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The Embodied Possibilities of Leadership Development

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TIIVISTELMÄ:

Tämä pro gradu -tutkielma valottaa, miten ja millaisena taiteen kautta koulutettu kehollinen johtajuus voidaan ymmärtää. Tutkielma pyrkii lisäksi osoittamaan kehollisen lähestymistavan käytännön seurauksia työyhteisöön johtajuuden kontekstissa. Johtajuuden kehollisuutta tarkastellaan kehollisten ja taidelähtöisen menetelmien kautta. Kehollisuutta lähestytään fenomenologisesta kehoikästä, jossa keho muodostaa ja kantaa merkityksiä erilaisissa asetelmissä. Johtajuutta tulkitaan kehollisena ja fyysisenä ilmiönä, joka toteutuu ihmisten välillä ja suhteessa tilaan.

Tutkielma nojaa laadulliseen tutkimusperinteeseen, jonka empiirinen tutkimusosuus on toteutettu laadullisfenomenologisena haastattelututkimuksena. Empiirisenä aineistona on asiantuntijoiden kokemustieto. Tutkimusaineisto kerättiin haastattelemalla kuutta johtajuuden ja työyhteisökehittämisen asiantuntijaa, jotka soveltavat työssään taidelähtöisiä menetelmiä. Haastattelut toteutettiin teemahaastattelumenetelmällä, joka painottaa vapaata kerrontaa kokemuksista ja merkityksistä. Analyysin kohteena ovat asiantuntijoiden kokemukset ja käsitykset johtajuuden kehollisuuden elementeistä. Tutkielman aineiston analyysi soveltaa aineistolähtöistä laadullista sisällönanalyysia kuunnellen kehollisia painotuksia.

Haastatteluista selviää, että taiteen kautta koulutettu kehollinen johtajuus voidaan nähdä kehollisena kuunteluna, luottamusta rakentavana, tilanne- ja kohtaamistajuisena, fasilitoivana sekä turvallisuutta luovana tilana, joka tarjoaa huokoista tilaa ja johtajuutta työyhteisöön. Aistipotentiaali, kohtaamistaju ja vuorovaikutus ovat kehollisen johtajuuden ydintä, jotka voivat mahdollistaa empaattisen, uteliaan ja leikkisän asenteen muodostumisen työyhteisöön. Tulokset viittaavat myös siihen, että kehollinen lähestymistapa johtajuuteen luo edellytyksiä kestävämmälle ja turvallisemmalle johtajuuskulttuurille organisaatiossa. Tämän lisäksi, luottamukseen, arvostukseen ja turvallisuuteen perustuvat olosuhteet synnyttävät laadukkaampaa yhteyden kokemista ihmisten välillä ja suhteessa tilaan. Johtajuuden kehollisuus luo tilaa, jossa ihminen voi toteutua omalla tavallaan.

Tulokset korostavat, että somaattisesti virittynyt johtajuus voi vaikuttaa haitallisiin työskentelytapoihin ja kulttuuriin käytännössä. Analyysin myötä, tutkielma ehdottaa kahta uutta käsitettä kehollisen johtajuuden tutkimukseen: kannatteleva ja kestävä kehontietoisuus sekä kehollisuuden uutisennuste. Molemmat käsitteet tukevat jo olemassa olevaa ymmärrystä, mutta avaavat myös uusia tutkimusväyliä. Osaltaan tutkielma haastaa perinteistä yksilökeskeistä johtajuusajattelua ja sen tuloksena kannustaa harkitsemaan kollaboratiivisempia johtajuuden muotoja työyhteisössä. Tutkielma osoittaa, että kehollisuudella on tärkeä rooli niin johtajuuden rakentamisessa kuin kyvyssämme kohdata toiset ja muodostaa yhteys toiseen.

ABSTRACT:

This thesis enlightens how embodied leadership can be perceived through arts-based training and development and also, aspires to reveal the implications that an embodied approach to leadership holds for the work community. Embodied leadership is explored through the embodied and arts-based development methods. Embodiment is approached with a phenomenological lens where the body form and bear meanings in different settings. Leadership is interpreted here as an embodied and physical phenomenon that comes into being in-between people and in relation to the spaces we share.

This thesis is a qualitative phenomenological interview study that draws from qualitative research tradition. The empirical research data was gathered with six unstructured interviews that emphasized open and free flowing conversation. The empirical data are the experiential knowledge and the perceptions of leadership and work community developers who apply arts-based methods in their work. The data was interpreted with qualitative content analysis paying attention to the embodied emphasis.

The interviews revealed that embodied leadership can be perceived through arts-based methods as embodied listening, trusting, having sensitivity of the moment, appreciative of encounter, facilitative and as a safe space that offers porous leadership and porous space to the work community. Our sensory potential, appreciation of encounter and interaction are at the heart of embodied leadership that enables an empathetic, curious and playful attitude to the work community. The results in addition indicate, that an embodied approach to leadership creates foundations for a more sustainable and safer leadership culture to the organisation. Moreover, the conditions of trust, safety and respect establish better quality of experiencing connection with people and with spaces. Embodied leadership holds space for us to come into being in one's own way.

The results highlight, that somatically tuned leadership has an ability to steer the work community away from harmful working habits and work culture in practice. Furthermore, this thesis suggests two new conceptual ideas to embodied leadership research: embodied sustained awareness and embodied forecast. Both concepts contribute support for existing research and also open new avenues of research. Additionally, this thesis challenges the conventional leader-centric approach to leadership and encourages to consider more collaborative forms of leadership in the work community. To conclude, this thesis argues that embodiment holds an important part in leadership creation, art of encounter and crafting connection with others.

AVAINSANAT/KEYWORDS: johtajuuden kehittäminen, kehollinen johtajuus, taidelähtöiset menetelmät, kehontietoisuus, kehollisuus, leadership development, embodied leadership, arts-based methods, embodied awareness, embodiment

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1 INTRODUCTION

Contemporary work life is increasingly remote, and our bodies are immensely confined to our screens and desks limiting the physical ways of working and our natural bodily movement. Work is also often done alone in the solitude of our homes being physically disconnected from other humans. Abandoning the office has left some of us feeling disembodied and lonely (Mäkinemi, Kaltainen & Hakanen 2022). Moreover, the pandemic era served as a great fertilizer for work loneliness to grow and the forced digital transition to virtual platforms created the perfect circumstances for this growth. Being virtually and digitally multiconnected yet physically very disconnected pose challenges for leadership. It has been suggested that the physical removal from the workplace and the lack of real-life human connection are unhelpful in developing leadership and organisational relationships (Taylor 2012; 2014; 2018).

Leadership failures are frequently emotional issues (Jackson & Parry 2011: 139). These challenges often appear as something invisible by nature such as trust. Inability to connect meaningfully with other organisational members can emerge as lack of trust. However, we cannot smell, see, hear or touch trust as such but we can feel it. More specifically, we can feel it in our body. Moreover, people inside the organisation might not know each other sufficiently enough to form organisational trust. This can manifest as poor productivity. The heavy cross of resolving poor productivity often falls on leadership. Abstract issues such as forming trust are difficult to resolve without our physical presence. Leadership developers who apply embodied and arts-based development methods might work from just the right position to help leadership with the intangible.

This thesis investigates leadership developers' perceptions and experiences of embodied and physical leadership. The goal is to find out what is embodied leadership developed with embodied and arts-based methods. Also, it aspires to understand what it means for practice to consider the embodied and physical notions of leadership. This qualitative investigation is hungry for understanding the bodily approach and its deeper implications to leadership and the work community. I seek insight and answers from

experienced and established Finnish leadership developers who specialize in embodied and arts-based methods in leadership development with qualitative interviews. This qualitative study presents their unique professional experience on the subject. I turn to the sensual, aesthetic, and bodily approach to explore the hidden in leadership.

1.1 Research question and aim of the study

The main research aim in this master's thesis is to explore leadership developers' perceptions of leadership's physicality and embodiment. Their insight is of particular interest for that they have access to mold and shape how leadership is created, exercised and understood in practice. Even more significant is their key insight of bodily elements in leadership. Frequently the focus in scholarly research is in gaining knowledge from either the leaders or followers and majority of the current research emphasizes more the follower perspectives. More specifically, the focus is more often on the people who are being developed and less on the developers (Biehl-Missal 2010; Ladkin & Taylor 2010; Springborg & Ladkin 2018). Interestingly, it appears that the developer's insight is less asked for in previous research (Day, Fleenor, Atwater, Sturm & McKee 2014). Even more, leadership development research remains on somewhat surface level of analysis lacking a deeper perspective on embodiment and physicality leaving their implications underexplored. However, a positive exception transpires from Parush and Koivunen's study (2014) where they interviewed both the developer and participant views in their study that examined leadership development workshops of choir conducting. Importantly, they discovered that development through arts-based methods can result in a deeper experience of learning. Their study demonstrates that embodied experiential learning is a dynamic tool for discovering, learning and developing behaviours.

The intention of my study is to further knowledge of the physicality and embodiment of leadership and advance the aesthetic possibilities of leadership practice, development, and research. This master's thesis aspires to capture the leadership developer's perceptions with qualitative interviews and mirror them to scholarly literature to understand

how bodily knowledge on leadership can enlighten our understanding of how leadership works in practice and what kind of implications it holds for work life.

The purpose of this thesis is to address my research problem of

how embodied leadership is perceived through arts-based training and development?

Additionally, it asks

What implications an embodied approach to leadership holds for the work community?

The purpose is to make the physical and embodied elements of leadership more visible and explore the rich aesthetic experience of its development. This investigation seeks to offer positive and empowering insight on the embodied experience of leadership that complement the previous understandings of leadership.

Also, my thesis aims to encourage us to stop looking for the ideal leader in leadership. In contrast, it aspires to offer motivation for us to stop sizing up our working and leading selves through ideal stereotypes that may lead us to feelings of inadequacy. I wish to invite the reader to look at leadership not through the leader rather through how we craft leadership connections with our body. Leadership should not be looked at merely fitting a “role” at a specific time and place. It is important to recognize it also as a physical phenomenon that is created together. My suspicion is that the visible and invisible elements of embodied leadership hold support for us as individuals and groups to create better pre-sets for work life. Next, I will shortly describe the structure of this thesis.

First, I present and explain thoroughly my theoretical framework. Next, I will explain my research design and approach. After framing my exploration, I will succinctly explain the method of inquiry and finally present my findings. Lastly, I will conclude my thoughts and

offer my scientific contribution and suggestions for future research. Before diving into the theoretical background of my thesis I will briefly unfold key concepts for thesis next.

1.2 Key concepts

Leadership

Leadership is a popular and an established scholarly research discipline (Grint 2011; Dinh, Lord, Gardner, Meuser, Liden, & Hu 2014). Majority of leadership theories assume that leadership is established with leaders, followers, and common goals (Drath, McCauley, Palus, Velsor, O'Connor & McGuire 2008). These three constituents of leadership are generally very visible. From a normative account it is suggested that it is the leader that makes the followers do tasks that help achieve common goals. This train of thought suggests, that doing leadership is a task for a leader individual.

Conventional approaches to leadership tend to aim at shaping the behaviour of the working individual or community (Bolden, Hawkins, Gosling & Taylor 2011: 38-41). Typically, leadership concepts and definitions regard to it being a logico-rational exercise to influence people (Ropo & Sauer 2008). Other traditional ways to approach leadership are it being a representation of a style, role or position, a socially constructed process, a set of key characteristics or traits, a set of behaviours, a set of qualities or skills (Bolden et al. 2011: 6-7, 26-29). However, all these leave leadership in a quite disembodied setting. Leadership research has traditionally been very focused on the individual leader. Also, leadership development and education are typically pinpointed to advance the leader's personal competencies and capabilities (Day et al. 2014). In traditional leadership theory leaders are set to appear as merely sites or vessels for disembodied traits, characteristics, and abilities (Ford, Harding, Gilmore & Richardson 2017). However, rigorous scholarly research has advanced the discipline to a much wider set of research approaches away from the individual approach (Jackson et al. 2011: 9-12).

In contrast, leadership can be understood as a relational and social process where the body is recognized: we need the body to understand the social in the process of leadership (Ropo, Parviainen & Koivunen 2002). The relational leadership scholars Hosking (2007) and Uhl-Bien (2006) have led the research focus away from the leader individual over two decades ago. The relational approach includes both, leaders and followers, placing the focus on the followers (Ladkin 2010; Taylor 2012; Taylor, Ladkin & Statler 2015). Leadership can be approached as a process that is co-created in social and relational interactions between people (Fairhurst & Uhl-Bien 2012). In Ladkin's (2010: 28) and Taylor's (2012: 100) approaches to leadership both leader and follower are included in the leadership phenomena it being a collective phenomenon emerging from their mobilization toward a mutual goal. The intention is to work together in meaningful ways, where communication is key, and the mutual relationships are co-created through interpersonal exchange. In the body context the centre of attention in relational leadership is the space in-between the bodies: the dynamic relational space (Uhl-Bien 2006; Biehl 2019; Ladkin 2012; Ropo & Salovaara 2019). It is also acknowledged that leadership is corporeally embodied in us humans socially and physically (Ropo et al. 2008).

As might be expected, this thesis takes a bodily-centred perspective to leadership for that there is knowledge embedded in the body. There is a convincing array of scholarly literature that exhibit numerous bodily takes on leadership. Ladkin and Taylor (2014) provide important observations of overlooking the body and they also distinguish helpful differences between physicality and embodiment in the context of leadership. Physicality in leadership works more from the outside-in from the apparent aspects of individuals that we can see, touch, feel and experience through our bodies. Going below of what might not be as apparent is the means of embodiment. Embodiment in the context of leadership works more from the inside-out, the inner world of the individual. The invisible energies, dynamics, and impulses that our embodiment brings about so that we are physically available for others to engage with. These two notions are not separate in the leadership context rather they complement each other and allow us to understand better the gestural and performative nature of leadership. Moreover, together they ease in

understanding how leadership is enacted and created. This thesis shares the view of these two leadership scholars (Ladkin & Taylor 2014: 12): “...*leadership works through a connection between people which is fundamentally physical in its nature*”. (Ladkin et al. 2014: 1-13.)

Ladkin (2013) views leadership as a bodily based experience where the followers and leaders engage in leadership processes. More specifically, leadership comes to be in the felt experience of being within a leadership dynamic in leadership relations. Perception in this approach does not arise from cognition, it arises from the body: we perceive kin-aesthetically and visually from our unique bodily position. Perception is a full-bodied activity. Our embodied basis of perception enables us to feel the experience of invisible leadership dynamics, for example trust, that by nature is invisible and abstract. Exploring through an embodied basis allows us to understand what it is like being within a leadership dynamic. Leadership is thoroughly embodied in us: in the experiences felt in our bodies. Investigating leadership creation from a more embodied and relational perspective opens a window to the invisible and may also offer clues of the perceived quality of workplace relationships. These invisible non-cognitive perceptual processes are in the heart of leadership. (Ladkin 2013; Ladkin & Taylor 2014: 1-13.)

Body

Our living, moving body enable us to experience spaces and places and other beings. We exist through our movement. With physical stillness we lose the nuances and clarity of sensing and perceiving. Through our senses we can know the world and gain sensory knowledge of it with our body that is called aesthetics (Strati 2000; Hansen, Ropo & Sauer 2007). Our sensory and perceptive abilities to see, touch, hear, taste or smell enable us to receive information that enable us to sense what is happening around us. It is hard to experience the world fully without aesthetics, with a static body. The body primarily allows us to connect with the world around us. It is the foundation of our perception and it is an individual expression in its own right. (Rouhiainen 2007: 83-102.)

A great deal of leadership scholars reviewed for this thesis (Bathurst & Cain 2013; Küpers 2013a; Ladkin 2013; Pullen & Vachhani 2013; Fisher & Reiser Robbins 2015; Biehl 2019) ground their body approach to the works of the French philosopher Maurice Merleau-Ponty. His works provide an essential framework of the body for research purposes: the human body is not looked at as a bio-chemical machinery rather it is understood as the primary eventual source and location for perceptions (Heinämaa 1996: 13). And this thesis is specifically after perceptions.

Importantly, for Merleau-Ponty, communication lingers more in our emotional bodily positioning, gestures and facial expressions, more specifically in the familiarity of them and how we extend them with each other. He suggests that mutual connection with others is not necessarily created through cognitive discourse, rather it is achieved with our faces. Principally we tend to connect through familiarity or by association with other people, spaces, and places. However, Merleau-Ponty aspires to express that it is possible to encounter and connect with the unfamiliar without identifying with it. Interest is not in *what* is expressed, rather in *how* it is expressed. Our embodiedness creates ways for connection to happen in alternative ways: with our capabilities of mutual bodily rhythms and resonance. Additionally, it is important in the body context to recognize and appreciate that we live, move, experience, feel, and perceive very differently from each other when our language differs and from how we are positioned in the world. (Heinämaa 1996: 87-109; Luoto 2012: 20-21; Roinila 2012: 50-53.)

