



2 Literature Review

2.1 Intervention Research

Looking at the history of intervention research, Kurt Lewin needs to be shortly introduced. He is looked at as the originator of action research and group dynamics (Adelman, 1993; Schwarz, 2015) which already demonstrate a high linkage between the two fields. However, Lewin might be more known as social psychologist that developed the field theory. In the field theory, Lewin already examined human social behaviour in groups that was either shown in direct actions or emotional expressions. Based on Lewin's theory, Schindler (1957) deduced his hierarchical dynamic basic formula from Lewin's research results. Both authors (Lewin, 1951; Schindler, 1957) recognized very early in their studies that it was impossible for them to stay out of the research process during therapy sessions.

By and by, action research has become increasingly utilised by organisational researchers to explain and describe organisational activities (Casell & Johnson, 2006). Björkman and Sundgren (2016) described action research as collaborative research between the academic researcher and practising managers in organisations in order to create actionable knowledge. The main goal of intervention research is to raise the awareness in the mind-set of the participants and not trying to identify a problem (Heintel, 2005). Cassel and Johnson (2006) classified action research in five categories whereby the two categories "participatory research practices" and "participatory action research" describes intervention research best in terms of the Klagenfurt School of Group Dynamics and Intervention Research that also sees it as meaningful and appropriate to enter into the research via the management or the superior level (Krainer & Lerchster, 2012).

In this respect, Peter Heintel (†, 2018) and his important role in the context of intervention research at the Klagenfurt School of Group Dynamics and Intervention Research needs to be highlighted. To pay a tribute to

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Heintel, here is an extract of his obituary, written by Rudolf Wimmer (2018):

“On July 12, 2018, Peter Heintel said goodbye to this world forever after a short illness. He is one of the formative pioneers of group dynamics and organisational development in German-speaking countries. For decades, he ensured that these fields of applied social sciences at the University of Klagenfurt could develop a powerful academic home.

Much to the regret of the entire professional community and its own grief, these extraordinary resources have gradually been dismantled after retirement.

For many years, Peter Heintel was co-editor and editor of our predecessor magazine "Group Dynamics and Organisational Consulting"; its continuous flourishing was always a special concern of his.”

Furthermore, the most relevant literature in the context of the Klagenfurt School of Group Dynamics and Intervention Research is listed below:

Klagenfurter Beiträge zur Interventionsforschung (Volume 1-12): These publications deal with work materials, discussion bases and documentation that are not carried out in the nature of completed research reports, but which should be made accessible to the interested professional audience.

- Esther Schmidt : Interventionswissenschaft – Interventionsforschung: Erörterungen zu einer Prozesswissenschaft vor Ort: Eine Dokumentation (2003)
- Hintergrundtheorien zur Interventionsforschung: Referate des Forschungstages 2003 des IFF - Standorts Klagenfurt (2004)
- Peter Heintel: Zur Grundaxiomatik der Interventionsforschung (2005)
- Beiträge zur Interdisziplinären Ringvorlesung Interventionsforschung (2006a)

- Das Verhältnis von Forschung und Beratung: Referate des Forschungstages 2005 des IFF - Standorts Klagenfurt (2006b)
- Hildegard Enzinger: Praxeologie: Wissenschaft – Praxis – Studium als lebendiges Zusammenspiel (2008)
- Larissa Krainer / Martina Ukowitz: Anliegen, Theorien und Praxis (2009)
- Reflexion – Intervention – Kultur: Interdisziplinäre Ringvorlesung 2008 (2009)
- Forschung als regionale Intervention: Interdisziplinäre Ringvorlesung Interventionsforschung 2010 (2012a)
- Selbstorganisation: IKN-Forschungstag 2008 (2012b)
- Praxis und theoretische Grundannahmen von Intervention: Dokumentation der Ringvorlesung Juni 2006 (2013a)
- Qualität in der wissenschaftlichen Forschung: IKN-Forschungstag 2011 (2013b)

„Gruppe. Interaktion. Organisation. Zeitschrift für Angewandte Organisationspsychologie (GIO)“ 2000-2019: The journal was published under the name „Gruppendynamik und Organisationsentwicklung“ until 2015. The journal gets published on a quarterly basis.

