 gives an overview of basic data about participants in the study.

Type of organization	Size of organization	Organization	Number of participants	Female	Male
Public administration	Big**	Eskilstuna municipality	12	12	0
Manufacturing company	Big	ABB	4	2	2
	Big	Volvo CE	4	0	4
	Middle*	Leine & Linde	3	1	2
	Big	Outokumpu	1	1	0
Research and education institution	Big	Mälardalen university	3	2	1
Total			27	18	9
*100-500 employees; **More than 500 employees					

Table 4: Overview of basic data about participants in the study "Culture and space for innovation"

In the PAR tradition, the process combined theory and practice and was organized as a series of many iterative cycles between action and reflection (Reason and Bradbury, 2001) through a process of experimentation and learning by doing, engaging experiences of everyone involved in the process in order to produce practical knowledge (Lindhult, 2012). In each workshop participants were invited to explore a specific topic related to innovation. Workshops were designed in a way that followed the logic of the innovation process through the eyes of contemporary dancers, always starting with some sort of tuning-in or warming-up exercises and then going into exploration of a certain theme. Afterwards we would always reflect why and how the questions explored in the workshop were relevant for our daily work and life, and then we worked on developing and sharing different ideas and tools we could test at work to encourage a specific aspect of innovation explored in the workshop.

When designing the workshops together with choreographers, we always thought of different choreographic tools we could use in the process, like the body, space, time and composition. For example, we intentionally played with using physical space in different ways to support innovation throughout the process. One space – a big theatre studio - was chosen as a base where the first, third and last workshop took place. This provided a sense of security, familiarity and continuity in the process. The studio also gave us enough space to work with body and movement and was appropriately equipped and designed so we could use the lighting and different objects or installations in order to create a specific kind of atmosphere that would be hard to achieve in a classical conference room. Design students from our university were invited to re-create the studio by using the lighting and making different kind of interventions in the space, depending on the topic we were exploring in each workshop and based on the input from choreographers. My colleague Jennie Andersson Schaeffer who is researching physical spaces for innovation supported the students in this process. The other three workshops took place in an art museum, a manufacturing space and in a creative consulting office.

Participants were encouraged to continue their learning process on their own after each workshop, so they could integrate what they learned in the workshop into their daily work practice. They were asked to engage in four different activities after each workshop. First, they were encouraged to test the ideas and tools from the workshop in their work team. Second, they were asked to practice innovative mindset in their everyday life, by performing a Fluxus score card, which they chose in each workshop. Fluxus was an interdisciplinary art movement in the 1960s and one of the activities Fluxus artists engaged with was writing so-called event scores, which we recreated in a collection of cards for the purpose of our course. Fluxus event scores are short text-based instructions for performing simple acts based on the do-it-yourself ethos, which is built on the proposition that everyone can make art and music (Friedman, 2009). Fluxus artists wanted to democratize art and turn passive consumers of art into an

engaged audience that would co-create art (ibid.). The idea behind using the Fluxus score cards in the course was to challenge participants to engage in activities they would not engage in otherwise, doing something unusual which would encourage them to take risks and go into the unknown. These creative actions or experiments in everyday life or work would hopefully stimulate participants to reflect upon their creative actions and get new perspectives, stretching their mindset. A photo of different Fluxus score cards can be seen in Photo1.

Photo 1: Examples of Fluxus score cards used in the course

Besides performing a Fluxus score card, the third task that participants were asked to do after each workshop was to write a reflection story about an important experience from their learning process and to choose a picture that visualizes the message of the story. An image of different reflection stories can be seen in Photo 2. And finally, participants were asked to read at least one text before the next workshop.

Photo 2: Examples of reflection stories with pictures

Texts were proposed by the researchers and related to the specific topic of each workshop.

According to PAR, the personal engagement of participants in the research process plays a crucial role (Lindhult, 2012), which is why participants were always encouraged to reflect not only upon how the process related to their professional practice but also to their personal life. The on-going process of reflection by participants during the research project also helped us document what was happening in the process and collect data for further research (ibid.).

The researchers were closely engaged in the process and facilitated the creation of practical knowledge through experiential learning by doing and dialogue in order to help improving their own practice and the practice of participants (Johansson and Lindhult, 2008). They also took an equal role to all participants, which meant that they actively participated in all the exercises facilitated by choreographers, that they shared reflections on their own learning process and tested new ideas in their work practice just like the other participants did.

Although feedback on the new method for enabling organizational innovation using knowledge from contemporary dance was continuously collected and discussed during the research project and more than 100 reflection stories were collected, there were also other types of data gathered in the process. First, a questionnaire was distributed to the participants both in the beginning and in the end of the process to see if their understanding of and knowledge about innovation changed in the process. The questionnaire given in the end of the process also included questions, which asked participants to assess how they experienced the whole process and the method we were testing, and give examples of how they applied tools developed in workshops in their everyday work environment. After all the six workshops they were also asked to complete a final written assignment in which they reflected both on theory and on the experiential learning process. As a part of their final assignment they also developed a follow-up innovation project that they implemented in their organization. All these sources of data helped us evaluate the method that was developed in the research process and understand if and how the knowledge and tools from contemporary dance can be used to enable innovation in organizational context. At the end of the process both I and my colleague Jennie Andersson Schaeffer, who also participated in the workshops and facilitated one of them, read all 100 reflection stories and analyzed what issues were raised by participants in the process with the highest frequency. In this way we could see what kind of effect the process had on participants and identify questions that would be interesting to explore in our future research.

Even though the general quality dimensions of action research are in principle not

much different from other types of research, there are a few distinguishing elements. The main difference is the aim of making a direct contribution to practice and to create scientific value from this action (Lindhult, 2007). This aim widens the quality aspects in action research since they need to include the contributions to change and innovation (ibid.). Another important difference that is rarely mentioned in connection to creating scientific value is the personal value which is central in action research and which constitutes a precondition for other dimensions in the evaluation of action research (Lindhult, 2008). In order to create knowledge, somebody (usually a group of people in collaboration) must gain experiences, learn new things and reflect upon learning (ibid.). Although I believe that we reached both of these quality dimensions, there were also some limitations encountered in our research study. The strongest limitation was related to the fact that the researchers (Jennie and I) were so closely and actively engaged in the process, acting at the same time as co-designers and co-facilitators of the whole process, as participants in the process, and as the ones collecting and analyzing data. This made it hard for us to maintain distance towards the method that we developed and tested in the process and to evaluate it from a more neutral perspective. I can personally say I felt rather like an entrepreneur who develops her company and has a strong personal attachment to it. This is why I think it would be valuable to engage another following researcher with a more neutral perspective in the future research and development of the method. Another limitation of the study was that we collected data predominantly through reflection stories, which are very useful in terms of providing rich qualitative data from participants' point of view, but they make it hard to quantify the data and measure the effects of the method we developed in process through showing quantitative indicators. In the future development and testing of the method, we could thus complement qualitative data with quantitative data that would help us measure different kinds of outputs, like the innovation competence of people trained by this method, innovations developed as a result of using this method and the possible impact on other innovation performance indicators.

5.2 Empirical results

Two sources of data were looked at in the analysis: the reflection stories participants wrote throughout the course and the questionnaires we collected at the end of the process. The reflection stories were of a more personal nature and were written by participants after each workshop about something they experienced as important in relation to the course. The questionnaires were answered by participants at the end of the course to reflect upon the whole course and evaluate their experience of the learning process.

5.2.1 Questionnaires

In the questionnaires that we gave participants at the end of the process we asked them several questions. First, we asked them whether being part of the study was important for them or not and why. We also asked them to evaluate what worked for them in the process, what they would change, and what were the main things they learned. They were asked to describe how they understood the concepts of culture and space for innovation so we could see if their understanding had changed from the first workshop where they were asked to answer the same question. Then we asked them to describe a concrete experiment that they did as a part of the course when they were testing ideas from workshops in their work environment. They were also encouraged to describe whether the course helped them overcome any challenges that they or their teams had in terms of being innovative. And in the end they had to describe a project they would do after the course to enable innovation in their work environment, using knowledge gained in the learning process. These projects were later described in more detail in their final written assignments. In the next section we summarize answers from some of the questions and quote examples of answers by participants.