Our embodied being enables the way of being in this world and how we interact with our environment and others. How we see, feel and move are expressions of our way of being in this world. We do not feel through our mind, we feel through our body. The elements of touch or listening evoke the sense of connection to the world through our whole bodily being. Interaction comes from our thinking, sensing, and feeling body. Embodiment is about how we perceive and connect with the world beyond our cognitive capacities: from the inside-out. Moreover, it is also a way of knowing that applies and

taps into our sensuous bodily sources of knowledge. Embodiment focus is on bodily presence, body language, bodywork, and embodied knowledge (Ropo & Parviainen 2001; Sinclair 2005; Ropo et al. 2008). (Fisher et al. 2015; Foster 2015; Satama, Blomberg & Warren 2022.)

To conclude, this thesis accepts that our embodied being holds both visible and invisible elements. Occasionally the visible in our corporeal is able to lead us to recognize the invisible in our embodiment. In these occasions our embodied knowing is essential. The body in the leadership context in organisational settings holds scholarly interest for its performative, discursive, and representative properties. However, Sinclair (2005) argues that there is more: our bodies and bodily responses stimulate alternative ways of knowing leadership and our bodies are essential to leadership. Harding (2003) discloses a key aspect regarding the body: our aesthetic understanding is a model of knowing. More specifically, aesthetics is a form of knowledge that is based in our senses. Before more incisive questions may be proposed, this thesis immerses first with the current and foregoing scholarly research to present its theoretical framework.

2 THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

Making people feel welcomed to the work environment, helping in belonging to the work community, making sure communication works and everyone feels safe, and work goals are getting accomplished are all important features of doing leadership. All of these features can be approached and accomplished in numerous ways. What is important: to emerge all these features need our bodies and social relationships. We currently enjoy a rich variety of scholarly approaches to leadership. For decades scholarly research has put a real effort in understanding what kind of leadership brings about the best in us (Grint 2011; Dinh et al. 2014). Regardless of abundant and rigorous scholarly leadership research, it remains an unsettled phenomenon with an amplitude of theories and explanations to it (Bolden et al. 2011: 9-10). This implies, there is still deeper insight left to discover of its creation and its implications for the organisation and the individuals who experience and produce leadership.

Traditional scholarly research and practice present leadership as a bold individual performance yet a disembodied one (Sinclair 2005, Wood 2005). Moreover, it is the leader individual who single-handedly, almost heroically is in charge of its creation. Leadership can be approached from both leader and follower centric perspectives concentrating on their mutual engagements that generate leadership. Historically however, leadership studies have privileged the leaders over followers (Dinh et al. 2014). In contrast, the post-heroic approach to leadership views it as a shared, collective practice not just a single person activity (Fletcher 2004; Crevani, Lindgren & Packendorff 2007). The scholarly literature suggests that the traditional individual perspective to leadership has shifted towards more collective paths where leadership is finding a more collaborative form (Crevani 2022: 205-228). I am optimistic that the perceptive leadership developer might have something to add to this shift directed towards emergent co-constructed leadership theory and practice.

Leadership as a phenomenon unyieldingly remains as a stronghold of cognitive operations in public discussions and in scholarly understanding. However, there has been a persistent school of thought that leadership holds more body to it than what we can see with the naked eye (Ropo et al. 2001; Ropo et al. 2002; Sinclair 2005, 2013; Hansen et al. 2007; Ropo et al. 2008; Ladkin 2008; Koivunen & Wennes 2011; Pullen et al. 2013; Ladkin et al. 2014; Meriläinen, Tienari & Valtonen 2015). Our mind is integrated to our living material body (Thanem & Knights 2019: 6) and for this, it is important to look at leadership also beyond the cognitive approach. The aesthetic approach to leadership recognizes the value, importance, and power of bodily presence in leadership creation. An aesthetic approach to leadership conveys alternative insight to leadership dynamics and how to develop further (Küpers 2013a, Springborg et al. 2018; Taylor & Ladkin 2014; Zeitner, Rowe & Jackson 2016). Aesthetic leadership embraces both relational and embodied perspectives to it (Hansen et al. 2007). Next, I will elaborate more the aesthetic, embodied and relational nature of leadership.

2.1 Aesthetic, embodied and relational nature of leadership

Embodiment is paramount in the activity of leadership (Koivunen et al. 2011) for that our bodily presence has an effect on our social interaction (Ropo et al. 2001). Embodiment underpins our social information processing (Barsalou, Niedenthal, Barbey & Rupert 2003). The materiality in embodiment is ordinarily perceived as physical presence, appearance, identity, and bodily gestures (Sinclair 2005, 2013; Ropo et al. 2008; Bathurst et al. 2013; Melina 2013; Pullen et al. 2013; Ladkin et al. 2014; Fisher et al. 2015; Ford et al. 2017). To branch out further from this view, embodiment also refers to the diverse bodily ways of knowing through our senses (Hansen et al. 2007; Ropo et al. 2001; Koivunen et al. 2011). The embodied perspective construes leadership as socially and bodily constructed through our senses (Ropo et al. 2008).

The relational perspective perceives knowledge as constructed between people in ongoing processes through interaction (Hosking 2011). Importantly, the relational

processes are not only operations for the mind: the construction is a holistic operation of both the mind and the body. Relational processes are ongoing acts of speaking, hearing, listening, seeing, gesturing, and moreover, the languages we use in relation to others are both verbal and nonverbal that may include body language, gestures or even dance. In other words, leadership knowledge is created and developed through our senses. To branch out yet even further in terms of embodiment, Ropo and Salovaara (2019) suggest that leadership is being produced in an embodied and performative process between people and space. They further how embodied knowledge creation and development involves our senses, feelings, and memories in the process that emerge not only between people, but also in the processes in which people and spaces engage with each other. We take part in leadership through engaging and participating with our body where we operate with our thoughts and emotions. Being attentive, present, and engaging with others around us reveals that leadership is an embodied activity. (Hosking 2011; Ropo et al. 2019.)

The relational approach in leadership research is interested in the social processes of organising where the focus is on relational dynamics between people. This thesis recognizes that leadership is co-created and always in motion in our relationships: it shifts and moves between people at all the different social levels of the organisation. Moreover, it is the processes that construct the organisational social order and realities where we exist in. In other words, leadership and people are constructs that are made through these processes. The social processes of leadership are both cognitive and physical acts of organising that occur in the interactions of our relationships. In essence, the relational interest lies in the dynamics of verbal and embodied social processes that produce leadership. Leadership surfaces and becomes more apparent through the interactions and encounters among organisational members, technologies, objects, places, and spaces. (Hosking 2007, 2011; Koivunen et al. 2011; Crevani 2022: 205-288.)

To bring forth, there are also contrasting approaches to the relational perspective explicated above that are more individualistic. More specifically, perspectives that focus on

individual properties and achievements such as leader's skills, actions or behaviour. In terms of relationships, the focus is typically on the quality of the relation between people. This perspective to relational leadership in scholarly literature is referred to as the *entity perspective*. The previously presented perspective in the above paragraph is referred to as the *constructionist view* which focuses on the relations and interaction between people. It is acknowledged here, that relational leadership is somewhat individual, collective, and situational at all times. (Hosking 2007; Jackson et al. 2011: 143-145, Crevani 2022: 205-228.)

It has been established above that embodiment and aesthetics both hold presence in the relational approach. More specifically, all three, embodiment, aesthetics and relational enjoy the existence of one another. In terms of relating with others, aesthetics enables us to feel as being part of the group and how to connect with others. We relate with each other with our emotions and feelings that are expressed through our bodies (Knights 2018, 2021). Relating is not an act that is in motion only verbally or cognitively: our senses also inform us of how relationships look and feel to us. In other words, our aesthetic sensibilities help us recognize, understand, and make sense of the relational dynamics of relationships. The awareness of the body is both experienced individually and together with others within these shared dynamics. Embodiment, such as our bodily presence, body language, bodywork, and embodied knowledge, are all in action here. (Uhl-Bien 2006; Fisher et al. 2015.)

An important mind shift to leadership development comes from the constructionist view: *interdependence* is the real fuel of development rather than the strive for individual autonomy and independence from others. However, the conditioned and ingrained ethos of self-development persists in leadership development practice and theory. In the literary review process, I started to take note of concepts and terms related to individual development. As it turns out, it was a cornucopia of individualism. What is important here, interdependence in terms of leadership facilitates to understand that development work is not accomplished alone, it is achieved together. Next, I will elucidate how all

three approaches, aesthetics, embodiment and relational make sense together in the leadership context in action. (Crevani 2022: 205-228.)

2.1.1 Aesthetics, embodiment and relational leadership in action

Fisher et al. (2015) studied leader-follower interactions in a dangerous context of a battlefield. Their focus of study is on the leaderful practices of the Australian military advisers. Investigating leadership in such a highly complex setting as war combat reveals what a fundamental part the body plays in leadership performance and construction. Their embodied analysis of leadership exhibits how the aesthetic, embodied, and relational approaches to leadership emerge in military command situations. Moreover, the experience of leading and following in an intercultural context also exhibits how our bodily interpretations of the ongoing specific situation sometimes overpower the cognitive interpretations we produce through our intellect.

In a military combat surrounding, where necessarily there is not a shared mutual language available, embodied awareness and relational processes with others both become heightened. In addition, bodily and relational sensing amplifies the bodies of others as more perceptible to us in a nonverbal manner. In such surroundings, it is pivotal that our thought, action, verbal communication, and bodily communication are congruent. Also, leading by example truly emerges in an embodied way through “doing” leadership in combat.

Another important display of leaderful practice that also manifests through bodily interpretations is trust building. The leaders in the case study used their body in a relational manner with movements and action that displayed a “warrior mentality” or literally led others with their body from the front line to build confidence in a combat situation. Additionally, the study demonstrated that establishing rapport, mutual trust, and connection through embodiment holds a possibility to evolve from collegial camaraderie to life-long friendships. Their research suggests that leadership is continually perceived and

interpreted through embodied communication. Moreover, the embodied nature of leadership becomes more apparent through nonverbal communication and interaction that extends our understanding of leadership.

Koivunen et al.'s (2011) leadership investigation provides quite the contrasting surroundings of the symphony orchestra. They propose that the orchestra conductors engage in a specific form of leadership that is composed of embodied, aesthetic, and relational processes. Their study draws attention to intuition, sense perception, and on the body through the work practices in conducting a symphony orchestra. More specifically, the focus is on the conducting process, not the individual conductor. The conducting process requires nonverbal communication and sense perception such as listening. In the interaction processes listening, being present to the moment, and ability to respond to unexpected situations come to the fore. Listening is considered as a relational act and a group performance in the symphony orchestra surroundings. The conductors communicate through nonverbal facial expressions, physical movements, and gestures that set in motion the relational process of leadership where bodily knowledge and sensuous perception are in relational action. In conducting, the embodied, aesthetic, and relational processes of leadership produce visible and invisible acts that support, facilitate, and enable collective construction of leadership.

Interestingly, military command and orchestra conducting share some leadership process similarities in the embodied context. These two groups are highly experienced and trained either to play instruments or combat together. They both also share the diligence of being well-informed of their place. They know exactly where they are seated in the orchestra and where they are positioned during combat. Most importantly, both are highly trained to orientate their sense perception so that they know, or rather feel, when it is time to act. Also, having a strong sense of rhythm is vital for both. To conclude, it might be tempting to consider an entitative leadership perspective to both, the conductor maestro and combat leader. However, these two completely differing worlds express vividly the aesthetic, embodied, and relational nature of leadership. In particular, they

exhibit how interdependence is key in leadership work, rather than individual performance that echoes the hero ethos of leadership. These two contrasting studies serve as a kind of illustrative warm-up to the rich tapestry of embodied leadership research. Next, the venture continues to the implications of the body and the framework of this thesis.

2.2 Deeper implications of the body in organisational settings

It has been argued by management and organisation scholars long before the pandemic era that the human body is overly absent in leadership research and deserves our attention (Ropo et al. 2002; Sinclair 2005; Ladkin et al. 2014). Physical appearance as a research interest in terms of leadership has enjoyed scholarly interest since the trait days. However, only a small fraction of the research extends to insight on a deeper level, meaning that it considers how the appearance related issues for instance form our current cultural presumptions of leadership. It appears that the research gap of the absent body is not yet fully disclosed. Bodily leadership implications are challenging to uncover and make visible. However, it is recognized that our bodies may perform as sites of meaning making and thus present cultural implications (Patton 2014: 41). To illustrate, I will next display scholarly research examples of bodily implications in organisational settings.

2.2.1 Voice standards for executives

Meriläinen, Tienari and Valtonen (2015) bring about beautifully in their discourse analysis how important a person's voice is for the managerial body. Voice is a very intangible bodily aspect in leadership, yet a very essential part of a leader. Their study shows how the managerial body, aesthetics, senses, and bodily knowing are consistently ignored, devalued, or even denied in established research literature. Cognitive and social aspects of the manager on the other hand are principally favoured over the embodied characteristics of the corporeal. Their research reveals that there are bodily limitations and ideal bodily norms at play that may operate unfavourably for some managerial executive recruits. Recruit's voice that differs from the ideal type of voice can prevent the person

from getting the position. Body qualifications in executive recruitment can result in discrediting, marginalizing, and excluding some candidates from executive positions. Their study shows how phonetics, how we produce and receive speech, play an important part in managerial recruitment structures and cultural norms. Using our voice, more specifically our vocal cords, is a bodily function and an important part of human interaction. Phonetics is not visible, but it can materialize the sound of leadership. Intonation, pitch, tone of voice or other phonetic characteristics tell their story of how leadership is expected to sound like. Consequently, how we sound to others, really matters even if we like it or not. (Meriläinen et al. 2015.)

2.2.2 The dark side of organisational wellness discourse

Another research example that delves deeper to the implications of the body displays how the leader's identity is construed in a fitness-oriented setting (Johansson, Tienari & Valtonen 2017). Furthermore, this athletic lifestyle behaviour is intended to energize people at work, gain their respect, and impress the work "pack" to ultimately attain regulation at work. This study serves as a fit example of current organisational wellness discourses. It shows how the wellness boom can act as a widespread discourse of exceptionalism in managerial discourses that leads to extreme individualized performativity in the organisation (Butcher, James & Bloom 2023). Leadership is likewise influenced from this overarching managerial athleticism. Even if leadership aspires to promote a more health-conscious approach to work life it might unintentionally do the opposite and result in anger, resistance, and frustration in the workplace (Thanem 2013). Furthermore, athleticism and healthism at work may obstruct the progress of relational leadership and also result in excessive responsibility of personal health and wellbeing on to the individual (Harjunen 2017: 66-77; Johansson & Edward 2021; Bardon, Brown, & Puyou 2023).

Healthism implies that our health is a personal responsibility, a free choice, and a question of morals (Harjunen 2017: 66-77) instead of being an obligation of the organisation. There are environmental and cultural issues that are beyond the control of an individual

that cause health inequalities (Palosuo, Koskinen, Lahelma, Prättälä, Martelin, Ostamo, Keskimäki, Linnanmäki & Kostainen 2009) and for this, it is questionable to emphasize the individual's responsibility in "doing health" at work. Moreover, how we "do health" and promote it in organisational settings manifests through our individual bodies. Extreme bodily crafting and the culture of being fit emphasize the individuality in our managerialism and leadership. Being fit is seen as being disciplined and in control of oneself. Organisational wellness discourses shape our physical and professional appearance, identity, and abilities. This current fitness ideal of western culture has implication to how we shape our social attitudes of what we conceive as a normative healthy body, more specifically the bodies at work. The professional corporate body ideal in leadership may for example exclude bodies that differ from it by gender, age, race, disability or body size. There are aesthetic bodily ideals at play in leadership that may bring new managerial norms to the organisation. (Johansson et al. 2021.)

2.2.3 Poker-faces and organisational conformity

Continuing with the more visible appearance related scholarly research, the body is also considered as an "investment piece" that may possess career advancing abilities. Also, cosmetic surgery and procedures may operate as tools for controlling our *emotional display*. Kinnunen (2007: 15-37) studied the physical time stopping possibilities of cosmetic surgery with an empirical study. Nonverbal bodily communication of gestures, facial expressions, and voice are important parts of how we communicate our emotions to others through bodily interaction. The ideal of an ageless, expressionless, and emotionless face hinders our ability to communicate and read faces. Her research suggests that appearance standards and ideals influence organisational favouring of the healthy and youthful looking individuals. Cosmetic surgery as a form of control removes the unusual from our appearance that does not correspond with the prevailing ideals of youth, health, appearing sexy, and able bodied. Ageing and life experience marks are not accepted within the ideal body norms. Appearance ideals apply pressure to hide life marks and control our emotional display to remain as "poker-faced" with a goal of looking the same forever.