Interventionsforschung Volume 1-3:

- Interventionsforschung Band 1: Paradigmen, Methoden, Reflexionen (2012)
- Interventionsforschung Band 2: Anliegen, Potentiale und Grenzen transdisziplinärer Wissenschaft (2016)
- Interventionsforschung Band 3: Wege der Vermittlung. Intervention – Partizipation (2019)

Schriften zur Gruppen und Organisationsdynamik Volume 1-12:

- Handbuch Mediation und Konfliktmanagement (2005)
- Transdisziplinarität in der Forschung und Praxis (2009)
- betrifft: TEAM (2006, 2008)
- Die Kunst der Politik (2009)
- Einfach komplex (2009)

- Prozessethik (2010)
- Organisationsentwicklung konkret (2011; 2013)
- Von der Systemabwehr zur Organisationsbewusstheit (2017)
- Netzwerke und soziale Innovationen (2019)

For this thesis, the term “intervention research” will be used synonymously for both action research and intervention research. Having introduced the historical evolvement of intervention research, the theoretical background and the practical application will now be explained in the next sectors of this thesis.

2.1.1 Basic Assumptions of Intervention Research

As highlighted in the introduction, intervention research is a rather younger approach of the empirical social research but in comparison to it the classic social research has three major disadvantages (Heintel, 2002): Firstly, the classic social research methods are researching in the past. Secondly, there is a strict separation of the research subject from the research object, and lastly, drawing conclusions thereof is not recommendable because there are too many factors (e.g. various motivations) that should have been taken into account for drawing conclusions. On the contrary, Björkman and Sundgren (2016) are addressing following advantages of intervention research: real issues in organisations are inquired; iterative cycles are used for problem identification, planning, acting and evaluation; and the status quo of an organisation is challenged.

Intervention research consequently aims at changing established organisational settings to create basic knowledge and actionable knowledge for the organisation. The afore mentioned advantages and disadvantages, on the other hand, implicate for intervention research that the research takes place in the present and future, the researcher is to some extend part of the research process (dual role) and conclusions are likely to be reasonable since the result is elaborated along with the research objects. That is also demonstrated in the nine relevant axioms for intervention

research (Lerchster, 2012) derived from Heintel's (2005) basic assumptions of science paradigms:

Axiom I "Freedom of research object": Intervention research only researches in fields where the research objects are active human beings and are seen as lively and free. In that context the question of the meaning of "free(-dom)" arises. Freedom signifies being (able to be) different or what hinders human beings to be free/different. On the one hand, intervention research is an instrument that allows human beings to freely establish freedom/differences. On the other hand, that also entails that the outcome is unpredictable because the research object is changing due to intrinsic motivation and not because of external influences and is therefore not steerable anymore.

Axiom II "Consideration of the boundary dialectics of systems": The research objects are systems that are boundary dialectic. That means, on the one hand, that these systems are self-contained in order to succeed as system. On the other hand – since the systems are lively, in constant move, communicate with each other, interact and have different relations to each other – the self-containment fails (Lerchster, 2012). The challenge for intervention research is to consider both aspects. Another issue of boundary dialectic is that human beings are part of systems like families, communities, organisations and associations (Coghlan & Shani, 2011) and cannot be separated and researched on solely as individuals.

Axiom III "Relationship to the research system": Highly important for intervention research is a high level of relations and reciprocal trust in order to guarantee a free exchange of views. The system is not just moving within its boundaries but starts reflecting on itself and its relations to other systems and gives feedback about its own perspectives. Moreover, the system is challenged because it acts on two levels: the action itself and the reflection on it. Therefore, a high level of self-reflection, a good relationship and reciprocal trust are demanded in order to be able to talk about and reflect on these relations without misunderstandings and prejudice.

Axiom IV “Process design”: The separation of the research subject from the research object is regularly abolished and reintegrated. Following, the system can be repeatedly constituted so that it serves the goal of self-enlightenment. In practice that means that research objects are set in relation to each other to build a system (integration). Then the system is getting analysed and corrected (abolishment). In the end a “new” system is constituted with a shared understanding (reintegrating) that again is being reflected on and corrected (abolishment). During that process, issues like motivation, conflicts etc. may occur that were unforeseen which again demands a high level of self-reflection.