Personal impact

When participants described why the course was important for them and what they learned from it, the most common category of answers (16 out of 24) referred to learning to *see more and differently*, both in the sense of getting new and broader perspectives on life, work and different aspects of enabling innovation, but also in terms of opening their mindset, daring to go outside the box and their comfort zone, letting ideas flow. The second most frequent answer referred to participants' appreciation (9) of a wide *toolbox for* supporting creativity, *innovation* and reflection that they got in the course and could use in their work. The third thing that they stressed as important was that they had developed their *theoretical and practical knowledge about innovation* (8) and learned about the importance of and different ways of doing *reflection* (8), reflecting both on personal life and work, individually, and in a group. The following two categories referred to their learning about using *physical space to support innovation* (6) and the *personal development* they experienced in the process (5). Some other answers that appeared only three or two times were that they liked meeting new people and networking, having fun, learning improvisation and the principle of "yes, and…", integrating the tuning-in principle in their work and the fact that the whole process was a challenge and taught them to keep challenging themselves.

Process design

When participants were evaluating the way the learning and research process was designed they stressed the following elements as positive:
- diversity and variation in all aspects of the course: diversity of people, spaces, tools, different ways of expression (written, body, visual...)
- workshop format and the way we facilitated workshops
- getting a diverse toolbox that they could use in practice
- collaboration with people from different fields in the course
- integrating reflection in the process (reflection stories, questionnaires etc.)
- combination of theory and practice (learning by doing)
- how we used different physical spaces in the process
- playfulness and openness in the course

On the other hand they mentioned the following elements that we could change:
- participants could work on a concrete project throughout the process to make the learning process more focused and concrete
- having more time for reflection in the whole group at the end of each workshop
- having more time at the end of each workshop to work with people from the same organization and discuss how to test ideas from the workshop in their work practice
- organizing a follow-up event to see what happened with all the projects developed in the course
- encouraging more employees and top managers from their organizations to participate in the process
- having a longer process or a continuation of the course with another course

Ideas tested in work practice

When participants were asked to describe an example of an idea or tool from the workshops that they tested in their everyday work practice, they described different kind of experiments. Below we present some of the activities that were tried out by quoting from participants' answers.

Tuning-in

The concept of using tuning-in exercises to do meetings in new ways and to stimulate collaboration and creativity in the group was the most common experiment tested by participants in their work practice. Here are some quotes from participants:

> "I think the tuning-in concept is the most powerful thing I learned. It had really positive effects on meetings when I tried it out. It helped me develop a lot and I got a lot of good feedback from my colleagues."

"I did tuning-in with production people. They surprised me so much. They really trusted me to bring them through it. And they became different people. From stressed people being in their role to team players, ready to share ideas. I was happy! It worked!"

"I tried different tuning-in exercises. Someone said we were playing games, but it was interesting to see that these games lead us to new ideas. The team opened up and was producing many new ideas. So I decided I will continue to play."

"I tried the tuning-in tool with top management and it turned out to be the best meeting they have had in a long time."

Space

Another very common experiment that participants did was to play with different aspects of physical space, either by changing the space from within or going to an unusual space to perform daily activities at work. Here are some examples of how participants described their experiments:

"I took away the table in the room and we sat in a circle during a meeting so we could get new reactions and ideas from the group."

"We rearranged tables and chairs in our lunch room. This resulted in more people starting to talk to each other."

"We had a meeting outside of the office building in our garden, which made a less stiff and more relaxed environment. Such a simple thing completely changed the atmosphere in the group."

"I took my staff out of the office to explore the city. They discovered so much creativity and it brought joy to the team."

Reflection and feedback

The next type of activity that participants integrated in their work and personal life in new ways as a result of the course was reflection and feedback. These are some quotes from participants:

"I tested the positive feedback method at the end of a meeting in a group where usually no one says anything. The result was a positive and strong feeling in the group. But some people had difficulty to receive positive feedback and some could not share anything positive with others."

"Reflection in one of the workshops made me take a life-changing decision."

> "I have become better at stopping and reflecting in my work and life, even if I´m stressed."

Challenging self and others to step out of the comfort zone

The final common type of activity that participants tested in practice related to challenging themselves and their colleagues at work to step out of their comfort zone and think or act differently. Here are some examples:

> "I tried leaving little notes in different public spaces in the office to challenge my colleagues to think or do things differently."

> "I started to think out of the box, changing ordinary structures and forms in my regular activities at work, such as doing presentations, writing reports, etc."

> "I performed a Fluxus card, which was about calling someone on the phone and announcing the time. I got two completely different responses which was fascinating and showed me how some people are ready and others completely not ready to go out of their comfort zone."

> "The course gave me a sparkle and I became a bit more courageous in trying out new things."

Some other examples of experiments were connected to trying out *improvisation exercises* and learning how to use the principle of "yes, and…" at work, or trying to create *diverse teams* and intentionally *taking different perspectives* in their work.

5.2.2 Reflection stories

The second source of data in the research process was reflection stories. After each workshop participants were asked to write a reflection story about their personal experience of the learning process, which they would share with other participants in the next workshop. The instructions they received were the following:

"Choose an experience related to this course (from a previous workshop, practical homework, something you read in the literature...) that was important to you and tell a story about it... Imagine that you are telling this story to a child or a friend of yours...Explain what happened, when, where, to what or whom it related, why it was important to you or in what way it changed your understanding or practice in connection to innovation...
Take a photo or find a picture that represents your story. Put the photo and the text

together in one file that should not be larger than one page and send it to us before the next workshop."

In the workshops we tested different ways of sharing stories among participants, by reading them aloud and then discussing them either in the whole group, in pairs or in small groups. We also asked participants to read a story of someone else and in one workshop we made story-telling corners in different spaces of a museum where reflection stories were read and participants were moving from one corner to the other to follow the flow of the stories. During the course we collected around 100 stories, which my colleague Jennie Andersson Schaeffer and I read and analyzed after the course. While reading the stories, we tried to identify topics that were brought up several times. There were seven topics that both Jennie and I identified as the ones that seemed to be relevant for the participants since they chose to write about them most often. They were:

- new forms of meeting (tuning-in)
- reflection
- body and movement
- feelings
- physical spaces at work
- cross-connections
- Fluxus score cards

In the following section, parts of selected reflection stories that describe the experience of the learning process through the participants' perspective are presented.

New forms of meeting

Several reflection stories related to the participants' reflection on how they used ideas and knowledge from the course to challenge the usual formats of meetings in their organizations. Here is an example of how one participant described what he tested in his work at a big manufacturing company.

"I chose to test the idea of "tuning in" at a meeting where I was the meeting leader. I thought about it for a while and decided to start the meeting with classical music. The music that I played was La march Turque by Mozart. Since I´m not a big fan of classical music, I just searched YouTube and found this music very relaxing. When we started the meeting we were five people attending. One was typing on his computer, one was dropping the curtains and two were in a discussion. I told everyone to get a cup of coffee and just sit down and listen to me. When they had done that, I told them about the purpose of the meeting and asked them to just listen carefully to the music and relax, reflecting on the purpose of the meeting, leaving all other things behind. At first they were

laughing and making funny faces. But I shut my eyes for a minute, listening to the music, and when I opened them again nobody was laughing anymore and there was a calm feeling in the room. When the music was over I asked them to reflect over this meeting start and how they felt about it. The reflections were all positive. One said that this was just what he needed to stress down. Another said that at first he laughed, but then he just relaxed and enjoyed it. A third person said that this was a thing he could take with him since he often attends meetings with people who cannot concentrate. So I decided I will try this more in the future. Not at all meetings, but sometimes to create energy and let everyone get into the mood! And how did the meeting go? It was a success! We decided about something that we had been struggling with for two months…"

Reflection

Another topic that appeared several times in reflection stories was the issue of reflection and the limited time that people have to reflect at work. The experience of reflection in the course made them stop more often and consciously reflect alone or with colleagues upon different aspects of work. This is a quote from a reflection story by a participant who described how she used reflection in her team based on inspiration from a workshop where we were exploring the topic of reflection.