This is an implication of how our appearance can be affiliated with organisational control. Further, this “freezing” of emotional display may impede with occupational well-being. As the organisational environments and settings change continuously our appearance remains fixed which may hamper our embodied being in adapting to the changes. On the other hand, the idea of something stable and constant in our appearance may also offer a feeling of safety and a way to secure a part of our identity or even provide a confidence boost. However, this “contemporary work mask” prohibits access to read emotions. Facial mimicry is important for emotion perception (Niedenthal & Brauer 2012). Moreover, the mask may impede with our ability to connect with others and hinder the receiving of emotion and facial feedback. Facial expression, facial and bodily mimicry facilitates mutual communication and information receiving within social interaction. When our facial expressions do not match our action, we might be misunderstood or we confuse others by conveying mixed signals that do not contribute to leadership. (Kinnunen 2007: 15-37, 29-30; Neal & Chartrand 2011; Niedenthal et al. 2012; Harjunen 2017: 66-77.)

2.2.4 Lucrative looks and outfit obedience

Another point to be taken, to how our competence and qualifications are not the only aspects through which we are assessed as professionals. We are also assessed through our looks, style, appearance, stance, and habitus likewise. The demands for looking fresh, youthful, and appropriate are catching up on all professionals regardless of gender. Our good looks may provide bigger salary in leadership positions: better looking individuals in finance might enjoy a beauty premium in their compensation (Ahmed, Ranta, Vähämaa, & Vähämaa 2023). Additionally, Härkönen & Räsänen (2008) discovered nearly two decades ago how obesity holds negative effects on women’s income and employment, whereas the same effects did not apply to men. Moreover, their study suggests, that this might have implications to discrimination at work.

Our looks and the way we dress as professionals is a form of aesthetic communication that needs to embody the desired corporate aesthetics. The outfit, typically a suit, is a shared language of a work community's culture that reflects organisational behaviour and what is expected from its members. Interestingly, Harding (2003) notes that the behavioural norms that are embedded in our outfit norms are set by male managers for the rest of us to comply with and undergo more appearance related scrutiny. Also, the cultural aesthetic code embedded in the manager body expects us to fade out any possibilities for our fleshy materiality to become too visible: it needs to stay concealed and kept in control. The controlled look of a manager body is also a display of competence. By "looking the part" their body signals that this individual can manage others in addition to oneself. The competence of an individual yet keeps getting evaluated through our looks and appearance (Smith, Liss, Erchull, Kelly, Adragna, & Baines 2018). How we look may provide a competitive advantage for some in organisational settings that leads to conformity pressures of the professional's body. (Harding 2003.)

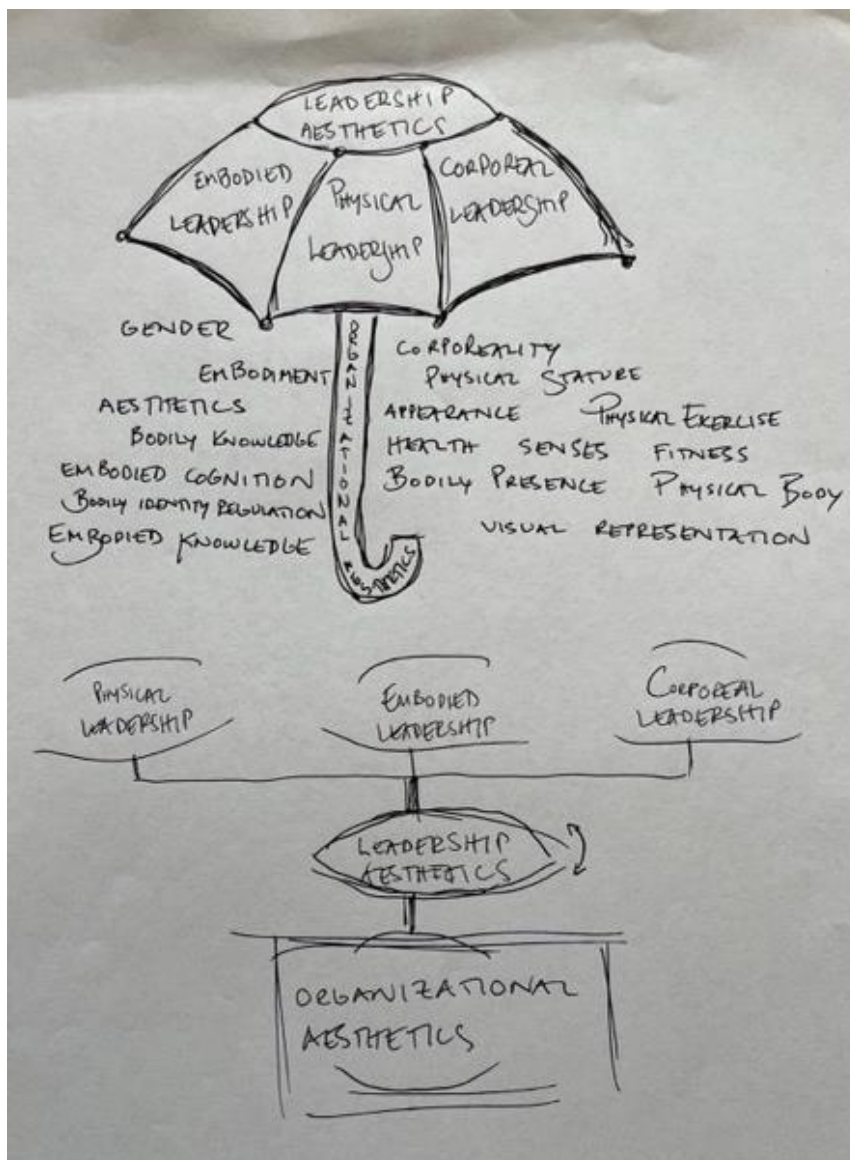
A recent systematic review demonstrates how our physical attractiveness in work life is connected to our socioeconomic outcomes and moreover, suggests it is gendered. The review discovered that attractiveness in general is an advantage for both women and men. However, good looks offer more frequently a positive socioeconomic outcome for men than for women. This appearance-related phenomenon leads to inequality in the labour market. Appearance related inequalities are formed in social interaction. Status, gender, age, and race are likely to sculpt the power relations in certain labour market contexts as unfavourable for some. Again, a bodily approach to research shows power to reveal important hidden structures that operate in the working life. Furthermore, the scholars suggest, that for future research purposes researchers need to develop more means of how to gain insight from occupational appearance expectations composed of e.g. styles of clothing, hair, posture, facial expressions, and grooming. (Kukkonen, Pajunen, Sarpila & Åberg 2024.)

These scholarly examples comprise visible bodily elements that express the kind of deeper implications of the body to organisational life where the visible leads to the invisible. However, a strong emphasis in these research examples is on bodily appearance and bodily norms that lack insight of our moving and sensing embodied being that offers understanding of the lived and felt experiences of leadership creation. Nevertheless, this thesis cannot escape completely from appearance-related discussions. They have ability to reveal hidden power structures just as Sinclair (2005) has argued. It is well acknowledged that as professionals our bodily presence and cognitive capacities are utilized as representational and performative purposes for the organisation. Moreover, the body with its implications might seemingly be understood as individual property. However, scholarly scrutiny of the body might reveal otherwise. Next, I will move on to explain the physicality and embodiment in leadership more thorough.

2.3 Leadership as a physically based phenomenon

As it has been expressed, scholarly research is dominated by a cognitive approach that perceives organisational influence essentially as a change in its members minds, changes in concepts like identity, norms, and values (Michel 2018). Without a doubt, leadership can be regarded as a cognitive phenomenon: there is extensive and convincing scholarly research to support the approach (Lord & Emrich 2000). However, scholars Ladkin and Taylor (2014) have taken an opposite approach: leadership as a physically based phenomenon. Furthermore, it is our physicality that allows us to fully experience leadership within human relations and connections in the organisational context. Capturing the embodied and physical elements in a written form is challenging for that leadership is not something fixed. Just as physicality itself, leadership is in a continual process of becoming, the ship in leadership is constantly moving. It is important to fathom the physicality in leadership for it has valuable implications to leadership practice. (Ladkin et al. 2014: 1-12.)

Outlining the abundant physical approaches to leadership is complex, messy, and bewildering. I sketched out by hand two different types of visual representations of how to arrange the research streams and embodied elements. Typically, academic writing is complemented with sleek smart art graphics. However, I wanted to include to this thesis something that might evoke a tiny sense of something physical in the reader. Handmade drawings might spark our senses differently than clear cut infographics. The first drawing is an umbrella that is held up by organisational aesthetics as the umbrella term. The second drawing is a reversed hierarchical figure that leans towards how facts and elements are more commonly arranged in academic writing.



Picture 1. Organisational Aesthetics Sketch.

The organisational aesthetics is the umbrella's handle that holds all the streams together where the embodied elements such as bodily knowledge, appearance, bodily presence or health reside under. Similarly, organisational aesthetics are the root foundation of where leadership aesthetics emerges from and spreads as various branches of research.

I have identified three main bodily approaches to the aesthetic phenomenon of leadership from scholarly research: embodied, physical, and corporeal. This thesis perceives all three branches as independent that reside under the leadership aesthetics umbrella. The diverse bodily element examples dripping from the umbrella, such as appearance, embodied cognition or bodily presence may float quite freely into, from, and through these branches. It appears that corporeal and physical leadership are more concerned with the visible elements of the body and the embodied approach is more focused with the not so visible elements. All three branches do however share the same interest of what possibilities the bodily approach may entail us to in the context of leadership. What is important for this thesis, is the key research focus on felt experience in leadership of the embodied branch. (Strati 2000; Hansen et al. 2007; Ropo et al. 2008; Ladkin 2012; Bathurst et al. 2013.)

It is essential to bear in mind that this arrangement of research streams is not be taken as conclusive. My interpretation is here just to visualize and illuminate the rich bodily approaches to embodied leadership research. This arrangement can be complemented and expanded with more streams and elements surely. It is also important to distinguish, that these three bodily streams of research do not serve as synonyms for each other. However, it appears that they might sometimes be used as synonyms perhaps for that the diverse bodily elements may float freely in all three streams. Nonetheless, closer examination reveals they are not synonyms, which is an entirely own scholarly discussion.

2.4 Bodily communication in leadership

Multimodality in leadership refers to all the other means of communication in addition to speech that we use to get ourselves understood. Language alone does not necessarily connect people, we connect with others also through action, physical movement and even with painting without words (Taylor 2018). Therefore, the use of the body and bodily gestures in leadership communication and social interaction is important to disclose. Speech is only one way to practice, albeit a very important one, human communication and social interaction. Our bodily gestures are an important part of leadership since their function is essential in social interaction and in building mutual understanding and rapport. We need bodily gestures and our gaze to attract the attention of others, they can also indicate the success of mutual understanding or giving the floor to someone else. Research has also shown that we are able to participate in social interaction and communicate with each other using our gaze, bodily postures and our physical orientations of our body or our gaze (Kääntä & Haddington 2011: 31-33). Moreover, the impact of our bodily gestures lingers sometimes hidden and hold more implications to leadership that is not always explicitly interpreted from our physical attributes.

Nonetheless, social interaction can be achieved with both embodied and disembodied ways. We can also use our bodily orientation and formation to block others from entering social interaction. Our stance and how we position ourselves can undermine or enforce participatory agency in social interaction. How we succeed in getting our message understood correctly and successfully can benefit from how we speak, gesture or gaze. However, success might be harder to accomplish when we are interacting behind our screens. *Where* we interact matters too, are we physically face-to-face or in a digital and virtual space. The modality of these bodily interactions changes: the timing of our gaze to confirm message being received or orienting our gaze on time to the screen to emphasize where the problem is are both important parts of our communication working properly. Multimodal interaction is communication where we need to use our physicality, speech, body, gestures, prosody, and facial expression. Also, we need to consider the environment we are currently in and the objects and spaces that surround us. Lastly, we

also need to take note of the movements formed around us and the proximity to other people, the objects, and spaces. These are all means to an end in building mutual understanding and connecting with other people around us. We are able to adjust our speech and bodily action so that we are understood better. We may find ourselves in work situations and settings where our embodied interaction and aesthetic awareness both act as finishing touches to our communication and to being present with others. The focus here is on the embodied ways of how we use bodily formations to communicate with each other in making connections. However, the impact of our bodily gestures lingers hidden in our leadership relations that is challenging to disclose. Next, I will turn to discuss the embodied and arts-based development methods in more detail. (Kääntä et al. 2011: 11-45.)

2.5 Embodiment and arts in leadership development

The leadership developer has a significant role and responsibility in developing and defining leadership in practice. The organisational developers hold power over in the business world, for this, it is important to gain their insight. Moreover, with this power they hold a unique position from where they are able to mold and shape leadership and how it is understood in practice and in general. Leadership development is a very lucrative industry (Jackson et al. 2011: 8, 141) that exercises power and has influence at organisational and societal levels. Moreover, leadership development is not yet researched to exhaustion, there is plenty of remaining research interest especially in the development methods, results, and impacts from leadership development (Jackson et al. 2011: 135, 141-143). This suggest that directing the research focus on the people who engage in leadership development, more specifically to the developers, how they develop and what is being developed would indeed be fruitful.

Traditionally, the centre of attention in development is the individual leader and their cognitive capacities. It is essential to distinguish that leaders as human individuals are not trained per se, it is their skills or behaviour that are under development. More

specifically, it is those skills or behaviours that improve the individual's capabilities to lead others (Jackson et al. 2011: 139). A central subject in leadership development is most often in human interaction and communication. The developmental attention is often in organisational relationships and individual social interaction skills, more rarely in the embodied capabilities of a person or embodied aspects of social processes of leadership.

As it turns out, in reality the *leadership* development work being done is often revealed as actually being *leader* development after deeper scrutiny (Jackson et al. 2011: 143). It appears that they are easily confused. Obviously, it is important that both enjoy developmental work, however, to keep the development objective clear, distinguishing them separate may be helpful. Well established forms of leadership development such as formal training, mentoring, 360-degree feedback or action learning all develop individual leader skills, not necessarily leadership itself. Distinguishing the developmental objectives can be challenging since they can overlap easily. The development design needs careful consideration to really meet the intended development objective, be it developing individual leader competencies or developing respectful ways to engage with team members despite individual differences in the ways we operate. In a nutshell, in terms of embodied leadership, it is not the person under development it is the leadership practice that is under development. (Jackson et al. 2011: 132-145; Salovaara & Ropo 2013: 193-215.)

There are also alternative methods to leadership development where the focus is more on the embodied notions of leadership. Arts-based learning and developing activities are slowly becoming more accepted and established in organisational development work. Embodied and arts-based methods of photography, theatre, improvisation, method acting, sculpture, doll-making, mask-making, poetry, painting, drawing, music, movement improvisation, martial art, dance, and story-telling can all be applied to developmental work (Woods, Culshaw, Jarvis, Payne, Roberts & Smith 2020). The possibilities of dance and movement in leadership relations development serves as a great

example of the potential that embodied and arts-based methods hold. Dance as an experiential learning method in terms of leadership has the potential to develop effective leadership practices. Moreover, it embodies the possibility of evolving how we can perceive physically and also develop our cooperative skills. How we gain knowledge through and with our body can be shaped in dance workshops. Tactile approaches to development can expand our personal process of making-sense to how we can make-meaning collectively in the leadership context. Dance as a method has also presented a key distinction in embodied leadership research that forms research streams and terms clearer. Zeitner et al. (2016) produced a distinction between *embodied leadership* and *embodiary leadership*. Embodiary leadership exhibits how individuals may physically imagine an organisational future through movement. Whereas embodied leadership is focused more on embodied knowing of the past and present. From a developmental perspective this helps in identifying accurate methods of certain types of developmental work. Embodiary leadership is more future oriented. Moreover, exploring with movement and bodily interplay can offer deeper understanding of how and where the leadership connection happens. (Zeitner et al. 2016.)

Apart from dance being an art form and a social practice, it has been established that dance and human movement can be applied as a tool for exploration and discovery along with its capabilities to enhance individual and collective learning abilities. It is possible to develop our embodied and tacit forms of knowing along our embodied agency in leadership with movement and dance exercises. Scholars Biehl-Missal and Springborg (2016) raise an important and sensitive notion that dance also holds culturally shaped bodily practices that needs to be taken to account in developmental work. Dance as an arts-based tool in leadership development essentially develops the ability to sense and connect to the present (Springborg & Sutherland 2014). This ability provides guidance for how to know the appropriate and attuned action for the present specific situation. Moreover, dance has a unique position where it may act as a “universal language” within multi-cultural groups. Sensing and understanding others with our bodily movements through dance may assist in apprehending the dynamics in personal and group relations.

Furthermore, our embodied knowledge is a gateway to unlock innovation, creativity, and intelligence through movement-based exercises and embodiment practices (Ludevig 2016). Organisations, leadership, movement, and dance share the notion of being in constant co-creation and change simultaneously. (Biehl-Missal & Springborg 2016.)