Axiom V “The question at the centre of research”: Classic social research assumes that there is a problem (question) that asks for a solution whereby the solution can only be provided by the theoretical framework of science. Intervention research, in comparison, takes the view that the solution can already be found in the research object itself and solely needs to be brought to light. This is why the question itself is the centre for intervention research. During the research, an unknowing person (researcher) tries to answer the question or respectively get to the bottom of the problem by making use of the tacit knowledge of “experts” (research objects).

Axiom VI “Applied dialectics - the dialectic as a motor of reality”: In comparison to classic social research approaches that try to abolish contradictions, intervention research tries to accept contradictions by providing a frame where both aspects can be integrated. Because in reality both aspects do exist as well and cannot be abolished.

Axiom VII “The organisation of process-ethical decisions”: As already mentioned, different issues occur during the process. These are mostly unforeseen or respectively the research objects have not been aware of it yet. The reflection that is part of the intervention research process encourages thinking about these issues from a different perspective. Mostly, the research objects realise then the complexity and contradictions they are tacked in. As long as human beings are not aware of their patterns, decisions are being influenced nonconsciously. Relevant paradoxes that

are influencing our decisions are described in chapter 2.1.5 Process Ethics (Krainer & Heintel, 2015). These paradoxes consequently implicate for intervention research that throughout the research process the researcher has to become aware of personal contradictions in order to be able to find the right balance between what is ethically acceptable on the grounds and what is necessary for the research.

Axiom VIII “Participation, codetermination and the expertise of non-knowledge”: The expectations, emotions and hopes of human beings (individuality) are the most important in intervention research. The goal is the objectification (contrary to “generalisation” of classic social research) of that individuality which is in turn represented as norms and patterns of collectives or groups in organisations. The collective therefore has to objectify its individuality in order to be able to make decisions about the own group to achieve self-awareness and self-enlightenment. The intervention researcher that is unknowing about the organisation at the beginning (expert of non-knowledge) is included in that learning process of the organisation (experts). Nonetheless, it needs to be considered that the process is accompanied with effort, anxiety and expenditure of time. So, the research objects need to codetermine along with the research subjects whether or not and at what time they are willing to “learn”. The goal of intervention research is that the collective is capable of autonomous self-enlightenment.

Axiom IX “The finiteness of truth”: Throughout the research process, collective or shared understandings and perspectives are created. The intervention researchers are unknowing about the organisation at the beginning (although they already do have specific theoretical framework) and also do not want to know because they do not want to disrupt the process. By and by, intervention researchers are gaining knowledge about the shared understandings and perspectives of the organisation which results in the researchers’ becoming experts. That means that intervention researchers – contrary to classic social researchers – do not draw from theory to gain research results. They observe, question and collaborate with the research objects and are then using their theoretical

framework to explain their observations and subsequently derive hypotheses (inductive approach). The goal is not to create truth because truth is finite. The basic idea is to use various approaches, methods and mindsets to help the research objects to improve and grow (Lerchster, 2012).

Based on these axioms it can be drawn that intervention research wants to generate shared knowledge within the existing system to initiate autonomous self-enlightenment. To initiate a change in/of the system, reflection and feedback are crucial (Lerchster, 2012). Contrary to classic social research that applies its pre-conceived knowledge at the end of the research process, intervention researchers provide their knowledge during the iterative process in order to make the system capable of autonomous acting even after the research itself ended. Nonetheless, that providing of knowledge is again accompanied with contradictions because the researchers need to carefully decide how much knowledge is necessary and useful which will be explicated in greater detail in the next chapter.

2.1.2 *Process Ethics for Intervention Research*

Krainer and Heintel (2015) describe with the “process-ethics model” ethical contradictions that occur during any decision-making process. They have defined five different fields to analyse different types of values:

Field I “The human being as a Differenzwesen: Differenzwesen is a German term that is literally translated as difference-being and means metaphorically that contradictions appear whenever a human being has to make a decision. Ethics and morality are seen as answers to those contradictions (Krainer & Heintel, 2015):

- Existential contradictions are based on age, sex, gender, state and are handled with social, cultural and historical norms.
- Contradictions between social configurations (individuals, couples, families, groups, organisations, institutions) derive from different values that are causing conflicts by nature.