"In my work both I and my colleagues often have too little time for reflection that could help us reach a deeper level of transformation, even though we do work with development and change all the time. The experience in the course made me see how I can think differently about development and innovation and I feel more free now that I have gotten different tools I can play with at work, which I appreciate… Based on the experience in one of the workshops I decided to test the idea of shifting between action and reflection in connection to 8 objectives of a project we work with. I also decided to consciously work with the time as a limiting factor in the process. We divided the group in two teams, which were asked to first stand still for two minutes, read about a specific project objective and reflect individually about the objective. Then we devoted five minutes to think together in the smaller teams and write down different ideas that would help us reach the project objective. We repeated the same reflection-action cycle for each objective. After that we had a common reflection in each of the small teams, where everyone was standing in a circle and sharing one after another different ideas and thoughts about the project objectives, which created a lot of input for writing our project application. In the end of the session the whole group gathered and reflected on each of the eight objectives to create a common picture and understanding of the project."

Body and movement

The third issue that was often raised in reflection stories was the idea of how using body and movement can stimulate and enable creativity, innovation and reflection. Working with body and movement was an unusual element for most participants in the process, which resulted in some interesting reflections. The following are parts of reflection stories from three different participants.

> "I really appreciated the exercise where we had to represent our personal challenge at work by movements in space without using words. Afterwards another person would interpret our movements again without using words. That gave me a completely new dimension of what I wanted to communicate and how this was perceived by the person mirroring me afterwards. It made me think how we almost always just rely on words to communicate what we want, either through speech or writing. It also made me question how often I really know that what I say with words is what I really mean and want to communicate? It happens many times that I think I was clear in my communication, but then I realize that the other person understood me differently. When we were forced to be quiet and communicate through movements, random objects and patterns, we got a new dimension of the possibilities to communicate and share our stories. And to be able to talk afterwards, both to first hear how the other person understood our movements and then explain what we meant by them, helped us suddenly move from seeing a one-dimensional picture to experiencing four dimensions. That was so insightful!"

> "In the last workshop we were asked to move around the space in small groups while we were brainstorming about how we can enable creativity in the workplace. Every once in a while we would take a new position in the space, exploring different parts of the space and using different body positions. Using the body and movement in space helped us create a feeling of flow and think in new ways. I think moving more consciously physically in the space could be a good method to test also at work."

> "The experience from last workshop made me think that we reflect way too little in new ways. When we get stuck in our thinking patterns we could use the body more to let our thoughts flow. By giving space to our imagination and let it fly freely through movement, just doing something we feel like, things that are unconscious and we would normally not access, would come up to the surface. Through reflection we could then make sense out of these experiences and get new ideas or see things in new ways."

Feelings

Using artistic tools in the learning process created quite an intimate atmosphere in the group, encouraged participants to use their senses, and at the same time evoked

both positive and negative emotions, like passion, joy, fear and frustration. Negative emotions especially appeared when people felt they were asked to go beyond their comfort zone. Here are reflections from two participants that talk about the feelings they experienced in the workshops.

"The fear to do something "wrong" made me feel unsecure in the workshop. But since the facilitator told us that we should not do anything that felt wrong or too uncomfortable I decided to step out and observe for a while. Afterwards I felt a bit stupid but at the same time I felt that I did as I felt and followed my own way. Based on my own experience in the workshop I did a reflection and came to some conclusions:
- the fear for change in organizations is often a problem
- "thinking out of the box" is always a challenge
- people often don´t dare to implement their suggestions for improvements in groups because they don´t want to stick out
- we have to dare to take risks and be allowed to make mistakes
- we need some leadership and tools to be able to succeed with what we want to do
- we need to ask ourselves what is it that we really want to do and achieve?
- we need to make everyone want to be a part of our common goal so we can help each other get the boat across the ocean without sinking."

"In the last workshop I felt unsafe, unusual and uncomfortable. In some exercises I felt almost as if I was not there, but was instead standing next to me and reflecting on what I was trying to do and what was the purpose of what we were doing. Now, afterwards, I try to look back and understand what happened, but it is not so easy… Intellectually I understand that we sometimes have to try to switch off our mind and experience and do things only with our body to be creative. But I still have troubles digesting what we did and translating it into something that I could use at my work."

Physical spaces at work

Reflecting on how physical space could be used to enable innovation was also a common topic that we identified in reflection stories. We share parts of two reflection stories below, one relating to a workshop and one to an experiment that was done in the participant´s work practice.

"I felt in a very good mood and full of new insights after the last workshop. I was glad we worked in creative and practical ways to create ideas about redesigning our workspace to support innovation. I think it is important to develop the working environment together with employees and create different spaces and rooms with different atmospheres that can help us solve different kind of

challenges. For examples, some rooms might create the right conditions for reflection while others for idea generation or dialogue between people…"

"One exciting experience that I recently had was when I gathered a group of people representing business, NGO´s and public sector to do a workshop where we would discuss the development of our municipality. I consciously chose a very unusual space for the workshop that was away from our office. In order to test a new environment, change perspectives and stimulate new ways of thinking and developing solutions, I chose to do the workshop in a paint shop. In the beginning we got a guided tour around the shop and the shop owner demonstrated us the new cool three-dimensional wallpapers that they just received. Workshop participants started to fantasize what type of room the wallpapers would fit in and what kind of furniture would accompany them. During the tour, participants informally socialized and chatted with each other, opening up for new experiences. After a while we gathered in the staff room that was very nicely decorated to have a coffee and some home baked pastry. Then I introduced the discussion around the idea of providing all municipality services from the same place instead of dispersing public services for citizens to many different locations as we currently do. Would that improve our offer to the citizens and strengthen the collaboration between different service providers? I was very surprised how participants quickly set their mind into this new scenario and started collecting different ideas on colourful post-it notes on the wall, describing with great engagement the images of their visions. The atmosphere in the group felt very safe and participants felt open to suggest ´crazy´ ideas. They were building on each others´ ideas and connecting them, highlighting many exciting new possibilities and solutions. Everyone actively participated and the leadership was rotating among participants in the group through conversation. Their different backgrounds also helped them get new perspectives and improve understanding of each others´ work. It was amazing that just in one and a half hour we collected loads of ideas and new possibilities for municipality development. When we were done we just looked at each other with marvel and felt filled with energy from what we created together."

Cross-connections

The sixth topic that came across in reflection stories was the idea of making cross-connections, stimulating creativity and innovation by collaborating in new ways and with new people, both within the organization and by involving suppliers, customers or other partners in the innovation processes. Here are some examples mentioned by participants.

"I tested the idea of having a coffee break with people from another department. It was a very easy thing to do, it didn't require any preparation and the result was positive in many ways. More people should do this as a habit. It opened up

to new knowledge and to new ideas how to work together and how to enhance quality in our products and services."

"Based on what I learned in the course I will interview people from different parts of our organization to get new perspectives on how we do things in our department. I will also do a workshop with the R&D department about what our department could do to become a better partner for them."

"As a part of my learning process I have challenged and more closely engaged my suppliers in our work by testing different tools from the course with them."

Fluxus score cards

Since one of the tasks for the homework after each workshop was to choose a Fluxus score card and perform it at work or in everyday life, it was not a surprise that one of the common things described in reflection stories was also how participants experienced the Fluxus score cards. Most of the experiences related to first challenging oneself to do something unusual and go out of the comfort zone; second, to observe what happens when other people get involved; and third, how simple acts in everyday life can make a difference, shift the atmosphere or our perspective on things. Below we include two examples from reflection stories.

"The most important experience for me since the last workshop made me think how strongly a body movement can influence other people. My Fluxus card said that I should arrange nine crackers in a nice way on a table and ask another person to choose the nicest cracker and take it. Then I was supposed to smash the other crackers with my fist. When I proposed this experiment there was a relaxed and joyful atmosphere in my family, and I smashed the crackers calmly but decisively. My biggest surprise was that this scared my daughter (who is an adult) and she almost started to cry. She had just seen her father destroy a part of the world and she could only save the nicest cracker. She didn´t want to eat it afterwards. This made me think that in our life we do movements that communicate strongly all the time, but we are often not aware how meaningful our body language is."