In contrast, development activities may also focus on embodied practices in leading. In such case the leader is now the centre of attention and how they embody or enact leading. Taylor et al. (2014) located four embodied practices that can be developed with the individual approach: being present, paying attention, engaging with others, and being resilient. These embodied practices can be developed with studio techniques and practices of handicraft arts such as painting or pottery. Through handicraft methods the abstract and invisible nature of the embodied practices can become more visible and tangible. What is central in this, is that leadership is understood as craft work. With arts-based methods the intent is to develop our felt experience into embodied knowledge that leaders can apply to their work. Moreover, with embodied knowledge leaders are able to perform more productively and meaningfully in their leadership relations when applying embodied practices they have trained for. Instead of enforcing the traditional understandings of established leadership frameworks and models, the artistic studio approach assists participants being developed to understand better the unique and unusual characteristics, mannerisms, eccentricities, and behaviours that manifest in diverse cultural contexts and situations at work. Moreover, motivation and commitment to the craft practice of leadership does not only come from learning skills as means to achieve instrumental objectives, rather it comes from fostering relationships themselves, not just the tools. (Taylor & Ladkin 2009, 2014.)

Resuming still with the leader individual, Biehl-Missal (2010) brings attention to theatrical development methods. Her research illustrates how theatre can reveal critical perspectives on leaders and followers when the aesthetic interaction between organisational members is produced visible through theatrical methods. She encourages us to take a closer look at the possibility of the leader performing as a problematic hero in

organisational settings. Theatre as a method holds power to expose ill-natured role playing in organisational relationships that might not necessarily be easily recognized. The perspective is of the followers who are the witness of this individual performance and who make meaning from it. In contrast, the emphasis on theatrical means of developing may also be in the leader's aesthetic awareness capabilities. Theatrical techniques that tap into the auditorial, visual, and sensorial elements enable leaders to control the images of their individual competence and also further the compliance and trust of organisational members. A valuable remark is how the possibility of theatrical techniques can lead to superficial and instrumental approaches to leadership development that misses the key point that is learning and creating knowledge. The delicate aesthetic experience of theatre develops our reflective thinking and aesthetic knowledge that both are indispensable for successful leadership. Moreover, aesthetic training of our gestures in leadership with arts-based methods provide both critical and general lessons. It is important to acknowledge that applying arts-based development methods offer opportunities for both the individual and the community to question prevailing roles and structures in organisational settings. The objective is to open up meaningful and contrasting interpretations of leadership, rather than trying to influence the perceptions of other organisational members. What is most important for this thesis, is the notion that theatre involves our embodied experiences of questioning the inescapability of role-playing and using appearance as a leadership tool in the workplace. Moreover, in regard to the relational approach to leadership, art is presumed to liberate and generate new possibilities to the organisation, rather than produce means to dominate and control members. Our aesthetic awareness that is under development provides support for better functioning leader-follower relations. (Biehl-Missal 2010.)

Lastly, I demonstrate one more bodily approach to leadership development: the martial arts. Bradford and Leberman's (2019) research bring insight on how Japanese martial art Aikido can be applied as an embodied method of leadership development. At its heart, Aikido is partnering with others and participating to movement practices as a collective. It focuses on physical self-defence techniques that avoid harming the opponent.

Additionally, it is also an attitude, a way of being in any situation with resorting to the body, space and movement that draw from a participatory mindset and active moment-to-moment theorizing. This type of movement practice as a method facilitates how to co-create leadership for collective creativity purposes. Co-creation is a future oriented process that focuses on collaborating towards something that is not known beforehand. This is an embodied forward-looking relational and creative practice that engages with others and goes against the traditional individual focused approach to leadership development. The dynamic ways of Aikido's movement practice facilitate the progress from what is already known to the unknown with movement in relation to a specific situation. Bodies learn with conscious movement that fosters embodied and relational awareness. Their framework suggests that dynamic movement practices can structure relational potential in the leadership development context. To conclude, their framework is a tool for creative work in leadership development that has the ability to reshape communication at work with conscious movement that generates collaborative possibilities. (Bradford & Leberman 2019.)

It is important to disclose that arts-based leadership development methods have also received some scholarly critique. Sandberg, Stasewitsch & Prümper (2022) exhibited concerns of how development programme participants may overestimate the training as a success on account of the aesthetic experience exceeding the actual learning results. The fun factor of applying arts-based methods may hinder the actual skills development in the training activities. What is most important from their study is that this is an under-researched matter: to provide further support for arts-based methods more research is needed to reveal the true learning results and create a more holistic picture of the impacts of art-based development methods. Furthermore, an extensive literature review (Woods et al. 2020) exhibits the scarcity in scholarly research that establishes deeper knowledge of the contributions of arts-based development methods to leadership. There is evidence and data of arts-based methods having some impact on leadership development however, the data is still quite limited. Encouragingly the results of the review however indicate that arts-based methods have further potential for developing

and strengthening capacities for collaborative and distributed leadership. Moreover, there is evidence of them having a positive impact on how we attune with our work community, cope with complexity and uncertainty and connect with others to cooperate and co-create successfully. Both articles provide an important reminder of keeping a critical perspective on the artful approach to leadership development and the need for more research on the impacts. Arts-based methods should not be taken exclusively as having absolute positive impact on enhanced practice of every organisational member. Some methods might not serve between differing cultural settings, statuses or gender for example. Their empowering possibilities may differ between diverse members of the organisation.

2.6 Crafting leadership connections

Leadership lives in our relationships inside the work organisation. Leadership flows back and forth in a space between the leaders and the followers. People inside the leadership dynamics sometimes need a push, a moment to pause or a nudge to go forward. They might feel a sudden pull towards an idea and get energized. Felt leadership, leaderful moments, can tell us when to push, pull, pause, make a full stop, or go forward (Ladkin 2013). Leadership is something physically and intellectually shared in various processes, between social groups and people themselves. In short, we need leadership to get things done and our physical body is very much in the middle of it all. The focus is typically on the felt experience of being part of a leadership dynamic, in leadership relations. Leadership study shows that bodily attention is concentrated more commonly in the leader-follower dynamics aspect (Hujala, Laulainen, Kinni, Kokkonen & Puttonen 2016; Powell & Gifford 2015; Ford et al. 2017). It is the dynamics that help us strive towards a common purpose or goal and more specifically as the sense of being led by something or someone. The perspective is not only in either the leader or follower, but also in their felt sense of perceiving with the body. The sensing human body in leadership is centre of interest of this thesis. In essence: leadership is a very bodily human experience of making connections. (Ropo et al. 2008; Ladkin 2013.)

Connection is a subjective felt experience of belonging (Ladkin 2013; Allen, Kern, Rozek, McInerney, & Slavich 2021). Our sense of belonging to something and making connections with others are fundamental human needs. Social connections with fellow humans are important promoters for our physical health, cognitive functioning, and even in preventing premature mortality (Holt-Lunstad 2018). Fostering strong human connection is beneficial for the working individual and for organisational productivity according to Holt-Lunstad (2018). At its heart, leadership is crafting connections with others (Taylor & Karanian 2008; Taylor 2014) where the focus is on crafting skills of mutual understanding (Taylor 2012: 30). Our ability to make connections makes us also powerful especially as leaders. Power may present a head start in relation to our competitors or offer an advantage to gain organisational success. Taylor (2014) argues that leadership is creating and working with a connection between people. Simply being in relation to others and sharing a mutual goal.

Connection is achieved with opening our heart to others and working in an embodied way that allows ourselves to feel vulnerable. Opening our hearts to others is a physical act of leadership. This kind of self-reveal, an embodied act, increases the level of connection felt to others. Strong sense of shared connection requires our physical presence according to Taylor (2014: 251). We can signal connection to others with laughter, we share and make sense of something with each other, and it becomes physically present and felt through laughter. The personal strength and courage are felt more deeply in that moment from the person who opens their heart with others. Moreover, this choiceful way to connect with others at work environments enforces our leader identities. (Taylor 2014: 239-252.)

Further, making ourselves exposed with our flaws by opening our heart creates a physically embodied path for human connection. Moreover, authenticity is a feeling of connection to the other (Ladkin et al. 2010; Ladkin 2018) that may be helpful in creating that path. In terms of leadership the intention is to convey feeling and perhaps strengthen

the belonging to the office and being part of the organisation. Authenticity is a subjective aesthetic experience. We perform physical things such as mumbling or turning our back while interacting in the same space with others that can stop us from connecting to others. Through our perceived personal height, we can create status differences that are physically felt. Taylor (2014) suggests that by playing classic leader-follower status games, physical or hierarchical, we simply build barriers that lead to inequality and along with it our mutual connection is lost. Emotional honesty and sharing are key elements of functioning leadership. More specifically, showing our vulnerability to others. (Taylor 2018; Taylor 2012: 81-94; Taylor 2014; Taylor & Taylor 2017.)

Taylor (2018) points out a crucial observation from time before the pandemic era: the lack of connection with others in our digital age is universally hindering. For this he encourages us to research more on questions of human connections at work. Our disconnection from our physical environments leaves us disembodied and enforces our urge to connect meaningfully with others. The sense of disconnect, feelings of loneliness, and being somehow out of place at work are not simple tasks for leadership. Moreover, making connections is not an innate quality, it is a skill that we are able to learn and improve through experience. (Taylor 2018).

Taylor views leadership as a creative process (2012: 4-11) and his earlier works establish theoretical foundations on relational leadership theory (Taylor & Karanian 2008). Working this type of connection is craft work that involves the art and construction, the skills, and the techniques of creative and relational leadership. Leadership is constructed within the relational processes of leaders and followers where leadership is all about making connections. Taylor and many other scholars whom I draw from are also established advocates and practitioners of arts-based-interventions. (Taylor & Hansen 2005; Taylor et al. 2008; Taylor 2012: 15-30, 163; Taylor et al. 2014; Taylor 2018.)

This chapter serves as an illuminating backdrop for my research problem. The scholarly research and literature introduce alternative ways to frame and consider leadership and

its development. This outlining of leadership development through embodied and arts-based methods underlines the possibilities emerging from the bodily approach. Ultimately the researcher chooses what to focus on and what to draw from previous research and this is the point when the researcher sets the course. Relational, embodied and aesthetic leadership serve as the backbone to my journey of discovery. On top of that, my theoretical framework consists also of bodily communication in leadership, embodiment and arts in leadership development, leadership as a physically based phenomenon and crafting leadership connections. Next, I will unfold my research design for capturing the human experience of leadership and its development.

3 RESEARCH DESIGN

The following chapter addresses the qualitative research design of the selected research approach, ethics, data collection method and the data analysis process. Qualitative research aspires to comprehend the research phenomena from the perspective of the researched. Interest lies in the experiences of the research subjects and what meanings they create from these experiences that emanated from human interaction. This thesis joins the qualitative research tradition, that seeks to understand the research phenomenon from the human perspective (Juuti & Puusa 2020: 13). More specifically, from a perspective that is informed by our personal experiences, accounts, emotions, and thoughts. Qualitative approach is an expedition of discovery (Patton 2014: 386). This approach is suited for this thesis that aspires to understand the perceptions of the arts-based developer on how leadership can be understood as a physically based phenomenon. The focus is to find out how they constitute embodied leadership.

Furthermore, it is after particularities not generalities and most importantly attempts to lift the curtain over from something unobservable from leadership. First and foremost, this thesis is after *possibilities* not generalizations, probabilities, or causalities. I am after people's perceptions, opinions, experiences, knowledge, and feelings that can answer my specific research problem. Qualitative inquiry aims at a relatively small sample that can offer in-depth information and understanding of a phenomenon. To achieve specifics, the sample needs to be purposefully selected and distinct. Information-rich data emerges from purposeful sampling. Through interviewing purposefully selected people it is possible to attain research data of their unique insight through their expertise and occupation for which a qualitative approach is fitting. (Patton 2014: 103-104.)

3.1 Phenomenological approach

A considerable part of the previous scholarly literature engages with embodied leadership from a phenomenological perspective (Ladkin 2012; Küpers 2013a; Pullen et al.

2013; Ropo, Sauer & Salovaara 2013). A phenomenological research approach aspires to reach the lived experience such as it is when it unfolds to us. Phenomenology is an approach to understand human interaction that evolves to a phenomenon. This qualitative study explores the physicality of leadership through the developer's experiential reality attempting to tap into their world to understand how the phenomena manifest itself in their world. It is considered a challenge to enter someone's subjective experiences, perspectives, and perceptions. (Huhtinen & Tuominen 2020: 578-602.)

The phenomenological approach is not about *who* we are in the world, it is about *how* we are in the world. Phenomenology seeks for the commonalities of experience and phenomenon by reviewing different variations of them and this thesis is after the developer's variations. An important aspiration is to softly disengage from previous and present experiences to acquire most diverse data of all. However, as a researcher I am aware that knowledge gained from previous research naturally influences my thinking. As a result, my pre-understandings may guide my ability of being completely open and receiving to whatever information emerges from the interviews (Patton 2014: 390; Huhtinen & Tuominen 2020: 580-581). In the analysis I seek to avoid misrepresenting the intended meanings, perceptions or experiences of the knowledgeable. Patton (2014: 192-193) refers to this as bracketing. (Patton 2014: 190-194, 842.)

Another important notion in the phenomenological approach is that the phenomenologist does not need a vast quantity of data: the question is to simply explore the utmost rich spectrum of an experience that provides the most diverse data. Phenomenological approach to being in the world is physical, more specifically, our embodied being is looking for connections between matters that enable us to operate between worlds. We occupy a world that expects certain gestures, movements, postures and positioning from us. Moreover, there is a world that is configured through movement where we connect with others within our experiences and bodily expression. Phenomenology assumes there is motivation behind this movement. (Heinämaa 1996: 15-21, 35-37, 68-71, 79-81, 83-86, 95-98; Patton 2014: 109-191.)

The phenomenological research approach addresses the need to understand such complex social and physical phenomena such as embodied leadership more deeply and holistically in real-life events and surroundings. This form of qualitative inquiry is interested in the nature of and meaning in everyday experiences, the mundane. Here the research effort is to reach the essence of the experience in embodied leadership development. Moreover, the effort focuses on descriptions of what the developers experience and *how* it is that they experience what they experience (Patton 2014: 193). The challenge is to find what is the core meaning of each perspective when everything contains meaning. The analytical priority is in describing and interpreting. (Patton 2014: 190-194.)

This thesis is a qualitative phenomenological interview study. Perhaps the greatest argument in support of the interview study is that it can take the researcher and the reader to places and events that ordinarily are not available for everyone. The objective is to grasp and investigate the lived experience from the inside bringing forth the understanding of the knowledgeable. The intensive experience and engagement in practice that the knowledgeable possess, holds an opportunity to increase, alter or deny the existing knowledge of embodied leadership. The purposeful selection of key knowledgeable consists of a diverse group of somatic and arts informed leadership and work community developers. The selection is not a random sample rather it is a strategically selected group of units of analysis who surrender their knowledge voluntarily in the form of a qualitative interview.

3.2 Data collection method and research ethics

The empirical part of this thesis is performed through interviews with key knowledgeable that are highly experienced leadership, management, and work community developers. Work experience they hold varies between 15-24 years. The empirical material gathered for this thesis consists of five face-to-face interviews and one video conference interview. The face-to-face interviews were conducted in cafes and restaurants. Before

the interviews I sent them a short description of the research topic, research consent form, and a research privacy statement. This thesis follows the current data protection legislation (EU Data Protection Regulation (106/679) art 12-14) of how to collect, process and protect personal data. My role as a researcher is to be an active listener who guides the discussion and also ensure that good scientific practice is fostered. They are considered exceptionally knowledgeable about the topic through their background in both arts and business. The knowledgeable apply embodied and arts-based methods directly in their work. (Patton 2014: 430-431.)

The mission is to investigate the embodied elements of leadership through interviews. My initial idea of how to reach the essence of the lived very corporeal and embodied experience of leadership was to ask straight from the source: the leaders and followers. After a long period of exploration and intense review of research I came to a completely different conclusion of how to proceed. I was getting ahead of myself with my initial idea. Before entering the world of doing and living leadership, the people holding the embodied agency of leadership, I am compelled to ask how it is perceived from a professional view that is simultaneously inside and outside the phenomena. This demands for me to ask about it from the people in power: the organisational developer. They hold the possibility and potential of shaping our understanding of leadership and its physicality through training and developing. They are the experts and professionals who are called to the rescue when the organisation faces challenges. On that account they have great capability of defining and developing an understanding of leadership as a physically based phenomenon. I concluded it to be more fruitful to ask the leadership development professionals who engage in the actual and particular circumstances where leadership occurs, exists, fails, and succeeds during development. Their thoughts, practices, and experiences come from real work life settings: they work directly with leaders, followers, and other organisational members. With this purposeful selection of knowledgeable it could be possible to capture interpretations of leader and follower perception and in addition the insightful developer's perception. Ladkin (2010: 17-19) points out a key thought: the ways how we can go on about knowing leadership varies with how we are

positioned to the phenomenon itself. The experience of leadership differs regarding from what position we are engaged with it: from a secretarial desk or from a sinking lifeboat. More distinctly, our expectations and recognition of leadership differ depending on our subjective situation and position.