"On my creativity card it said that I should give someone the world´s smallest sculpture. I thought for a long time what that meant until I found a sheet of small three-dimensional stickers in a form of stars about 2 mm wide. I started to cut them out and give the little stars to different people in my office. Even though it was such a simple thing it resulted in a lot of positive energy from my thankful colleagues and it was a win-win situation for everyone. Think what unexpected things can bring, even if they are just little stars! To be creative and do things that people don´t expect you to do, resulted in more value for everyone!"

The cycle of playing with Fluxus score cards was rounded up in the last workshop where participants gave each other a final present which was a card with a creative challenge that they created themselves with inspiration from their experience with the Fluxus score cards. Photo 3 represents the cards made by participants, which are wrapped up as presents. Below the photo are some examples of texts from the score cards created by participants.

Photo 3: Fluxus score cards created by course participants and given out as presents to each other in the last workshop

Some examples of text on the cards created by participants:

Card 1:
"This card has two sides. Choose the side W if you define yourself as a woman and choose the side M if you define yourself as a man.
W
Wear something visible that you would usually associate with menswear, such as a bow tie, tie, handkerchief set into the pocket of your jacket, men's fragrance... Select what fits best the occasion.
M
Wear something visible that you would usually associate with women wear, such as a necklace with pearls, nail polish, lipstick, evening bag, female fragrance… Select what fits best the occasion."

Card 2:
"Ask a colleague at work to help you. Take your office chair out to the corridor. Then sit on the chair and ask your colleague to push you around while running. Go by all the rooms and shout out to everyone: today is a good day!"

Card 3:
(This card was given together with a small book). "Take the red line of the Stockholm´s metro. Travel until you have read the whole book. Leave the book on your seat. The book is a new poetry collection about the underground – about the Stockholm´s metro."

DISCUSSION

⑥ DISCUSSION

6.1 Research questions

In the first part of discussion we will return to the research questions posed in the introduction and discuss them in relation to empirical results and theory.

6.1.1 Creative processes of contemporary dance groups compared to innovation processes in business

The first two research questions posed in the beginning of the thesis were:
RQ 1: How do contemporary dance groups work in their creative processes? And
RQ 2: How does the creative process of contemporary dancers compare to established models of the innovation process in organizations?

Empirical results of the first study done through a series of semi-structured interviews and presented in chapter four and in the first appended article (Bozic & Olsson, 2013) give insights into the creative practice of contemporary dance groups and how they work in their creative processes. They describe how dancers think, act and collaborate in the process, and which principles are important in their work, enabling them to go from an idea towards developing a new performance. Looking critically back at our research and writing, I would say that the analysis of empirical results in the first article (Bozic & Olsson, 2013) lacks a clear definition of what different categories in the framework (presented also in Diagram 5) mean. Some of them relate to key activities or different stages in the creative processes of dancers (like tuning-in, exploration through improvisation and reflection), while other categories represent various enablers (for example diversity, personal involvement etc.) that support dancers to create new performances and move through different stages of the process. In our later writing we tried to clarify this confusion of different categories by looking back at empirical data again and identifying the enablers in the creative processes of dancers in the second paper (Bozic & Backström, 2013) and defining the key activities and stages in the creative processes of dancers in the third paper (Bozic Yams, forthcoming).

In the following section the logic of the creative process through a choreographic perspective is shortly summarized as it is presented in the third appended paper (Bozic Yams, forthcoming). It is also discussed how dancers' process can be compared with some existing models of the innovation process mentioned in the theory chapter (Cooper, 1990; 2008; Scharmer, 2009; Tidd & Bessant, 2011). But first we would like to discuss whether it is possible at all to compare the creative processes of dancers

and innovation processes in organizations and explain the thinking behind the idea.

When we use the term creative process in the context of contemporary dance we refer to the process that happens when a dance group moves from starting to work with an idea or question that they find interesting, to the point where a final performance is created and publicly presented to an audience. In this sense we see a parallel with the innovation process in organization, which also moves from identifying an important question, challenge or opportunity towards developing an end innovation, which can be a new product, service, process or method that is launched on the market. In both cases there is the aim of developing a new product, only in the case of contemporary dance the product is not a typical consumer product but an artistic product or experience – a new performance. In both cases the group creating a new product has limited resources and a time frame within which it is expected to launch the product on the market. In the case of dancers the launch of the product would correspond to premiering a new performance for an audience and the market is not the consumer-goods market but the art scene. Let us now return to a widely accepted definition of innovation from innovation management theory presented in the introduction chapter and see whether there are any parallels with contemporary dance practice. Crossan and Apaydin (2010) define innovation as a process or an outcome that has a novelty and creates value. On the other hand, Kamnikar (2012) defines contemporary dance as the art of creating movement with a critical attitude of questioning our understanding and experience of the world. This means that contemporary dancers aim at proposing new ideas and concepts to the audience through the experience of an artistic performance that will challenge their existing understanding and experience of the world. Or, in innovation terms, they propose "novelties" that create "value" for the users (viewers) by stimulating them to experience and perceive in new ways.

Although we presented several similarities between the creative processes of contemporary dancers and innovation processes in organizations, it is also important to stress the differences. For instance, artists in general rarely use the word innovation (Elam, 2012) and rather refer to creativity and a concept of "creative process and practice" instead of "innovation process". They often connect innovation with something that is predominantly used in the context of market economy and focused on producing economic value. Although innovation has lately been applied in a much wider context, for example including social innovations produced by organizations in the public sector and social enterprises in order to improve the wellbeing of citizens, innovation in artistic context is still quite different. Innovation processes in organizations usually aim at developing new solutions that respond to needs, solve concrete problems and create value for different kinds of stakeholders, be it employees, product consumers, citizens, patients, students or others. On the other hand, the creative processes of contemporary dancers are much more open-ended

and less oriented towards reaching goals or solving problems. Even though dancers think a lot about the audience and its involvement in and experience of performance, the focus of the dancers and choreographers that serve as informants in this study is not on fulfilling a specific customer need, for example entertaining the viewer. Creating novelty and value in artistic context is usually either connected to the creation of new knowledge or ways of working within contemporary dance practice and research or to proposing something new to the audience and questioning existing relationships between the artist and audience and formats of staging a performance.

This kind of thinking, however, is more and more present also in business, which has lately put an increased focus on questioning prevailing ways of working by innovating internal processes, methods and business models. The new business models can enable companies to move from product innovations which respond to the existing needs of users towards more radical innovations which, in some way similar to art, challenge dominant product norms on the market by surprising and opening users' imagination and creating new experiences, emotional connections and meanings for the users (Verganti, 2009). Apple, Alessi or Bang & Olufsen are examples of companies that are continuously striving to develop such products (Ibid.), which is why it is not unusual for many of these companies to engage artists and designers in the development of their products. The difference, though, is that the ultimate goal of creating these radically new products is still to increase the profit and value for the shareholders, which is very different from the purpose of innovating in art. But even though the final purpose of innovating and the value created by innovation vary among different fields like business, the public sector, science, or art, we think it is interesting to look at how the process of innovating works in various contexts and see if they can learn from each other.

Innovation process through choreographic perspective

If we look at the empirical data collected through our semi-structured interviews with choreographers, we can identify four phases in the creative process of contemporary dancers: tuning-in, exploration, reflection and sharing, which can be seen in Diagram 6. The reason why the word *stages,* which we often use in innovation processes in business, is problematic in this case is that the four activities of dancers do not follow each other in any specific order, but are all constantly present throughout the process and iterate quite messily between each other. This is why we think a circular or spiral way of representing them is much more suitable than a more traditional linear way of presenting different steps or stages that follow each other in the process and are common in other established models of innovation in innovation management (Cooper, 1990; 2008; Tidd & Bessant, 2011 – Diagrams 2 and 3).
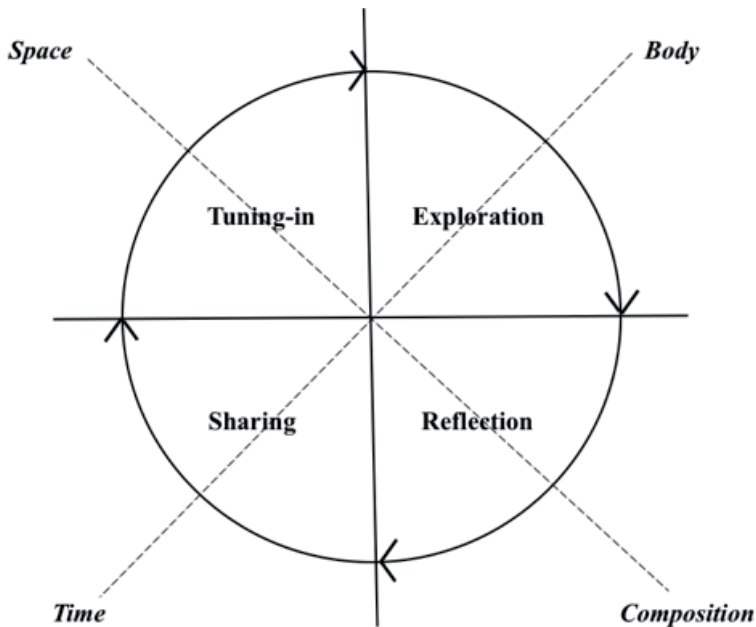
Diagram 6: The innovation process from a choreographic perspective

In the case of dancers, it is common that all four elements will be a part of everyday work in the studio, starting the day with some sort of tuning-in or warming-up, creating a focus on work and opening up for creativity. It is also usual for dancers to engage in some sort of exploration of material for performance, experimenting with different ideas that they will later share with each other within the group or also with someone from outside in order to reflect upon material created in exploration and decide how to move further in the process. In general we can say that a constant iteration between exploration and reflection is at the core of dancers' creative process and happens throughout the process. But looking at their process from a distance we can also see that there might be more focus on a specific activity in different periods of the process. For example, even though tuning-in is a part of everyday preparation for work, it is more extensive and important in the beginning of the process when the group and common intention are still forming. On the other hand sharing is mostly present in the last part of the process when performance is staged for the audience, but it happens also in previous stages as work-in-progress is shown to different external viewers or smaller audiences to gain feedback.

If we compare the basic ideas behind different activities in the creative processes of dancers with other innovation models introduced in the theory chapter (Cooper, 1990; 2008; Scharmer, 2009; Tidd & Bessant, 2011), we can see that the process proposed by theory U (Scharmer, 2009) is closest to the creative practice of contemporary dancers. The U process (presented in Diagram 4) has the form of a curve and thus similarly to

the process of dancers a circular or spiral logic. It starts with the phase of co-initiation, which can be compared with the tuning-in activities in the dancers' process. In this stage, a common intent and a feeling of the group are built. Trust and safety need to be established in the group so everyone can open up, share their vulnerabilities, suspend habitual patterns of thinking and create an empty space to become available for new things to come. But if the U-process stresses the importance of an open mind in this stage of the process, dancers underline the importance of activating all senses, engaging the body, and accessing intuition as a preparation for creative work. In the work of dancers a series of iterative cycles between exploration and reflection follows, which corresponds to the concepts of co-sensing, co-presencing and co-creating in theory U. Engaging in these activities helps the group create and explore new ideas and prototypes and at the same time question them on a very existential basis, connecting them back to purpose and intent on individual and group levels. A high sense of awareness, being in touch with all levels of self (body, mind, heart and will) is needed in this process to really shift the perspective and create something new. In the U-process this is called presencing, while dancers see it more as a way of being present in the process all the time and continuously questioning the purpose and meaning of their work and ideas in an existential sense. The last activity in the creative process of dancers is sharing which is similar to the concept of co-evolving in theory U, because when dancers start sharing a performance with the audience, what was created and explored in the process slowly becomes embodied in their practice.

Both the creative process of dancers and the U-process are based on emergence, and both are iterative, messy and open-ended. This makes them to a certain degree different from the classical stage-gate innovation model (Cooper, 1990), which is much more planned, predictable and focused on minimizing risks and improving efficiency through different gates in the process. The U-process and dance process are harder to plan and control and the experimentation happens almost throughout the process and not just in the beginning when one should come up with the "great" idea. There is more emphasis on risk-taking, and challenging existing norms and ideas through questioning and reflection. In this sense these two processes are better fitted to support radical or discontinuous innovation (Bessant et al., 2005; McLaughlin et al., 2008) than little step-by-step improvements through incremental innovation.

Even though the U-process and the creative process of contemporary dance groups are in many ways similar on a conceptual level and in some of their basic principles, one interesting thing that distinguishes the process of dancers from the other innovation processes we have mentioned so far is the way dancers go about the process in practice, using different choreographic elements or tools. As quoted in the introduction, a common way of defining choreography is "organization of movement in time and space" as Etchells formulated it (Corpus, 2013). Choreographers

consciously play with the elements of body and movement in relation to time and space in ways that we often do not think about in organizations. Different ways of exploring relations between these aspects in the process help choreographers reach the final composition or choreography of a performance. The four elements of body, space, time and composition are visualized also in Diagram 6.

How could organizations be inspired by contemporary dance practice?

Work in organizations is predominantly focused on engaging the mind, which is why it is interesting to look at the practice of contemporary dancers and explore in what ways we could be inspired to use body, movement, intuition, and feelings more consciously in innovation processes in organizations. What would happen if we would start our innovation sessions with tuning-in exercises, doing a group mediation or some creative movement exercises to warm up and access our creativity? And what would happen if we would explore new ideas in our brainstorming meetings not only verbally but also by consciously using bodily expression? Could we imagine reflecting upon our work and giving feedback to each other in new ways through body and movement? Or sharing our innovative ideas with different stakeholders by making a performance that would engage them on more levels than just a traditional powerpoint presentation?

In a similar manner it would be interesting to experiment more with the elements of time and space as dancers do in our innovation processes. For example, what would happen if we would use a very flexible office space that allows continuous transformation depending on the needs in different moments of the innovation process - an office that looks different every week or month? What would the impact be of movable walls, furniture that has multiple uses, a great deal of natural light and spaces in nature around us that could be used as an extended office? Instead of staying in the office building, innovation teams would be allowed to move in and out and inhabit a variety of places to work in. For example, for a while they might be working from an incubator where they would be surrounded by exciting high-tech start-ups. At another time they would be working from a hipster café where they could spot trends from the creative people around them. But maybe there would also be a time when they would go to the woods or to a monastery and spend a week in silence, have time to reflect upon the process or focus on finishing up a project. And what would happen if we changed our 9am-5pm work time frame and engaged in the innovation process in iterative intervals of work – non-work or sometimes tried to work at unexpected times, like in the night or very early morning? Can we imagine intentionally leaving our calendar blank for one month, creating empty space for activities that would spontaneously emerge in each moment from our needs in the innovation process instead of planning them always in advance? Or could we play with the rhythm and intensity of time, trying to solve the same challenge or perform

the same task in different time spans, sometimes in a few seconds and other times in several hours or months to see what would happen?

We tried to experiment with some of these choreographic tools, using body, movement, time, space and process composition in new ways as a part of innovating in organizational context in our second study. Some of the results of these experiments were presented in chapter five and will be further discussed in later parts of the discussion chapter.

6.1.2 Innovation enablers in dance and industry

The third and the fourth research questions posed in the beginning of the thesis were:
RQ 3: What are the key enablers for innovation in contemporary dance groups? And
RQ 4: Are there similarities between enablers for innovation in dance and industry?