Knowledge generated in and from our daily engagement with the world grants us different insight than what our abstract scientific principles and precepts might inform us. To understand the intangible nature of leadership requires details of how its meaning and purpose is socially and physically constructed in different settings and positions. Michel (2018) points out that before turning the natural human being into an analytic entity the researcher must make decisions of what makes the person fundamentally the best choice to explain the researched phenomena. Entering the world of embodied and arts-based developers' can present an alternative and unusual perspective emerging from a professional who concurrently creates, develops, and knows specifics of the physicality of leadership. Another pivotal notion is the regard that the developer holds power with how leadership is constituted and may have an impact on how it is done. Along these lines they are in a position from where to tweak the pre-sets of how leadership is understood, constructed, developed, and viewed. (Ladkin 2010: 4-5, 16-18; Michel 2018.)

My initial thought was to ask from leaders with diverse backgrounds. Attempting to enter their world of thought through embodied exercises and group interviews with leaders from engineering, teaching, finance, and health care. After deep diving to scholarly research and literature, I realized how abstract the aesthetic world might appear for them and a challenge to discuss together with a random group of people that are only connected through their work position and the researcher's invitation. I felt these circumstances and settings to be too uncomfortable and challenging to create trust between people so that they could feel comfortable and safe enough to share personal, intimate and embodied details of their work to strangers. Likewise, it might also be difficult to share intimate thoughts in a group interview between familiar colleagues. Additionally, group interviews may pose challenges for ensuring equal voices for everyone

and also there is the possibility of the discussions drifting towards groupthink. More importantly, discussing with leaders only holds a possibility that the discussions stay unduly at an overly individual level. (Eriksson & Kovalainen 2016: 134-136.)

Considering ethical choices in advance solves possible ethical challenges in gathering the data. It is important to point out in the body context that we cannot study the body through a universalist lens. Our bodies are different. Diversities manifest in the ways how we live in and occupy our bodies and how we experience the world with our bodies. This embodied subjectivity shows itself for example in how we experience or take up space in a room that we are occupying. Our embodied differences and inequalities are attached to how we embody our physical abilities, gender, race, sexuality, age, and class. Investigating other people's bodies is a sensitive and intimate matter. Interviewing about personal and professional lives makes a person vulnerable. Embodied research cannot assume that all bodies function and experience lived embodiment in the same way. (Parviainen 2006: 39-55; Thanem et al. 2019: 31-37.)

3.3 Entering the world of leadership development

Finding the fitting knowledgeable turned out as a challenge. I found only a handful of professionals from Finland who I suspected that could provide such specific knowledge of what I was after. All the knowledgeable found hold multidisciplinary expertise and experience both in the art and development work. Also, they all hold vast professional proficiency, university degrees and coaching certifications. None of them were fixed to holding only one working position, title or role. In the organisational development context, they spoke in terms of coaching, training, and educating. How they spoke of the actual work manifested as coaching, advising, guiding, developing and teaching. None of them spoke of their work as consulting. For the most part their developmental work was concentrated to groups and work communities and to a lesser extent to individuals except for one knowledgeable. Interestingly, one of them who applied embodied methods also coached individual's through video conferencing. To introduce their backgrounds and

same time protect their anonymity I arranged their professional titles and expertise randomly to figure 1. below.

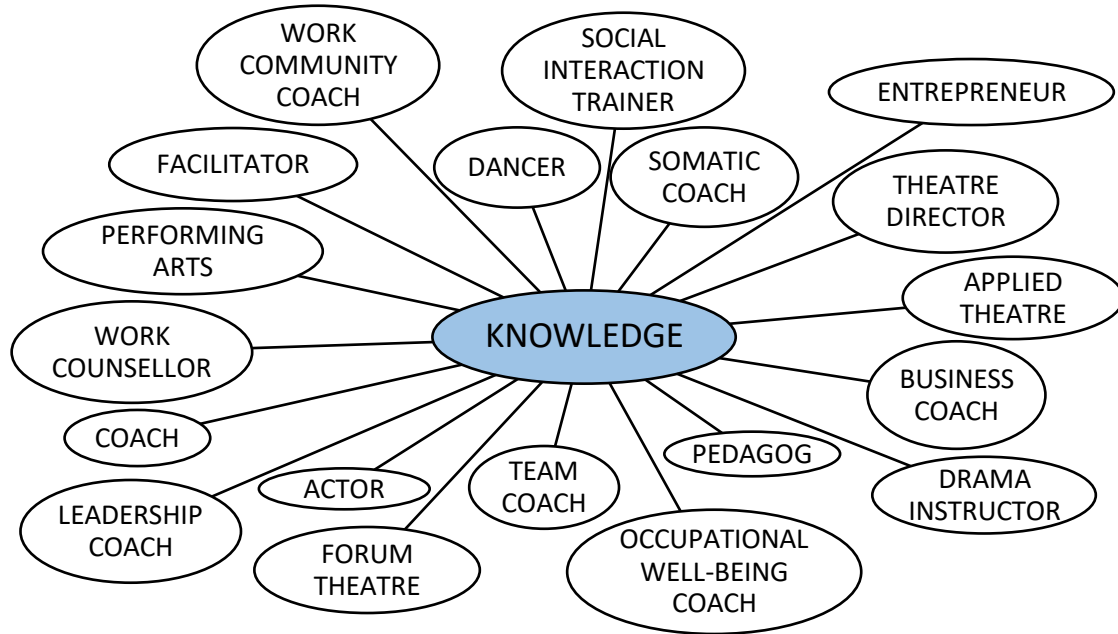


Figure 1. The expertise of the interviewees.

In such manner, the reader can make sense of where the knowledge emerges from and the interviewees are kept as undetectable as possible. Moreover, I also seek to protect the anonymity of their clientele and refrain from too notable descriptions of their practice. The first knowledgeable was found through a search for organisations that provided arts-based development services. The first key knowledgeable established a valuable foundation for the interviews and also gave advice for whom I should turn next to. Two of the knowledgables were found through the researcher's personal contacts and three knowledgables snowballed through the first interviewee. Snowballing is a method to discover information-rich key knowledgables by asking well-informed interviewees for who to interview in their opinion (Patton 2014: 451-452). This way the snowball gets larger and larger and generates new information-rich data for the researcher.

The industries where the knowledgeable ventured in to do developmental work varied greatly. Alongside, the working roles, positions, and titles were likewise diverse. Table 1. below presents examples of the industries and roles engaged in organisational development, training and coaching.

Table 1. The industry settings and working roles of the knowledgeable.

INDUSTRY	WORKING ROLES
Social services and health care	Nurse, doctor, social and welfare professional, physiotherapist, psychiatrist
Sports and exercise	Coach, athlete, game manager, kit manager, yoga teacher
Marketing and communication	Executive and creative staff
Industrial sector	Executive, management and production staff
Municipality and city sector	Municipal employees and managers
National defence forces	Defence command
Security sector	Police officer, firefighter
International and local non-governmental organisations	Office staff, international organisation official
Art organisations	Actor, director, dancers, managerial and support staff
Education field	Teacher
Religious organisations	Parish staff and management
IT sector	Coder, programmer, it-support staff

The organisational member positions were organisation-wide, from executives to employees and from stakeholders to volunteers. The social services and health care sector stood out from the interviews as an industry that is susceptible to arts-based organisational development. Particularly interesting was that two of the interviewees expressed

that the people from the IT-sector were also very open and engaged with experimenting through arts-based methods.

The research data is shaped through the interaction between the researcher and the researched (Ronkainen, Pehkonen, Lindblom-Ylänne & Paavilainen 2014: 107) where the interaction is the key for obtaining data. The kind of deeper insight I was going after for needed to emerge from the developer's experience and expertise unreservedly. I wanted to open up a safe space for their knowledge to emerge as unobstructed as possible. After careful consideration I chose to proceed with unstructured interviews. Tapping into their knowledge informally and without the predetermination of the interviewer might produce unanticipated insight on the topic. Naturally the interviewees were informed of what the researcher was looking to have a "chat" about. I outlined the discussion themes (see Appendix 1.) along with few guiding questions in case the interview somehow would fail to move along naturally. The weakness of unstructured interviews is in arranging the data for analysis. This follows from the unsystematic nature of the conversation. The knowledge is gathered from different people with non-identical questions. Nonetheless, the unstructured nature deepens the interaction, expands and accumulates the knowledge emerging from the interviews. (Hirsjärvi, Remes & Sajavaara 2007: 204-207; Patton 2014: 641-643; Eriksson et al. 2016: 95; Sarajärvi & Tuomi 2018: Chapter 3.1.1.)

Having said that, I noticed a touch of systematic approach from my interviews. I commenced and finished the interviews with the same question with all of the knowledgeable. The interviews started with asking about their work, education and experience. I invited them to speak freely of how and where from their knowledge was created through that could act as a bridge to the main focus of embodiment in leadership. I also chose to end the conversation by asking what their favourite part of their work was. With this final part, I wanted to part with the knowledgeable summing-up what it is that they enjoy the most about their work. I anticipated that this might reveal something important of the empowering side of their work. The rest of the interview was a free-flowing discussion of leadership, embodiment and the embodied and arts-based methods

they applied. The fruitfulness of the unstructured nature manifested in the interviews with moments where the conversation turned into genuine dialogue. In support, Patton (2014: 683) writes *“A good interview feels like a connection has been established in which communication is flowing two-ways.”* The interviews produced detailed descriptions of the phenomenon of embodied leadership from real-life.

3.4 The data analysis process

The goal for data analysis is to describe, interpret and understand the researched phenomenon (Puusa et al. 2020: 274). My analysis work begun from the moment I started conducting the interviews. In qualitative research the researcher is a research instrument who’s embodied presence sets the analysis work in motion (Puusa et al. 2020:273). The second step after interviewing was listening and transcribing the interviews verbatim. After, I listened to them closely once again but now simultaneously deep reading the written transcripts and bolding expressions and words from it that felt meaningful and relevant to my research problem. Concurrently I wrote mind maps by hand from the transcriptions. In this part of the analysis process, I immersed myself fully in reliving the interviews that I describe as bathing with the empirical data. The objective of this lingering with speech and text was to sense out what was important for both the researcher and for the knowledgeable. Additionally, I aspired to re-enter the experiential state of the interviews through hearing their voices and reading through my notes.

The analysis process provoked and flushed out embodied reactions and responses to the information, facts and meanings that emerged from the interviews. I travelled across, back and forth the interviews leaving ricochet all over my research notes and transcripts. After, I focused on the key bodily discussions to critically reflect them with the knowledge gained from previous research and literature. In this part of the process the researcher brings forth the most relevant and valuable findings to construe meaning to the research problem (Ronkainen et al. 2014: 123).

I allowed my bodily nudges to take the lead in this process bearing in mind what I was after: words and expressions of embodied leadership in the context of leadership development. I tapped into my somatic awareness for bodily cues of direction. My body and my embodied awareness both participated closely in producing insight and findings (Küpers 2013b). As a result, the analysis process was a cognitive processing of information with close co-operation with my embodied cognition. I identified over 100 words and expressions connected to embodied leadership development from the discussions. These were all attached to the major themes of leadership, body and the sense of connection. After intense sifting and funnelling through the data I was able to determine what was of the essence. Also, to provide answers to the research problem a key part is to rule out unessential information from the interviews.

Patton (2014: 790) describes qualitative content analysis as a process of analysing text to reduce qualitative data that reveals the core meanings. In short, it is a search for patterns that establish the foundation for themes. The emerging patterns were written on colour coded sticky notes that were arranged under a major theme. The arrangement of the sticky notes was stuck on a window, so that at the same time they were visually available and possible to rearrange or remove them as needed. Alongside, I looked for illustrative quotes from the knowledgeable that supported what was being brought from the transcripts for interpretation. The interviews were conducted in Finnish and naturally for the purposes of this thesis the quotes were translated into English. The quotes are pivotal in *providing support for the results* of this thesis. (Patton 2014: 790-792, 808-10.)

The next chapter presents the core findings of this thesis. However, before proceeding to read further, I would like to encourage you to take a breath and stretch your legs to fully gain your holistic bodily attention before turning to the empirical part of this thesis.

4 FINDINGS

The six meaningful discussions of leadership development through embodied and arts-based methods provide a generous collection of perceptions from the developer. After conducting the final interview, I sensed that they all looked at the same picture through just a slightly different frame. That notion offered reassurance for that the research phenomenon was identifiable in real-life settings and saturation reached. The analysis intention is to understand, describe, and interpret the phenomenon and also exhibit what kind of meanings are attached with it. Furthermore, the concepts and themes that emerge from the data are the focus of interpretation. Analysing qualitative data is described as detective work where details from the data start to form an amalgamation that leads to a conclusion. (Alasuutari 2019: 44-48; Puusa et al. 2020: 272-274.)

The findings chapter is divided in four parts. The first part reveals a personal discovery of how we might be inclined to describe and offer findings as kind of foundational corner stones of a phenomenon. After, I resume to describe the nature of arts-based development work. The last two parts disclose the importance and meaning of developmental groundwork and lastly suggest how our embodied possibilities make room for embodied leadership to exist. The data references from the knowledgeable (labelled as K1-K6) are translated from Finnish to English with careful consideration to reduce the possibility of something getting “lost in translation”.

4.1 Personal findings: The handbook trap

In all likelihood, scholarly research has offered established handbooks on leadership theory and practice since the very beginning. Concurrently the leadership industry itself has also been very productive in publishing handbooks for practicing leadership. As if it is an innate tendency emerging perhaps from our desire to have clarity of practice. More specifically, an urge to follow a step-by-step guide to practice leadership. Finnish work

culture holds great passion for constructing work manuals, playbooks, and handbooks. This proneness might be a cultural product coming from our strong engineering heritage.

In the early stages of my analysis work I found myself from the handbook trap of streamlining the findings. I fell straight into the instrumentalist trap of “capturing alive” the phenomenon and forcing it to “fit the manual”. However, writing a manual for such an intricate phenomenon as embodied leadership is rather impossible as expressed by two knowledgeable:

It is not something, as carrying a toolbox with me, rather it is a more intuitive matter. It's something that cannot be neatly and technically laid out. (K6)

It is something, where different layers of development happen in concert. Not like “right, we’ve mastered this (sharp tap of a gavel), mastered that (sharp tap of a gavel), and now we’ve completed this (sharp tap of a gavel)”. Vertical human development doesn’t necessarily move forward like a train... or have only one answer to it. Rather participants learn skills that enable them to navigate change and solve challenges. These foundational skills derive from vertical development and take time to acquire. There is no universal key, formula or recipe for facing challenges. However, we acknowledge the desire for it but we can’t provide for it. (K1)

What comes clearly across from the interviews is that there is no universal handbook or a manual for practicing and developing leadership. The interviews reveal that it involves generating deeper experiential knowledge that does not follow a step-by-step manual. It is impossible to create a manual for something that has not yet happened or been imagined. Moreover, the sensations, experience, and sensemaking processes of leadership development pull towards a more future-oriented leadership practice that embraces a mindset of discovery (Sandberg, Stasewitsch & Prümper 2023). Additionally, conventional “the corner stones of” -thinking might work against a mindset of discovery. Embodied leadership is a living, breathing, and moving phenomenon that finds changeable forms which leave room for subtle and slow shifts along with more prompt shifts.

The data suggests that an embodied approach to leadership is a complex collection of interpretations, perspectives, and relations that work towards fulfilling developmental

demands. Development work requires elasticity that allows a little lingering, pausing, marinating, and most importantly, fostering curiosity of both personal and mutual discovery. Embodied leadership encourages more of “*what if-what could happen*” thinking than “*what should be*”. Furthermore, it is an embodied method of action to push for possibilities. Too prescriptive and norm-based approach to development work does not allow the spatial elasticity it needs. Also, the findings are not etched in stone rather they are taking peeks at what it can mean for leadership to take an artful and embodied approach to understand, create, and practice it. Through these peeks this thesis enlightens how we can perceive embodied leadership through and with embodied and arts-based development. On top of that, perhaps dim the need for a toolbox. Next, this thesis invites you to take a peek at leadership observing it from the stage wings.

4.2 The development work

For research purposes the embodied and arts-based methods were illustrated in the theoretical background as more distinctive from each other. The interviews in contrast established that to do any development work at all our embodiment is always present. As elaborated by two knowledgeable:

Just a slight change in our voice, a really, really small marginal shift and the computer in our brains goes “wait a minute, hold on, what’s going on”. Or changes in our facial expression or bodily posture. Our recognition system, it’s really intricate and fine-tuned. So, there really is nothing where embodiment isn’t present. (K3)

Our minds, thoughts, our communication, they all have an embodied equivalent. Reading all this information together is tremendously challenging and ambiguous to interpret because we react and respond very differently from each other. (K5)

To clarify, this thesis is not about the methods, but rather about how to look at embodied leadership through that. The exercises, lessons, projects, workshops, training, and coaching sessions are designed to generate, expand, and extend our embodied possibilities. Applying these methods and techniques introduce us to embodied alternatives that

we might not even be aware of. They can be considered as aesthetic experiments that teach how we are all very different in the ways we do things at work. For example, we can discover how our rhythm and tempo differ from others but also how we might start to interpret them with more clarity. What is typically activated and practiced especially through the theatre and drama-based sessions are: presence, attentiveness, listening, trust and outdoing yourself in a sustainable manner. In essence, development is of awareness, concentration, and contemplation.

The development timeline can range from a few hours of activities to a project of few years. It is the development objective that defines the timeline needed for the whole process. Getting familiarized thoroughly with the organisation and its true objective is vital especially in the lengthier development projects. Regardless, it is essential to understand from where the development need originates. Barriers for not meeting the objective typically rise from not understanding properly the organisational need. For this it is important to prepare and get oriented thoroughly before designing the development.

The core focus of embodied and artful development is in fostering our appreciation of encounter and mutual interaction. In other words, crafting connections together illustrated below by a knowledgeable:

The development focus is on the art of interaction and appreciation of encounter, not in the technical side of work or the technical processes. The atmosphere, ambience and interaction that is produced through encountering. (K1)

Learning how to encounter others with the intention to understand our mutual and individual interaction and the ways we communicate with each other all starts with the body. Having a sense for encountering others is not something we are born with, rather it is something we practice and learn throughout life. Shaping and re-tuning our mutual interaction and communication habits appear to exist in the very heart of this embodied development work. Regardless of what might be the developmental context ranging from strategy work to product development or from grouping activities to learning how

to listen to what in particular needs our attention at work. All of the knowledgeable in this research emphasized that the methods, exercises and techniques they use are the very same they have trained for years and practiced throughout their professional art careers. These same methods support and further our ability to employ the sensory awareness with our intellect to produce the knowledge that we are after. Our sensory awareness and intellect are by no means mutually exclusive: they should always occur simultaneously and not limiting the other from being possible. This is where the arts are applied as a path to facilitate them both to work in agreement so that the connection between the mind and the body melds together more naturally.

The majority of us do not enjoy being at the centre of attention. A recurring barrier for applying embodied and arts-based development methods in the discussions was the participants' fear of being on display that might place them somewhat vulnerable. All the fear of shame: the participants feared becoming ridiculed by others from having to act, sing or dance and that might leave them feeling embarrassed from it all. I interpreted from the interviews that dance as a method was perhaps the most feared. As through the words of a knowledgeable:

They start to think that "oh, how should I look doing this or what is this movement supposed to look like". Movement and dance are very value laden and aesthetically charged activities in our conceptions, in our minds. Regardless of what type of dance is in question. It conveys thoughts like "I should somehow know how to perform something technically" or "I should look like something particular". (K2)

The applied methods are carefully tied to the development context which is clearly explained out to the participants. Engaging with arts-based development work without a clear context hinders the possibilities of meeting the objectives. Working with the unfamiliar, in this case the embodied and arts-based methods, might bring about feelings of insecurity or even down right fear. Fear works both ways in the developmental context: it may serve as a powerful force for either failure or flourishing. Paradoxically, the methods can act as a fear instigator and at the same time as a fear eater where the activities instigate fear in us in the beginning and reduce our fears after. The activities

facilitate to move past fear thus allowing us to be vulnerable with others. In other words, to be able to drop any unnecessary embodied armour that we might carry. Establishing trust is key here: the development professionals clearly explain and demonstrate that it is a safe space to participate

We all have the need to be heard and feel accepted. And then there lingers the fear of shame and embarrassment that someone laughs at you. Exactly why it must be expressed out loud, that this is a safe space, that we don't have to feel fear or embarrassment here. Once this is said out loud, you can almost hear everyone sigh from relief. (K3)

It is important to provide an explanation for what we are about to do. Of course, not everyone necessarily needs a thorough illustration of the activity. However, a lot of us do need it to feel safe. It also facilitates the acceptance and willingness of the lesson because now I know why we are doing this and how it may influence me. (K2)

Another knowledgeable reveals a key distinction in creating trust by saying the following:

We really can't push for anything if we haven't established trust. Nothing goes through. Trust is not created unattended; it needs to be built and allow it to happen. (K5)

The activities and practices naturally encourage us to step out of working from our heads toward working with our senses. The body needs to be warmed up so that it physically understands that the purpose here is to work holistically, not just with our minds.

We don't work with text; we work with our senses, our body and interaction and communication. (K3)

The activities are principally designed so that the simulations and activities preserve anonymity where focus on the individual is avoided. It can be a recurring unfavourable situation at work that is simulated through theatre. The fiction provides shelter for the individual in the drama-based methods. Additionally, the design aims to give voice for all and encourage to work equitably among peers. The arts-based methods have the ability

to make issues visible and thus make room for and provoke discussion. As two knowledgeable explain:

We work more with ways and techniques that never force the individual to the spotlight. Discretion and situational awareness facilitate to notice the unnoticed, if there might be something important hidden. There are ways of working the situation so that no one loses face or gets revealed. The fiction in drama gives shelter and certain degree of abstraction, so participants can find themselves from the script without the reveal. This offers self-realization "That's just like me! But I never knew what my behaviour does to others!". (K1)

A completely different applied drama method are pre-written scripts of a very specific subject that is acted by professional actors. This works as a conversation starter and reveals what resonates in the work community. When people see something from work on stage, it is received through so many sensory channels working its way through to our emotional intelligence in such a different way than how it would reach us from spoken presentations. Seeing it through someone else's eyes, awakens our feelings, our sense of togetherness so that our minds can meet in mutual understanding more effortlessly. (K3)

The fiction opens up a space where to feel emotionally exposed without having to fear. Thus, we can safely start to consider how do I feel about this and how does it feel to work here with these people. A key issue that is often developed is how to influence the employee experience: what it feels like to work here. Over two decades of first-hand knowledge and experience of development practice carried out in Finland disclose that the greatest change at work has been the arrival of our emotions. It is now acknowledged that we carry these states of being with us to work. As one of the knowledgeable described

When we started there was a long era of emotions not being allowed at work. They didn't have space and were left undiscussed. Vulnerability and sensitivity at work was seen unprofessional. This cultural norm appeared also in developmental settings. So where are they then (subtle laughter)? Where are they then, when we embody emotions? Being hidden where at work exactly? We've come a long way from this to realizing organisational members more holistically. (K1)

This change brought attention to the need to understand emotions more specifically at the workplace (Fineman 2003). Alongside, it has also brought awareness of such things as atmosphere and ambiance at work that also require attending through leadership. It is not something that can be clearly defined or settled as fixed. Our gestures, facial expressions, attitude, rhythm, tone of voice, and words we choose to apply among others all influence the atmosphere. How we feel in a specific space, place and time changes along with the people experiencing and creating it. Moreover, we all participate in creating the ambiance of interaction that is an important part of our daily work culture. The knowledgeable hold an insightful position from where to describe this change and also act as a changing force.

However, before any developmental work can commence there is a great deal of conditions that need to be established. To illustrate, in restaurants there is an immense amount of work preparation to be completed before the service may start. The importance of *mise en place* in culinary practice is a premise for successful food assembly and service process. That is to say, here the significance of setting and preparing a thriving development environment. Next, I will elaborate the *mise en place* of arts-based development work.

4.3 The *mise en place* of development

The secret sauce of arts-based development work is the preliminary groundwork where a lot of details are considered and worked through. It is designed so that the room, space and the design of the development session encourages to examine social interaction in a slightly or completely unfamiliar manner. Moreover, the purpose in essence is to move us from mental engagement to a more embodied manner of engagement. Most importantly, creating and making space for participatory trust:

When the actual work starts, obviously generating trust and mutual attunement both are paramount. (K1)

These both need to be established and placed among all participants so that people may really let go and surrender to the development process together with others and trust the flow. Once people have arrived, the “taking the temperature of the room” begins by taking in the beats and breaths of participants. Artists are very sensitive to notice even the most subtle physical indications to sense the situation. This is what especially actors are trained for: placing themselves in “someone else’s skin” as professional empaths.

A knowledgeable expressed an embodied suggestion for how to start a meeting in the following way:

Every meeting, any team meeting should start with a pause. A quieting down. To arrive together to the moment, taking few minutes with ourselves. This subtle difference how we start meetings might be groundbreaking for collaboration. (K4)

This is an example of how to begin experimenting with our habitual practices of meeting to see what it might change or how it might influence our abilities to be present. Arriving to a state, after we have settled ourselves, then we may start interacting more freely. Also, to appreciate how different paces we run with at meetings. Understanding our embodied differences is also a root development object in arts-based development. The purpose is not to learn how to tolerate differences, rather the objective is to firstly acknowledge their existence and thereafter allow them to simply exist. This mind shift, moving from tolerating to allowing, furthers us more effortlessly to understand others with more clarity. When we enable people to be as they are open the door for collaboration and development. There might just be a feeling of unfamiliarity in the background that obstructs us. Acceptance and respect are operational modes free from fear that may boost work engagement and productivity.

Another way of expressing this is how to work more in tune with others to share a mutual frequency. We all hold differing views, backgrounds, knowledge, experience, and communication styles that we operate with. This is part of the process of making sense of how to collaborate and develop together before we start crafting connections. As a knowledgeable illustrated:

Attunement is exceedingly embodied. The processes are also intellectual but that alone is insufficient. Something always arrives in us just being physically present. It is rather very simple, how we settle down or arrive and habit a space. What kind of space I create for others to arrive to. There are a lot of things to consider, one of them is rhythm. (K6)

Sensing and understanding our differing rhythms, tempos and manners of responding and reacting requires our social, embodied and cognitive awareness. Our bodily felt awareness keeps us advised of the moment and notifies our movement and gestures in the process of attunement. Tuning into our mutual frequency is part of how we start forming relationships. It is pivotal that everyone is able to attend the mutual rhythm. The rhythm is a process of constant negotiation and connection. Through rhythm exploration we can recognize repeated patterns of movement and sounds we produce at work. Developing this ability enables us as sharper and more sustained. Another way of expressing this is putting mind to your movement and movement to your mind through rhythm, structure and expression.

Moreover, misattunement at work refers to us not being seen or heard accordingly. There is always the possibility to tweak or completely reset the quality of being in tune with others just as how we attune businesses to changing situations. Attuning to a mutual frequency with regulating our rhythm and tempo, be it online or in-person, facilitates us to be more naturally aware and responsive at work. Being attuned to our own emotions and those of others help break grounds for natural connections and feelings of empathy to appear.

4.3.1 Porous leadership: preparing fertile grounds for crafting connections

Leadership is capable to reside in a group or individual or system or in the spaces and places we create and inhabit. Leadership can also exist as a space where people can lose their inhibitions and imagine without restraints in a developmental state: a supported and safe space to work in and from. This state is a space of porousness that is created

through and supported by our embodied sustained awareness. Furthermore, through these spaces we remain interconnected with others through our words, movements, touch or eye contact that all foster the sense of interdependence. As two knowledgeable expressed:

In creating safety and trust, it is very critical that managers and leaders are able to create a neutral space, that enables creation and provide a space where employees feel they can interact safely with their professional and personal integrity. Even with negative issues. This is what we practice through embodied lessons. (K2)

Before it is possible for me to engage with you, face-to-face, I need to settle down, so that nothing gets in between us that influences my receiving, so that I can really hear what you are saying. So that I'm not agitated or too worn out or hungry. In a neutral state of being. This can be practiced with simple observation activities. (K3)

It might also be our attitude that obstruct us from hearing what is really being said. We may sometimes find ourselves ruminating thoughts like “oh, I’ve heard this before, too many times” and then we wander off to autopilot.

Tolerating and sustaining oneself in high pressure situations has increased at work. This manifests in the body and is felt in the body. How we can notice what is going on with others and also at the same time recognize what is going on in my own body. So that I can pause and limit the pressure to offer and produce a porous space around myself and for others. This isn't only a responsibility for the individual, it is also mutual. But this is a key responsibility, especially for the leaders. You must perceive what is going on in the work community. (K1)

This can be rendered as creating foundational porousness of space that provides support against the pressures of work life. It is an in-between space that is open and permeable. These spaces can be imagined as literal, emotional or physical. We do not create space only with our minds, we also make space with our bodies. Through our sensory channels we are able to move within this in-between space that holds an environment where we are able to pause and regulate the pressures. In other words, a place for pause between the lines, taking a breath in a fluid area. In this place we are able to examine more neutrally our work environment and notice what needs adjusting. Imagine a person being a

sponge that is bursting with water and needs a release. In such space a sponge can safely release the water and after return to flow. Another way to express this could be that we need to pause to hear the music.

Only one of the knowledgeable demonstrated physically how we can control space with our bodies. More specifically, the knowledgeable showed how we can use our bodily presence to make someone feel welcomed or make someone feel distressed with our bodily stance. It was striking how easily a professional actor is able to show in a split second very distinctly how we exercise our bodily power. The knowledgeable came close to my skin from an upright position, positioning to look at me with a pressing stare. Without any spoken words I instantly felt threatened and overwhelmed. How we move, position ourselves and use our gaze are forceful tools of exercising power in making or taking space. Our gestures or head movements, such as nods, are important nonverbal communication tools. Our nodding can indicate agreement or it can indicate to the speaker that they should keep going. Nodding, however subtle, is an embodied interaction. How we orientate ourselves with and to others through our gaze, facial expressions, gestures, sounds, tone of voice or simply orientating our body can make space or withdraw it from others. These bodily means of control make an impact: be it a virtual or in-person environment.

A different physical manifestation of a porous space is the break room where we can release pressure and laugh together at the insanities of work life. As one knowledgeable elucidated:

Coffee. That there exists a breakroom with coffee. An exercise, we apply often, repeatedly reveals the number one wish at work: everyone greets each other. Besides that, they wish to laugh together with others. It is good that the manager hears this coming from the employees directly and not from spreadsheets. (K3)

Furthermore, break rooms are sanctuaries of receiving and offering peer support. The key here is to sense togetherness. Our feeling of belonging to a place facilitates our recovery and helps to release the water before it overflows. More importantly, the break

room reminds us that we are not doing this alone and thus reduces our illusions and preoccupations with self-sufficiency. Our bodies convey the necessity of diverse porous spaces, states, and places where to operate so much that we start to consider what might be the state of our restorative breaks and practices at work. After the break, we might sense more better if we are ready to reabsorb the workflow. The figure 2. below illustrates the elements of porous leadership.

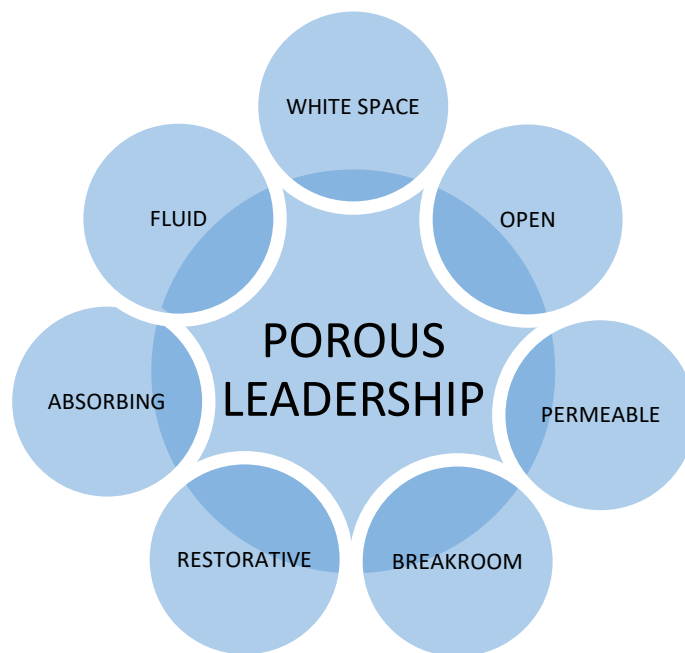


Figure 2. The elements of porous leadership.

There is a natural need to leave a little space between work and humans that can act as a white space where to recover. The figure 2. above displays the fine white line of these porous bounds. The leaders and managers are primarily responsible for these porous spaces so that there might not be the need for “when push comes to shove” situations at work. To a certain extent the leader’s embodiment also draws these porous bounds and concurrently acts as a porous space from the leader position. Just as in graphic design, white space can be designed intentionally and not just as space that is left blank.

The leader and the followers likewise can learn to recognize when and where to add necessary white space around us and this can be practiced.

This crafting of space is by no means something built from the scratch. Quite contrary, there are several conditions that need to be met. One of them is called *embodied spatial awareness*, which means not being interconnectedly clumsy, rather being naturally present and sensing. The figure 3. below gathers up the conditions for a holding and supportive environment of trust that emerged from the interviews.