In our first article (Bozic & Olsson, 2013) we compared the principles that contemporary dancers use to support their creative process with the concept of creating a culture for radical innovation in organizations. Looking back at the research from a critical perspective I can conclude that it is difficult to connect the concept of organizational culture with the practice of contemporary dance groups. Organizational culture is linked to relatively stable structures, values and attitudes established among employees in an organization over an extended period of time (Schein, 1984). Contemporary dancers on the other hand most often form groups on a project basis and for shorter periods of a few months. Although dance groups do establish common principles of work in their creative process, it would be hard to say that they share a common organizational culture. This is why we started to look more closely at the concepts of "enabling innovation" and "enabling spaces" for innovation (Peschl and Fundneider, 2012), which were presented in the theory chapter. As a part of writing our second paper (Bozic and Backström, submitted) we looked again at the empirical data from the interviews with choreographers and compared innovation enablers that dancers use in their creative processes with the data which suggest how Japanese manufacturing companies enable radical improvements and innovation. For the latter we used a review of 65 case studies of large-scale innovation initiatives in Japanese manufacturing companies which was performed by our colleague in the Kaikaku project (Yamamoto, 2013). Interestingly enough, the conversations in our Kaikaku research group showed that on a very basic and general level, both sources of data showed that similar principles were important for enabling radical innovation both in dance groups and in Japanese manufacturing companies. Integrating data from both sources we then developed a framework of six enablers for supporting innovation in groups. The framework can be seen in Diagram 7.

In the following section we briefly summarize the ideas behind the six enablers for innovation in groups and explore how they coincide between the practice of contemporary dance groups and industry. The six enablers are visually represented in Diagram 7 where they are placed in a circle, which indicates that they are equally important and need to be present throughout the process of enabling innovation in groups. The spiral with the arrow represents group innovation competence, which increases over time and moves from incremental towards more radical innovation.
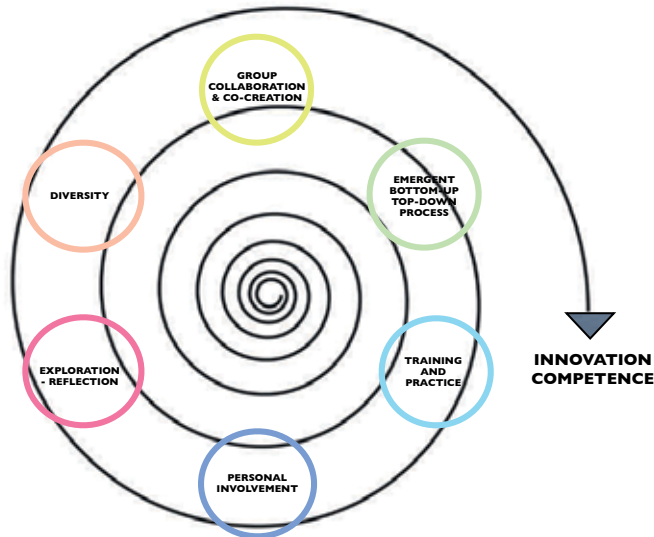

Diagram 7: Enabling innovation in groups, Bozic and Backström (submitted)

Monday, March 10, 14

Group collaboration and co-creation

The empirical data about the practice of contemporary dance groups showed that the first key enabler for dance groups to come up with something new in the creative process is the active participation and collaboration of everyone in the group that happens through co-creation as the group members build on each other's ideas through improvisational principles such as "yes, and…". Similar to the study of dancers, a collaborative team effort was identified as a key factor for the successful implementation of radical innovation initiatives in the Japanese manufacturing industry (Yamamoto, 2013). Employees from different divisions and functions from across organizations closely cooperated to co-create radical improvements (ibid). Buur and Larsen (2010) explain that when people collaborate and listen to each other in participatory innovation, a process of co-sensing through shared discovery is achieved. Collaboration in a group is important for enabling innovation also because in this way the richness of tacit knowledge that people possess is shared (Leonard &

Sensiper, 1998). Through co-creation people communicate and further develop their mental models, life examples, physical skills and unrecognized patterns of experience which they draw upon when innovating (ibid.). A conclusion that can be drawn from the study of contemporary dance practice is that an improvisational way of working in a group can be an important vehicle for supporting collaboration and co-creation and stimulating radical innovation.

Emergent bottom-up top-down process

The second key enabler of innovation in groups is an emergent bottom-up, top-down process. In contemporary dance practice each dancer and the group together take responsibility for actively contributing to the process and making it work (bottom-up approach). On the other hand, the choreographer needs to show some kind of drive, engagement and vision and give the group energy and a sense of direction (top-down approach). The choreographer gives different proposals, facilitates co-creation in a group and steps in more actively when things get stuck. At the same time she keeps the process quite open so everyone feels they can actively influence and co-create the process. She comes to the studio with some ideas how the group could work during the day, but remains open-minded to see how the group will react to proposals and where they will take them. The creative process is thus emerging from the needs of the group in each moment through a kind of bottom-up, top-down dynamics. A similar dynamic was used in the Japanese companies where managers had an important role to provide enabling conditions for employees to innovate (Yamamoto, 2013). This was done by their enthusiasm, setting challenging targets, having a clear strategy, through close communication with employees, and by giving high priority to innovation initiatives (ibid). On the other hand the employees had the autonomy and empowerment to drive the processes and decide how they would reach the targets through continuous learning and experimentation. Leaders deliberately created situations where groups in the organization were challenged to be more explorative (ibid).

Training and practice

The next enabler for innovation in groups that dancers find important is the idea of practice. Among performing artists, the concept of daily practice and rehearsal is very common. Dancers in the study said that to develop an explorative ability of the group to come up with radically new ideas, a common daily practice and continuous learning are needed. The magic of creative flow in group improvisation does not happen at once and without hard work. Trying out different ideas, options, and experimenting with them are important to build the group's creative practice. Work based on the concept of practice means that the research, questioning and feedback are going on during the whole creative process. Close to the idea of

practice in dance, training and practice contributed to increasing the competence for innovation in Japanese companies. Both internal and external training programs for employees were provided to gain the necessary knowledge and skills for the implementation of innovation initiatives (Yamamoto, 2013). Many companies used support from external consultants to drive the initiatives. Learning from failures was considered as an important part of making explorative improvements with a daring spirit because it prevented the same mistakes from occurring again and increased the employees' ability to innovate (ibid). The more explorative improvements employees tried out in their work, the more difficult challenges they learned to tackle (ibid). Our research in the Kaikaku project showed that most employees in companies are at best involved in incremental innovation. They mostly focus on small improvements of existing products, services and processes. In order to expand their ability to innovate towards radical innovation, employees need to be provided with opportunities to train and practice explorative thinking and acting. The fact that Japanese companies stimulated employees to increase their ability to innovate radically through several cycles of training and explorative experiments in practice also supports the idea that innovation competence is gradually developed in time through repeated cycles of explorative action and learning through reflection.

Personal involvement

Another enabler that supports dance groups to innovate is a strong sense of purpose, motivation, involvement, responsibility and ownership shared among all members of the group. Especially to cope with high levels of ambiguity in the process of creating something new the group needs to feel strong involvement and intrinsic motivation that will make them persist in taking risks without seeing the immediate results. Many researchers have identified intrinsic motivation as the form of motivation that is most closely associated with creativity (Amabile, 1996; Csikszentmihalyi, 2008; Ray & Myers, 1986). If people feel passion for their work, are deeply interested in it and positively challenged by it, their creativity will be stimulated (Amabile et al., 2005). Personal involvement and motivation were considered as key success factors also in innovation initiatives in Japanese companies (Yamamoto, 2013). A number of cases showed that employees' motivation increased during these initiatives since a sense of achievement grew which gave employees the motivation for further exploration and improvements. Persistence or the never-give-up mentality also enabled employees to strengthen their ability to innovate and successfully implement innovation initiatives (ibid).