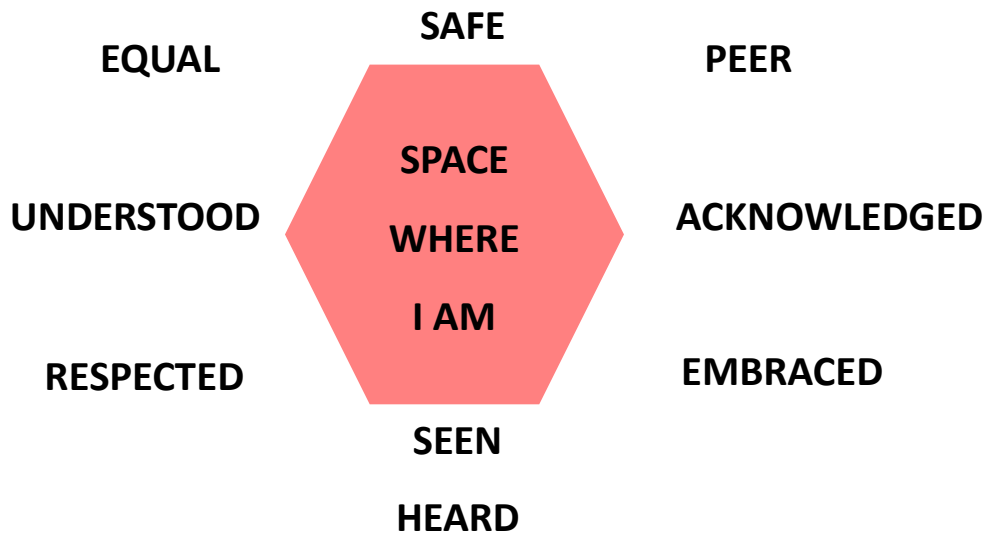


Figure 3. The conditions of trust.

How we share or take-up space varies depending on our embodied capabilities and on what we are trying to achieve. The significance of trust manifests through our basic needs of being seen, heard, acknowledged, respected, understood, and embraced as equals and peers to feel safe. These conditions construct a space of trust being a safe work community where we may meet as peers and a space that allows one to feel vulnerable, uncertain, risky, unguarded, fragile, unease, nervous, uninhibited, and exposed. Moreover, these conditions also allow us to feel safe in our own personalities and bodies

so that we might feel a little less reserved to feel vulnerable with others. From this space of trust, we are able to progress to equal encounters with others and proceed to take action together. Once more, this all reverts back to trust. Trust is perhaps the greatest asset for an organisation.

The work community could also be described as gravity for leadership. Work community support is a resource of belonging and engagement. If fear can be the enemy of achieving trust and connection, then the work community can act as a fear eater: trust as a space where fear does not exist. With this, I aspire to express that if the community fosters fearlessness, adventurousness, courageousness, and cultivates the appreciation of encounter, it may result in providing sustenance for leadership creation, development and practice. Community is a source of sustenance for leadership that keeps it alive: as breathing, moving, sensing, feeling, thinking and as action taking. Vulnerability may hold the potential of crafting connections with others that enable us to exhibit compassion at work. However, there is also a *dark side* to vulnerability at work. A knowledgeable reminded of the other possibility of what vulnerability at work might bring along:

Seeming vulnerability, such as in "oh I'm having such a hard time always" but not really trying to do anything about it and dismissing it altogether can lead the seeming vulnerability to consume space from doing basic work and impede the way people can work in the community. (K1)

The point here is to think what kind of vulnerability works for us that helps to move the atmosphere forward. It also means making distinctions by discussing them together to achieve facilitative boundaries at work. In other words, what is being allowed and what is sensible so that we can work in the best possible manner without someone high jacking space from work. To conclude, as a knowledgeable expressed this in a nutshell:

For me leadership specifically means creating a safe space. (K2)

Establishing the principles for mutual grounds, agreements and boundaries are formed together with the guidance of others. In the development context after this, the examination of the current state may commence to which we will turn to next.

4.3.2 Poking, evoking and sensing the hidden

There are conventional ways to explore and analyse the current state in organisations through surveys and interviews that are further quantified and analysed statistically and evaluated with analytical methods. Arts-based methods provide alternative ways to do a little poking to see what is going on inside the organisation. With them we can go beyond the written reports towards what may stay hidden in statistical analysis and often silent in strategic meetings. In contrast, the hidden can be felt through experiencing them in a more physical and embodied manner. More specifically, we can notice alternative insight through feeling it in our body. We do not feel calm in our mind, we feel it in our body, just as we feel the tingling excitement of discovery in us as embodied beings.

Forming physical pictures or bodily line-up constellations in a development session where the bodies of the participants create a physical still of the current state of e.g. team performance can paint a completely different picture for us than a statistic evaluation. These physical images or statues are more intuitively formed and they serve as a pre-text for discussions. More importantly, it also becomes a felt and shared experience of the current state which facilitates a more polyphonic interaction and discourse on the subject. Also, the discussions are not entirely guided by our rational thinking, rather it brings our embodied cognition to the fore:

If we process only through our intellect, not allowing feelings to be present, this doesn't leave any room for the element of surprise. It leaves something hidden and unnoticeable. But when we form a bodily image of a specific agenda, this allows completely different takes to emerge between people and this makes room for a completely new vision that comes up for discussion. (K1)

Just as Parush and Koivunen (2014) suggested that through arts-based development experiential learning can act as a dynamic tool for discovering, learning and developing behaviours. Experimenting together as a shared experience can lead to new perspectives. These physical and embodied exercises aim at making things that are hidden, such as feelings, more apparent so that they can be discussed.

Another example of a physical exercise that reveals important information in an alternative way is letting the participants place their physical bodies on a directed line segment. The agenda could be e.g. sensing the level of work exhaustion in an experienced team. The exercise of work exhaustion is not only a physical activity of people positioning them to a scale of how exhausted I am I at the moment but it is also an embodied activity where we can not only see, but also feel how our staff and managers position themselves on the work-wellbeing scale. By the means of our physicality and embodiment employees are not reduced as just numbers that are read from a line sheet. As a knowledgeable expressed:

People walk to the number on the scale and the manager sees instantly what's going on. Very simple. No one escapes the situation. There might be a real person, who is completely worn out. (K3)

It is possible for both the managers and staff to convey their vulnerabilities together in a safe development space. Moreover, it is an embodied way for leaders to sense more deeply the work atmosphere and climate. Atmosphere is a sensory state that makes us move and take action. This particular exercise does not reduce organisational members as measurable resources, instead, it makes possible for us to sense the situation in flesh. In this case, realizing the level of work exhaustion progresses from the visible to affectual. Our physical body is a powerful tool of measurement that holds power to reveal and express something important without any spoken words. Simple physical exercises may make a powerful impact that opens the discussion. Moreover, they teach us to pay attention to the unnoticed. Bearing in mind, that in order to gain access and permission to

start such exercise, there needs to be the conditions of trust to be met that were explained in the previous chapter.

Another key observation in the context of something unnoticed is how embodied exercises and activities have also the ability to reshape or re-orient our original priorities

With breathwork exercises or some other embodied exercises we might completely change our priorities of the conversation. Even only a simple embodied practice or a breathwork exercise may have altered the priorities in us. Maybe, it might be that something else suddenly feels more important. (K4)

When something feels important, we may sense how the silent discourse starts to manifest

It is something of a drifting space. With taking more pauses, seeking, hesitating and asking yet in a flowing state. Suddenly everything in us and everyone becomes more alert. We start to move from our inside towards others and the intensity to listen in a group gets more concentrated. Then someone says something that leads to our undivided mutual attention and something new starts to brew. (K6)

What this is, it is hearing development happening. This is the part where we all arrive at a space where everything starts to make sense to us and we move towards a collaborative state. As Taylor (2012: 81) describes it “*Collaboration is that wonderful, magical experience of two plus two equals five, an experience of synergy where the self is lost and the group is far greater than the sum of its parts*”. This could be interpreted as people experiencing connectedness and interpersonal synchrony

The group starts to synchronize. Our bodies start to discuss with each other. At the same time, we are discussing and our bodies start to discuss too. I produce, they produce and we react and respond with and through our bodies and speech. It’s a high frequency sizzle. A lot of little things going on at the same time. It is fantastic to be in such moment. It’s where we find each other and come together. (K6)

This might be what Merleau-Ponty refers to as “when our bodies start to sing” (Heinämaa 1996: 100). This phenomenon is to some degree like listening to music where the matter and energy meet us, when we start vibrating like the music in our eardrum

that makes us feel in a certain way. These feelings might make us dance. With dance we listen both physically and in an embodied way, we often experience empathy and we might feel the need for patience or in contrast feel excitement. Furthermore, experimenting with dance practices can teach us how to anticipate and sense the possible moves from others. Altogether there happens a great deal of nonverbal cues that lead us to collaborate on the dance floor. Or not! Something anticipated can always fail to happen. With the help of a knowledgeable, let me elaborate:

When we enter a group where our bodies come together with every reaction. We know that when we enter a room, our heartbeats start to synchronize. That's biology. (K4)

Synchrony is achieved during social and embodied interaction between people. This is considerably easier to experience than to explain how we synchronize. It can also be interpreted as being part of the process where we begin to realize that we are part of something bigger than ourselves. Perhaps this might be framed as making music at work. Embodied possibilities are the supporting act whereas the headliner is the safe work community. Next, I will disclose what kind of embodied possibilities we possess that we can make music with.

4.4 The embodied possibilities of leadership development

In the context of leadership development, we are inclined to consider the concepts of capabilities and skills. To elaborate, typically the train of thought is that through these concepts we are capable of achieving development that drives the organisation forward through its people. However, these concepts also underlie presumptions of “I should be” and “something ought to be”. Moreover, this thinking holds the presence of something that feels pre-emptive. The interviews surfaced an interesting observation of an ogre manifesting in the form of “ought to”. If we hold on to organisational structures and conventions that provide support for the ought-to-ogre, this choice may limit our possibilities.

My initial thought of labelling this last part of the findings was embodied capabilities. This kept me feeling at unease for some reason. The notion of unlearning also lingered in the interviews and then it suddenly hit me clear as a day. Through arts-based learning we become more aware of how sensory potential creates more possibilities for us. These possibilities might be something we have always known, already forgotten or something completely novel. This thesis agrees with scholar Sinclair (2005, 2014) that addressing bodies and our embodied practices as possibilities can stimulate change and further our abilities to inhabit leadership in a more embodied way. Realizing our skills and capabilities as possibilities enforces our ability to recognize what actually needs to be done, not what is ought to be done. It might be the ought-to-ogre that keeps us stuck and underdeveloped. The point here is to learn how to let go of our impractical habitual ways of working that obstruct us from arriving at possibilities. In addition, our embodied preparedness presents us permission to dwell in the state of not-knowing and after our body informs us when to move forward. These embodied possibilities are practices, that simultaneously operate both as very delicate yet also quite mundane or even self-evidently. Possibilities that emerged the most from the interviews are presented below in table 2.

Table 2. The embodied possibilities.

EMBODIED POSSIBILITIES	
Being present	Listening
Embodied observation	Being attentive
Exceeding our abilities	Appreciation of encounter
Situational awareness	Embodied awareness
Breathing	Pausing
Bodily postures	Eye contact
Vocal delivery	Availability of our being
How we arrive at a space	

These possibilities can be cultivated through training and development. As one knowledgeable expresses this:

Exploring and realizing our embodiment through the clarity of context is understood and quite easily digested. Understanding how to apply them to ordinary work life. It really doesn't require a lot of effort. At the end of the day, it only requires us to understand what the point here is and through this realization it can be put into practice effortlessly. These are, especially for management and leadership, tools to create a work environment to feel well in. (K2)

What the knowledgeable in the quote above refers are simple exercises, such as rolling of our joints that awakens and prepares the body, brings our attention from the head to our body, thus enabling us to be fully present in both our mind and body. This exercise also maps our bodily connections that facilitate us being more relaxed in the presence of others. Exploring our movement patterns and habits of how we think and respond in action assembles us as more grounded in our daily actions. Simple exercises of movement, balance and coordination through walking and standing for example re-educate the intellect and our embodiment holistically so we may operate more freely and effortlessly and take action in a more grounded way. These techniques further our understanding of the qualities of movement through exploring and developing our sensory awareness. This provides support for changing our bodily habits or thinking patterns which adjust our nervous system. Sensory awareness brings us balance, freedom of movement, better presence and working ability.

Moreover, it can re-program unproductive or harmful habits and patterns we might habit. It follows to achieve bodily freedom that produces more precise and relaxed verbal and nonverbal communication. Movement exploration with notions of slowness, softness or hesitations of the body train us how to arrive at a standstill for others that open a space for crafting connection. Understanding these qualities better teaches us when to purposefully yield or soften the body in reaction to another body. We also memorize and remember knowledge that we receive kinaesthetically through our movement and

sensations. This way we are able to use movement as a kinaesthetic memory technique to organise knowledge through our movement. This may provide alternatives to how we observe. A knowledgeable explicates this further:

When you do an intense work sprint or a work-related discovery and do 15 minutes of free movement right after, it fortifies the cognitive process and the memory trace. This is because the kinaesthetic memory is in a specific place where it connects and coordinates the thing we have discovered or learned in a different way. (K2)

Another alternative way to open up more possibilities for us is practicing breathwork. This facilitates a more balanced pattern of breathing that releases bodily tensions that we might be aware of or not that impacts on how we speak and engage in bodily interactions. Breathwork also teaches how to lower our heartbeat and blood pressure by stimulating our parasympathetic nervous system through breathing. Even more, breathing consciously makes room for pausing to contemplate and re-evaluate the situation and thus, enables us to provide more sensible decisions (Sinclair 2014).

Our breathing is essential. How we make decisions, important decisions, it's the slowing down. To have courage to pause just when things are most pressing. Because then, a window opens to new thoughts or situations. (K4)

Having even a split-second more time in decision making usually provides us with better possibility to make good decisions. Breathing also works to facilitate others, not just ourselves. As one knowledgeable provides an example of this:

If I'm feeling frightened or scared, when I'm facing a person who is dying and there is a really tough situation going on in the patient's room, what can I do to make myself more relaxed so that I am able to relax the others also. How I breathe, so that others may breathe more peacefully. (K1)

Drawing to a close, learning to listen one's own bodily messages in relation with others makes room for discussions of what could be. Next, I will move on to discuss two potential outcomes that can emanate from applying embodied possibilities.

5 DISCUSSION

This chapter discusses the relevance of embodied possibilities to previous research and suggests novel conceptual ideas of *embodied sustained awareness* and *embodied forecast* that contribute to the understanding of embodied leadership. Although the findings were mirrored with previous research throughout the previous chapter, this section aspires to further highlight the fruitful concepts that emerged through the analysis of the interviews.

5.1 Embodied sustained awareness

When we are literally, physically and emotionally well prepared, we are more able to allow our feelings to exist. We somehow allow them permission to prevail. This provides confidence in us to endure stress, external pressures and better resilience and adaptability, to keep the wolf from the door so to speak. Our fears and insecurities may set unnecessary alarm bells ringing in us. Obviously, there are times when they are very literal and we need to take action for reasons that require immediate response. However, there is also a possibility to acknowledge the bells and listen carefully and decide if this really needs me to take action. Do I need to respond or is it possible to leave this as it is. This possibility is practicable and can be trained with our embodied skills and capabilities. This embodied preparedness practice could be translated as embodied sustained awareness through which the information we receive we are able to make judgements and decisions more neutrally. So, in other words, we are fully aware of all the possibilities we might have. This requires us to really tune in to our embodied awareness.

To explain further the embodied sustained awareness, I will elaborate this through movement practice. In a group we start making movement that originates from the self. Letting it be just a flowing movement that is carried out without any specific emphasis. Just a movement that keeps on going and existing uninterrupted with free flow. When we explore our movements in a group, we self-evidently need to take others who share

the space into account. Then we start to be more aware of the movements of others that might be asking, inviting or uninviting by nature. These are gestures we sense from others that may convey feeling or direction. It is up to us to choose to respond to the gestures and start relating with others. Moreover, we may just be aware of the gestures and movements around us and contemplate with the self, whether this needs responding from me or should I offer a subtle gesture that conveys the message being received but it does not require any action from me. The key is to realize the possibilities of what is fit for purpose, appropriate and functional here. Movement is a space that crafts connection: through movement we are able to move, breathe and sense together that unites us.

This part of arts-based development is achieved essentially through individual development. However, it requires the presence of others for that we are not able to cultivate this without others. The pursuit towards a neutral embodied state of readiness or in other words, just simply being neutrally on standby requires us to practice this among others. It is also a state that aspires to be unreserved and free from pre-defined expectations. It is being neutral, attentive and present which facilitates our ability to listen in an embodied manner that promotes thoughtful responding rather than just simply reacting. Moreover, it also informs us in our mutual communication. A knowledgeable described it as:

But it isn't a state of resting or any meditative state or such. It is neutral, attentive and an alert state. This is really important in creating safe spaces. This neutral state enables the employees to feel that they can interact here with trust. (K2)

Discussing this neutral embodied state of readiness with one of the knowledgeable having a background in performing arts generated another take on the concept. I asked if the state was similar to a calm and collected state before anything happens and from where the action starts just before entering the stage and the answer was:

I think it is the same thing. I need to land myself in a calm enough embodied state and through that also in my mind. I'm trained like this, first through the body. If I

know I'm going to give an important lecture or I'm about to enter the stage, I need a minute to arrive and return in a neutral state of being. (K5)

Through cultivating this neutrality, we are able to practice and educate ourselves to recognize what actually needs to be released from what we have received. What this means for leadership and leaders is that once again we are able to listen and hear others with more quality. As a knowledgeable elaborated this:

Before a performance we use techniques like release where we run through our bone structure, our place of being to achieve a free-flowing state. Stress is solidified energy in the body. It freezes and keeps us stuck. The opposite is this free flow what is the foundation of us being neutral. During interaction, I'm not taking punches and a fall from it, it doesn't have an impact on me. They rather just run through me so I don't store them in me. Keeping the self as flowing and aware. (K2)

Springborg (2010) quite similarly suggested, that with staying with our senses keeping a sustained awareness to the present enables greater flexibility in decision making. This thesis aspires to further this concept by emphasizing the importance of the role of embodiment in sustaining our awareness. Staying with our senses and in a position of not-knowing facilitates our embodied listening. Embodied sustained awareness is available for all of us, not just for those in leadership positions. This way we will not collapse confronting and experiencing something that is unfamiliar or uncomfortable. The core elements of embodied sustained awareness are arranged to the figure 4. below.

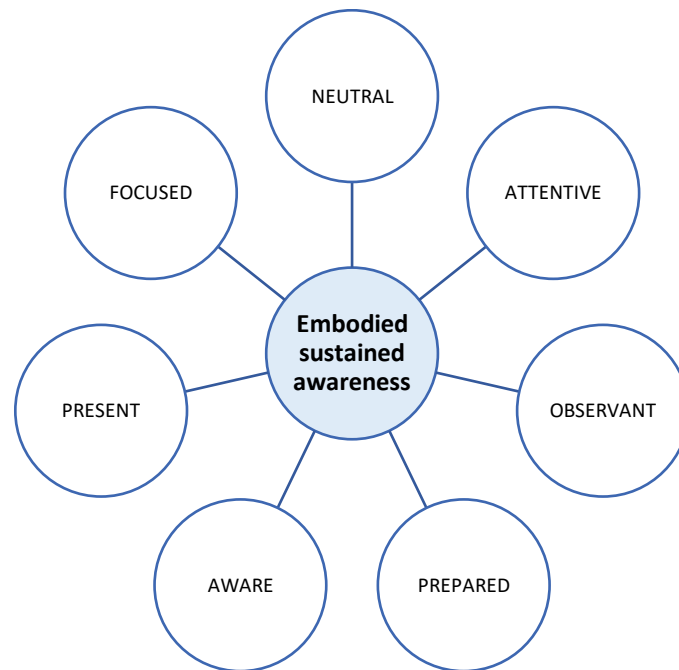


Figure 4. The core elements of embodied sustained awareness.

Through these core elements we are able to practice embodied leadership. It could be thought as a sensory state that supports communicating knowledge and conveying feelings to others that are fit for purpose. Moreover, being able to be comfortable with the uncomfortable can guide our actions better in how we practice and cultivate our leadership. Developing our capacity and ability to sense develops our embodiedness which helps us cope better with our fears that can reveal themselves as bodily tensions. Moreover, to keep our bodily tensions aside so that they do not create inhibiting barriers to clear and congruent communication. Fear also limits our capacity to use our senses fully: it limits our breathing. Furthermore, the lack of knowledge of our sensory awareness may urge us to silence our sensory-based knowledge. Embodied sustained awareness is our tour guide at work.

The product of embodied sustained awareness is congruence of what we transmit to others: the alignment of how we feel and act. The unity, coherence and consistency in how we convey our message so that the verbal and nonverbal congruence all line up.

This could also be described as our embodied communication being in agreement. As a knowledgeable expressed it succinctly:

The body is real. Our speech is just the tip of the iceberg. And what we interpret and experience as real is the embodied message underneath it all. The expressions and gestures. If our nonverbal and verbal communication aren't in sync, then we predominantly believe the nonverbal message. It's just the same then what you say, if your body communicates something else. If we want to get things done, to create a deep and confidential relation with others and a good work atmosphere, the only way it can happen is through really encountering the other in-person. (K3)

In-person encounters are necessary so that our social awareness develops and we really get to know how we communicate. What is focal here, is that in-person we are able to observe and interpret at the same time our own expressions, social gestures and movements and those of others. Our unity and congruence create embodied assurance. In other words, this ability of consistent bodily communication creates organisational safety. For this reason, it is important for us to visit the office regularly. This is most important for the latest arrivals of employees who do not yet know everyone. Moreover, when we are familiar with what kinds of bodily communication our organisational members produce, we don't feel so guarded or fearful necessarily. Sustained embodied awareness serves many purposes in leadership. An important one is how it supports the congruence of communication and interaction. More importantly, it guides the way how we relate and engage with others so we can craft connections. When we are connected, the knowledge flows more effortlessly and we can relate to the feelings of others and with the knowledge they are transmitting more neutrally. The next part describes how tuning into body talk matters.

5.2 Embodied forecast

What you sense instantaneously when you walk into the premises, is that if it is a place where wellbeing exists. You sense it in your body in the first two or three minutes. You feel it from the vibe, if its good where people are open and relaxed. (K3)

The quote above serves an example of what embodied forecast might mean. All the knowledgeable brought up the importance of how we read the room and the people habiting it. Similarly, as Fisher et al. (2015) suggest that we continually perceive and interpret the nonverbal communication. We may do this consciously or unconsciously, regardless of which, it is acknowledged in the interviews that we are constantly receiving and transmitting through our sensory channels. After receiving the forecast, we need to sense out what the situation requires: soft, simple or perhaps energetic interaction or perhaps calming down a notch so that we can really sense what is going on. We are perpetually in relation with ourselves, others and the situation at hand. Turning to our leaders and managers for a moment:

It all starts from our bosses abilities to sense, see and hear carefully so they can read the room and detect. Read the weak signals that exist way before the shit hits the fan. The pre-emptive work. How to learn social sensitivity of given situations, how to be aware and responsive to these sensors. Taking a step back and observe. (K3)

Our possibilities to read the embodied forecast in the organisation is important because the embodied signals and responses we receive and transmit are the very essence of what moves us from leading to creating leadership. This pre-emptive work is also part of creating space for porous leadership. To be able to see what is going on in the work community from a leader position is important. Hence, this also works both ways: the followers detect likewise from the body language of the bosses what is going on, is this a situation where I should be worried perhaps. Especially in high pressured work situations embodied forecasts go on the rise. Everyone feels and senses that there is something hanging around that is unarticulated and this is the point when we start to be really aware of the subtlest things in our body language.

It is adamant for the leaders to be able to keep up with the situation. To sense how the people feel. Understanding body language enables to respond pre-emptily and open up the discussion. (K1)

There are physical indications that might express something of our state of being and how we are feeling. Or situations where words fall short but instead our body comes into play. As one knowledgeable specified this:

Our breathing is a classic example of how we can detect what's going on with someone. Observing the manner how they are breathing: where they are breathing from, the depth of breaths and rhythm. (K5)

In a pressing or an uncomfortable situation, we sometimes dismiss people and what they are transmitting for whatever reasons. This habit pattern does not cultivate the conditions of trust to form. Another very important notion here is that we all react and respond physically very differently and this very notion reveals the major challenge to how we can interpret the other properly. Moreover, for this we might fail to hear and detect something significant. As a knowledgeable stressed:

It is some wisdom that is missing from cognition-based leadership where we dismiss these situations. "Oh, I won't say nothing about this or tell anyone how I am reacting to this". The kind of forward pushing leadership, that goes to the core, to be open and express how I am feeling or influenced by this or how I sense that the atmosphere changed slightly, what happened here could be an opening for something big. Let's pause here to have a look at this. (K4)

Embodied forecasts bring us closer to the fertile grounds of *crafting connections*. These grounds allow our feelings and emotions to exist. What is most essential, our embodied possibilities facilitate how to work with them. What is important here, is to understand the transmission coming from the body so we may ask more purposeful questions. To finalize the discussion, this thesis argues that embodied sustained awareness and embodied forecast both contribute to creating safe spaces for crafting connections.

6 CONCLUSIONS

This thesis is a subjective rendition of theory, practice and perceptions of embodied leadership. How I have interpreted and arranged the phenomenon available for others. These are not truths; in contrast they are possibilities that are offered through the perceptions brought by the knowledgeable. This thesis suggests that embodied leadership is perceived through arts-based methods as embodied listening, trusting, having sensitivity of the moment, being facilitative, safety creating, offering porous spaces that enable empathy and curiosity of discovery with a playful attitude. In conclusion, the heart of embodied leadership is the art of encounter and interaction. What is more, it is the foundation of organisational empathy and synchrony. What this means is that embodied leadership entrenches the trust between people and sustains them as being well prepared to open dialogue. Ultimately, the end goal in the artful and embodied approach is not only individual development rather it aims at developing a safer leadership culture together. The individualistic hero illusion shatters naturally when the individual truly fathoms that nothing is actually created, performed or accomplished alone. A forward moving organisation lives from people who are doing leadership together.

The core contribution of this thesis is that embodied leadership opens, creates and holds space for us to come into being in one's own way. In this space we are all seen, heard, acknowledged, accepted, equals, understood, and safe. It is not just the developmental environments that need to be designed as safe spaces, in parallel, the organisation itself needs to be adjusted with it. This thesis also suspects that this might lead us to work more intentionally and solve organisational challenges more effectively. Embodied leadership is not only of our gestures or physical expressions it is also of what we bring to the room with us so we can move forward and develop as an organisation to a work community that achieves organisational flourishing. This thesis concurs with Ladkin (2008: 33) who describes how an embodied leadership performance can be experienced as: *"...inclusive, accepting and creating of a safe environment"*. This type of leadership offers us nourishing engagement that holds power with better work commitment and collaboration. In practice, this shifts us from small talk to big talk and then we must listen

up closely to hear the space where action emerges from. This thesis argues that leadership needs to be somatically tuned into and connected with the work community so that it is able to recognize the situation and steer away from unnecessary physical and social working habits and work culture. This is a *practical implication* of what follows from embodied leadership to the work community.

This thesis has offered consistent, transparent and continuous quality of information on the research process. In addition, embodied leadership was identified as an existing real-life phenomenon from the rich descriptions of the knowledgeable and thus, indicates that the chosen method of research provided answers to the research problem. Furthermore, the greatest support for the *credibility and reliability* of this thesis stems from the quotes of the experienced knowledgeable. Another researcher could possibly yield quite similar results through their vast professional experience and knowledge as this thesis has drawn. The results complement the previous understanding of embodied leadership and additionally, suggest fresh insight through the concepts of embodied forecast and sustained embodied awareness.

After disclosing my conclusion, I am left with new questions. If we have acknowledged the arrival of our feelings and emotions at work do, we really know what to do with them at work and furthermore, how might we use them to our advantage? Moreover, what limits our ability to sense at work? Springborg and Sutherland (2014) discovered in their study that managers held emotional, mental, and physical barriers that limited their ability to be aware of a range of aesthetic qualities that they could reflect through their bodies in an art-based development workshop. The workshops applied exercises of tango, contact improvisation and choral conducting. A key observation was that these limiting barriers occurred regardless of a safe learning environment created carefully by the professional developers. Their study distinguishes how challenging it is for us to understand and develop our aesthetic agency even when the grounds for development work are well placed. This implicates that employing our senses at work is not a given, in contrast, they require training so that we can apply them effectively to leadership

practice. This thesis concurs and contributes to the notion of our embodied possibilities being our goggles for understanding and practicing leadership so that we do not need to fly in blind.

Perhaps a reason for why these limits appear might have something to do with the fear of performing and being vulnerable under the gaze of others. There might be some conscious and unconscious reservation underlying in the minds of the participants. Safe environment, willingness, good motivation, curiosity of discovery or professional expertise in development necessarily do not guarantee success. Furthermore, without environmental safety it is harder to develop our aesthetic abilities and embodied possibilities. Fostering our work community to embody a curious and playful attitude to development might ease this shift.

A recent article in a well-established Finnish business magazine *Kauppa-lehti Fakta* pointed out that arts in organisational development work have not yet established their place in the Finnish business world (Ojalainen 2024). This thesis suspects that reason for this might lie in the fact that drama and dance are not independent school subjects in Finnish comprehensive school education. The lack of familiarity of the arts might make us experience a little allergy towards them. This implies there is still an immense amount of work to do before this type of developmental work could be received as conventional. Presuming, this is one of the reasons, this thesis then suggests that if we were accustomed to the arts through comprehensive school education, it might not feel so unorthodox to apply them in the organisation development context. Moreover, being familiar with the artful approach might facilitate us to foster better health at work, create more sustainable futures, develop trust, and boost productivity that can all strengthen work communities as more sustainable. Just as Stacey (2007) suggests the organisation and their futures are created with interdependence through the embodied relationship between people of the present that is a co-creation. Furthermore, some of the knowledgeables also focused on the development work as being part of a broader socio-ecological change that involved issues such as climate change challenges and the planetary

wellbeing. What this implies is that the development work is not performed only for us in the current moment it is also for the future members of work life. The artful development work could be perceived as a sustainable movement of building foundation and structure for the future.

To reflect the methods applied to this thesis, the use of figurative language and metaphors was a strategic research design decision. The purpose here is to evoke the experientiality in the reader to pause and think how this might apply in their own experience. With this decision I have gone slightly offroad from the strict academic writing conventions of clarity and objectivity. The evident *limitation* of this thesis is the lack of triangulation. To elaborate, the knowledge is drawn only from the developer's side that naturally influences the outcome and conclusion of this research. To achieve a more complete picture would be through observing real development situations, having the possibility to examine development material, and also interview the participant side likewise. Nevertheless, this thesis contributes further support for previous research on embodied leadership and has offered both theoretical and practical implications. Moreover, this thesis unfolds potential fields for further research.

Three particular suggestions for *future research* emerged. To start with, investigating the consistency of the perceptions between the leaders and the youngest employees of the conditions of a holding and supportive environment could reveal deeper knowledge of its importance. Moreover, it would feel enticing to discover their perceptions of safe space creation and how arts-based methods might evoke them to realize their embodied possibilities more holistically. The suspicion is, that the artful and embodied approach could be very salient to research the experiences of these two groups. More specifically, how they would perceive embodied leadership's ability to create a safe space. Another avenue for future research might be exploring the concept of embodied forecast further. More specifically, to examine how leaders themselves might describe and interpret the meaning and purpose of embodied forecasts and thus, pursue more knowledge of its practical implications to the work community. Lastly, this thesis suspects that the

concept of porous leadership involves a considerable amount of emotional, affective and immaterial labour especially in the leader position. Therefore, it could be useful to inquire into the possibility of how embodied and psychosocial workload can snowball in the context of porous leadership.

Lastly, artful development has received *some critique*. As explicated earlier, Sandberg et al. (2022) exhibited the hindering possibility of art-based development's fun factor, meaning that the artful experience itself outplays and thus hides the actual developmental results. Even if this might be the result, this thesis regardless encourages to take the risk on the grounds of the knowledge received from the knowledgeable. With this decision, we decide to trust the process: in any case we create meanings and results that leave room for adventure. Public discussion and scholarly research in Finland are very keen on understanding why employees do not wish to return to the office. One option to understand the reluctance in a more meaningful manner might be the artful approach. With the assistance of arts-based and embodied methods they can gently remind employees why we enjoy working together in-person. And perhaps realize there might be an unidentified bodily deficit of community support. Another suggestion for taking the risk is that with dance exploration there is a possibility to influence workplace motivation (Schmidt, Smith, Fernández, Emmermann, & Christensen 2023). Placing emphasis here on the *workplace*. Furthermore, providing dance sessions to employees might potentially boost their productivity through subjective well-being (Vecchi, Elf, Ueno, Dilmeri, Dennis, & Devereux 2022). Last but not least, if even Finnish defence forces teach breathwork, exploring our embodied possibilities are nothing to do with nonsense (Johtajan käsikirja 2022: 129). Quite the opposite, there is hidden potential waiting to be unlocked.

To draw this thesis *to a close*, I would like to invite you to dream a little with me. What if our future organisations offer their employees analogue wealth and freedom at work by encouraging them to put their smartphones away for a little break at the office studio and invite them to reconnect with others through movement exercises or pottery. What if our workplaces provided studio space for free movement practice or oat pillows that

employees could warm up and set the warm pillow to their shoulders to emphasize that taking a break means something else than eating your lunch over your screen while reading emails. What might this lead to? The artful and embodied development approach to organisation offers us a great escape to hop-off our heads with the help of seasoned professionals. What is more, it may provide you with the joy of discovery to have another go at it once more, with feeling.

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Appendices

Appendix 1. Interview discussion themes

INTERVIEW DISCUSSION THEMES

Keep in mind:

I've been invited to take a peek into the world of another.

I am allowed to enter someone else's world and thoughts.

Themes
<p>Background</p> <p>education, work experience, where are you coming from</p>
<p>Work</p> <p>Typical training, coaching, consulting cases or situations</p> <p>Examples of development work where the body and embodiment are essential</p>
<p>Methods</p> <p>Examples of embodied and arts-based development methods</p>
<p>Leadership</p> <p>How it is understood</p> <p>How it is present in development work</p>
<p>Embodiment</p> <p>How is embodiment comprised</p> <p>Elements</p> <p>How does it manifest in leadership development work</p> <p>Challenges to it</p>