Continuous iteration between exploration and reflection

The fifth enabler for innovation in dance groups was their continuous iteration between exploration and reflection in the creative process. Dancers constantly

shift between the generation and exploration of new ideas and reflection upon the material they created. As they say creativity has to do both with producing and with being able to reflect. Even though we might often think that artists mainly engage in creative exploration, they believe that without reflection and questioning there is no art. Unreflective action is never innovative because if we do not think things through we will not be aware of anything new (Benammar, 2004). Through reflection we reconsider our experience and re-evaluate our actions (ibid.). In the case of Japanese companies, reflection was mentioned as a part of learning from mistakes and the importance of using wisdom (Yamamoto, 20013). The fact that Japanese companies stimulated employees to increase their ability to radically innovate through several cycles of training and explorative experiments in practice also supports the idea that innovation competence is gradually developed in time through repeated cycles of explorative action and learning through reflection.

Diversity

The last enabler for innovation in groups in our framework is diversity; both in terms of bringing together people with different kinds of knowledge and experiences in the group, but also diversity in the sense of using a variety of tools, spaces and external inputs in the creative process. Choreographers usually intentionally invite into the creative process people who can bring different kinds of insights to keep the freshness and newness in the process through the meeting of different perspectives. Interdisciplinarity in the groups is a common practice. Dancers also use input and feedback from external people in the process, and a diversity of physical spaces (Schaeffer et al., 2012) and expressive media (visual, music, bodily and verbal) that stimulate creativity and bring continuously new perspectives into the creative process. The diversity of people, knowledge and skills was also mentioned as important in Japanese innovation initiatives (Yamamoto, 2013). Often cross-functional teams consisting of experts from various divisions were engaged in innovation processes (ibid). Compared to dancers, the importance of using diverse physical spaces and media for expression were not explicitly stressed as important in Japanese companies, although several cases mentioned that visual communication, such as the visualization of problems, results, and making appealing posters, was important for enabling innovation.

To return to research questions three and four, we can say that there are similarities between enablers for innovation in groups in contemporary dance practice and industry on a very general level, which is represented in our framework with six enablers in Diagram 7. Although this model was very useful for our research because it helped us develop a practical method for enabling innovation in groups that we tested in the second study, I believe it lacks a critical perspective that would explore more closely also the differences between innovation enablers in dance and industry.

The paper we wrote together with our colleagues in the Kaikaku project (Schaeffer et al., 2012) looks into one aspect of these differences, which is related to how dancers perceive physical space for enabling innovation in comparison to workers and managers from the industry. In my future research it would be interesting to explore in more detail also other differences.

Looking critically at the framework of innovation enablers from our second paper (Bozic & Backström, submitted) and presented in Diagram 7 we can say that it would make sense to exclude two of the enablers to make the model more simple and clear. For example, the enabler called "continuous iteration between exploration and reflection" is a core activity rather than enabler in the creative processes of contemporary dancers and was already discussed in the model of the creative process from a choreographic perspective presented in Diagram 6. On the other hand, the enabler named "collaboration and co-creation" in the group is rather obvious when we talk about enablers of innovation processes in groups and could be included under the enabler "emergent bottom-up top-down process". The latter talks about the importance of bottom-up people-driven innovation supported by theories about employee-driven innovation (Høyrup, 2010 & 20012) and participatory innovation (Buur and Matthews, 2008), which were presented in the theory chapter. These theories are centred around people as drivers of innovation processes through participatory group efforts and with the help of enabling leadership from the management. If we would revise our framework of innovation enablers in contemporary dance groups and connect it to our model of different stages and core tools of the creative process from a choreographic perspective, we could thus merge all the concepts in one clear visual representation that is showed in Diagram 8.
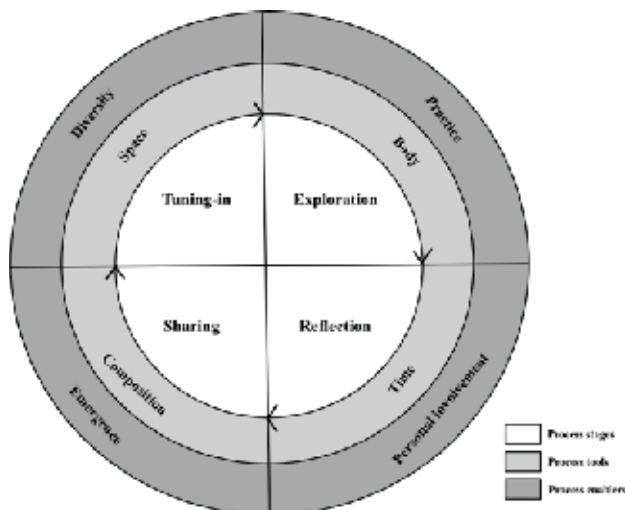

Diagram 8: Choreographic view of innovation process stages, tools and enablers

Different models presented in the three appended papers and in Diagrams 5, 7, 6 and 8 show how my research and analysis of empirical data evolved in time. The final model represented in Diagram 8 will be used as a starting point for my future research and will be further tested and developed through practice in the next study in collaboration with the Eskilstuna municipality. It will be interesting to explore also the connections between different layers in each of the four quadrants of the model, representing different process stages, tools and enablers. For example how the concept of practice through the use of different body and movement tools can act as an enabler of exploration in the innovation process, or how diverse spaces and space-related tools support the tuning-in aspect of the process.

6.1.3 Applying methods from dance to enable innovation in organizational practice

The last research question was exploring whether methods for enabling innovation in dance are applicable in organizational practice. This is why the focus of the second study was to develop and test a practical method, using knowledge and tools from dance when trying to enable innovation in teams from different organizations.

Evaluating the method and process design based on the feedback we got from participants in our study and which was presented in chapter five, we can see that they appreciated most of the things that were at the core of our method design. Our method integrated the concept of different innovation process stages, tools and enablers from a choreographic perspective represented in Diagram 8. Participants found valuable the workshop format that enabled active participation, collaboration and co-creation in the group. The fact that many appreciated the combination of theoretical and practical knowledge with the toolbox they developed in the course showed that the principle of combining training in a safe environment outside of work and then testing knowledge in practice, was a method that participants found useful. Since they mentioned personal development as an important aspect of the process, this also shows that we managed to engage them not only on the professional but also on a personal level. Iterating between exploration and reflection was also reflected in the participants' feedback since many of them mentioned that they appreciated both the open mindset they developed through exploration and the insights they discovered through reflection. The diversity in many aspects of the course (people, spaces, tools, different ways of expression, such as written, body, visual...) was also valued by participants.

What participants suggested that we might improve, though, was for future participants to work on a concrete project during the course, which would make the

learning process more focused and concrete. I will test this idea in my next study. They also wanted to have more time for common reflection in the whole group at the end of each workshop and time to work with their colleagues on developing concrete ideas for their workplace. Here we see the challenge of balancing expectations and the time that companies are prepared to spend on training. We could try to do two-day workshops instead but based on my experience very few organizations would be prepared to support employees who would want to take so much time off their work. We could also work in smaller groups which would be a bit less time-consuming, but at the same time having around 20-25 people in each workshop created a certain dynamic that would be hard to achieve in a small group. The process perspective – to have more time and a sense of continuation - was perceived as positive since participants suggested that it would be beneficial to have an even longer learning process. In the next study I will thus test this idea and work for one and a half year with the same group of people. My reflection from this experience is that a process of six months can make a difference on the individual and group levels but it is hard to achieve change on the organizational level in such a short time.

The way participants in the study improved their understanding of innovation and were able to integrate and adjust the knowledge and tools from dance gained in workshops in their work practice, also shows that knowledge and methods from contemporary dance can be applied to enable innovation in organizational context, at least to a certain extent. The critical element is, though, to find the right balance, where methods from dance are used to challenge practitioners to go out of their comfort zone in a way that stimulates their creativity and helps them increase their ability to think and act innovatively. If the line is crossed and participants feel too uncomfortable to make sense out of the experience and connect it to their work, then the whole point is missed. This happened to some participants in one of the workshops where several participants felt insecure, uncomfortable and frustrated and where even reflecting afterwards from a distance made it hard for them to see something beneficial for their work in this experience. In order to resolve the situation Jennie and I sat together with those participants who had the negative experience in a separate meeting, where everyone could share their feelings and reflections and where we assured them we will take their feedback very seriously in our future design of the process. This helped re-establish trust and openness and enabled us to move on in the process. At the same time it was interesting that the same workshop that was perceived as problematic by some participants was perceived as the best workshop by other participants who liked the experiential side of it and thought it brought them more new insights than the other workshops. This shows that people experience the same methods in different ways and that we as facilitators need to find the right balance that works for everyone in such a big and diverse group.

The way that participants applied choreographic thinking and tools in their work, which is described in several examples presented in chapter five and in our third paper (Bozic Yams, forthcoming), shows us that although some of them dared to use body and movement in very simple ways in their teams, it is of course a challenge to bring body and movement into a work environment that is very focused on the mind. This means that while transferring knowledge and ideas from dance on a more conceptual level might be relatively easy, embedding practical work with body and movement might demand quite a long-term process of training and practice before practitioners would feel ready to integrate these tools in their daily routines without the help of external trainers.

If we look at the specific effects that dance-based methods had on participants in this study and compare them to previous studies on art-based initiatives in organizations, presented in the introduction, we can see many similarities between the two. The category of seeing more and differently, which was the most common aspect mentioned by Berthoin Antal and Strauß (2013) was also what participants in our study stressed with the highest frequency as something that they learned from the course and that was important for them. It seems that art-based methods, no matter from which field of art, have the ability to help people open their mindset, go out of their comfort zone, and see new perspectives. Also what Berthoin Antal and Strauß (ibid.) refer to as the effect of "activation", which relates to employees tapping into their feelings, bodily ways of knowing and helping them experience and express emotions in new ways, was something that happened in our study. But activating people on a personal level can be both positive and negative. If people open up and experience and share very strong emotions, then facilitators have to be prepared and able to deal with this kind of situation. Neither artists nor researchers are professional therapists, which means that the opening up on a personal level needs to be done in a manner that can be competently managed in a constructive way for everyone involved. Also other effects of art-based methods described in the study by Berthoin Antal and Strauß (ibid.), such as collaborative ways of working, reflection, personal and organizational development, and artful ways of working (applying artistic toolbox in organizations), were noticed in our project. This means that our study supports the existing evidence on how art-based methods enable innovation in organizational context.

We should then also look at whether there are some differences or nuances in our study. Some elements that stand out and could be interesting to explore more in the future relate to the choreographic way of working with physical space, body and movement to enable innovation. It was interesting to see how many participants started to experiment with different aspects of using physical space to enable innovation in the study. Another aspect that is close to dance practice that seemed to have an effect on participants was a more conscious use of body and movement. Participants realized

that in their everyday work they often focus on communication through spoken and written language, but forget what a strong impact body language has on others. The experience in the course made them also see that body and movement can be consciously used to stimulate creativity and the flow of ideas in the group. Letting the body move freely can also bring about aspects of self or unconscious material that we cannot access with our rational mind and that can help us discover new dimensions or get unstuck in our existing patterns of thinking. Becoming more aware of the body and our feelings can help us focus better and open up for explorative ways of working. It was surprising to see how many participants also took the idea of tuning-in from dance and tested it in their work. They realized that it is hard to expect from their teams to be suddenly extremely creative in meetings and work without some sort of warming-up and tuning-in in the creative process. These experiments also brought about the importance of practice or rehearsal - that a team needs to continuously try out, experiment with and train various aspects of explorative thinking, acting and collaborating, and simple tuning-in exercises can help create the right atmosphere in the group that can stimulate creativity and innovation.

Looking at the empirical results in the second study I can thus confirm that methods from contemporary dance can be used to enable organizational innovation, but I feel a great deal of further testing and development of the method is needed to be able to prove consistent results in the long term and also to look more closely at the effects of the method on individual, group and organizational levels.

6.2 Critical perspective and questions for future research

Looking back at my research, some other critical thoughts come into mind that were not presented in the discussion so far. One refers to the methodology in the first study in which we performed interviews with different choreographers. Since their answers are influenced by the perception they have of their own practice, it would make sense to perform observation as well of a few creative processes of contemporary dance groups to complement the internal view of their practice with an external perspective gained by the researcher. Observation would allow us to see if other elements would appear in the researcher's observation that dancers themselves, coming from inside the field, might not be aware of, or did not find important enough to talk about. Unfortunately it was not possible to conduct observation at that point of my research for various reasons. First, I found out that dancers were quite sensitive about letting an external person observe their practice, since they thought participation of everyone in the group was essential to create trust and openness in the process and a person that would just sit and observe what they did could influence their creative process in a negative sense. Second, the dancers with whom I had most trust and who were open towards my presence and observation of their process, were

unfortunately either not working on a performance at that point of my research or there were challenges in timing and geographical distances that would not allow me to participate in their processes due to a lack of resources. Although I believe that an extensive amount of material was gathered through interviews (more than 150 pages of text from 20 transcribed interviews), it would be interesting to complement existing empirical data with data collected through observation in the future.

Another problematic aspect I see in my research so far is that it has a very strong focus on demonstrating the benefits that innovation management theory and practice could have by using knowledge and methods from contemporary dance practice, while it lacks a more critical perspective. This is easy to understand if we keep in mind my background and previous experiences. Having worked as a trainer, consultant and entrepreneur for many years before going into research makes it hard for me to have a distant and critical perspective on my own work. Creating distance is especially difficult when one works in a very young field, such as art-based initiatives in organizations, which still struggles to demonstrate to the business world its value and beneficial effects. This is even more true for dance-based methods which are extremely rare in organizational context. Many times this puts us – practitioners in the field – in the role of defending our practice. But at the same time our field of practice cannot develop and establish itself as a research field without a continuous self-reflection and a critical perspective. This is an important lesson learnt for my future research in which I would like to challenge myself not only to dare to propose doing "crazy" dance things to people from business, but also dare to look at my own practice and research more critically.

It would be interesting to explore how far dance-based methods can take us and what their limitations are in terms of enabling organizational innovation. First of all, not all people might feel comfortable or interested in using body and movement in innovation processes, even if this is done in the simplest way that does not demand any previous knowledge. Engaging body, intuition and feelings in the process usually brings to surface quite personal aspects of oneself, which not everyone might be ready to expose or share in a professional context. Secondly, the predominantly positive feedback that we have received from practitioners from companies and the public sector so far might be related to a specific cultural context and management practices in Sweden, which are based on the principles of equal participation and openness towards trying out new approaches at work. Our experiment would probably be much more difficult to implement and would encounter various barriers in many other cultures. It is also a question whether dance-based methods for enabling innovation can be applied in all types of organizations or whether people from specific industries or sectors might be more prone to engage with such methods than others. In our study more than half of the participants (56%) were from the public sector, which poses an interesting question whether dance- and art-based methods in general are easier to

apply in the public sector. The study done by Berthoin Antal and Strauß (2013), which gives a review of art-based initiatives in 205 organizations, shows a comparable result to our research since approximately half of the initiatives have been performed in municipal, health and education institutions. And last but not least, since in our study the majority of participants were female (67%), an interesting question is also whether women are more likely to find dance-based methods beneficial than men.

This brings me to other questions that I would like to explore further in future research. From the perspective of the innovation management field, I would like to look more closely at the concept of innovation competence on individual, group and organizational levels. I would also like to develop a tool for measuring innovation competence on different levels, which would allow me to complement qualitative data with quantitative data. On the other hand, it would be interesting to test new methods for collecting research data inspired by dance, using bodily expression of participants instead of collecting data only through already established methods, such as interviews, observation and questionnaires.

From the perspective of exploring contemporary dance practice in the context of art-based initiatives in organizations, I would like to look more closely also at the specific effects that dance-based methods could have in organizational context. As a part of this endeavor I would like to research the literature on embodied cognition that could help me better understand what kind of effect the engagement of body and movement in artistic ways can have on learning, creativity and innovation from a scientific perspective. And last but not least, I would like to continue developing dance-based methods for enabling organizational innovation in practice. I plan to perform further studies with practitioners from organizations, but this time on a longer-term scale, and involving more people from the same organization, to see if my method can produce effects not only on individual and team levels, but also on the organizational level.

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All photographs were taken in the course "Culture and Space for Innovation".

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