- System contradictions (e.g.: superior – subordinate) occur in every organisation where for example the needs of the subsystem differs from those of another subsystem or a superior system.
- Contradictions of historical non-simultaneity describe conflicts because of the different paces of development of each human being.

Field II “basic conflicts, conflict potentials”: The conflicts that occur because of the above mentioned contradictions (existential, social, due to system logics, developmental, structural) are necessary and useful (Krainer & Heintel, 2015) but ask for co-ordinated resolutions.

Field III “impulsive (not reflected) reactions”: Impulsive reactions are enshrined in human nature but those usually do not lead to useful solutions. Krainer and Heintel (2015) listed different types of impulsive reactions: disavowal, suppression and playing down; reproach and defence, accusation; resignation or fate; rapid solutions.

Field IV “answers”: Because impulsive reactions do not lead to useful solution, analysing the answers (habits, norms, rules, values, etc.) to conflicts lead to the identification of the type of ethical contradictions. That facilitates identifying the core problem of the conflict.

Field V “authorities of protection and justification”: Certainly, the set-up habits, norms, rules, values etc. of the system are protected by its authorities (churches, politicians) via different instruments.

In conclusion, the process-ethics model can be seen as a tool for intervention research to explain ethical conflicts that are influencing the decision-making process. The analysis of the decision-making process itself with this model facilitates identifying triggers and biases that are based on the human beings being a “Differenzwesen”. Nonetheless, it has to be mentioned here that the decision-making process is influenced by various factors which will not be of further relevance to the topic of this thesis and therefore not elaborated on in more detail.

2.1.3 Academic Integrity of Intervention Research

The aforementioned axioms describe the basic assumption of intervention research and how it is differentiated from classic social research. Based on these, one important issue raised by the classic social research concerns the academic integrity of intervention research. It is claimed that intervention research is not objective and therefore not scientifically profound enough because of the researchers' involvement in the research process. That is also reinforced by Levin (2012) who stated that one major pitfall of intervention research is that researchers get absorbed in the process (and consequently lose objectivity) due to the necessity of the fulfilment of the dual role during the research process. Therefore and in order to be able to handle the circumstances that come up with the dual role appropriately, he names five relevant points to grant academic integrity throughout the research:

- “Research partnering”: Since researchers are involved in the process, their perspective or viewpoint may lack objectivity. A research partner is able to question those perspectives and viewpoints so that more objectivity is achieved.
- “Researcher’s biases”: All human beings are biased. The goal is to cope with these in a systematic way. One way to do so, according to Levin (2012), is to think about possible research outcomes before the actual research process starts.
- “Standardised methods”: Regardless of whether the method is qualitatively or quantitatively, every handling of data in the world of science needs to follow a standardised process. One example that Levin (2012) compares to the method of intervention research is the grounded theory that has as well an inductive approach. First data is constructed and then theories or hypotheses are derived.
- “Alternative Explanations”: Having just one explanation for a phenomenon is not enough. Levin (2012) states that alternative ex-

planations have to be searched for as long as the most promising explanation prevails.

- “Trustworthiness”: The first four factors represent arguments for reliability, validity and objectivity that are quality criteria of classic social research. Nevertheless, Levin (2012) states that the term “trustworthiness” is more suitable for intervention research to guarantee academic integrity.

Levin (2012) is of the opinion that the contradiction that comes along with granting academic integrity itself already has to be managed by intervention research. On the one hand, getting involved in the research process is crucial for intervention research, and on the other hand, it also has to cover the analytical process that entails distance to the research object. Both aspects demand for training of the researcher in order to be able to execute intervention research accordingly.

In conclusion, there are various facts to every research approach that may interfere with its academic integrity. For intervention research, the proximity that is demanded during the research may result in a high risk of bias. On the contrary, drawing conclusions may be more reasonable because of the researcher’s involvement in the process. In comparison, classic social research that separates the researcher from the research object may miss some crucial insights to draw a reasonable conclusion. Ultimately, intervention research as well as any other scientific research approach is questionable about its academic integrity. Therefore, pursuing rules and standards is crucial for intervention research as for all research approaches to achieve a high level of academic integrity.

2.1.4 Reflection and Feedback in Intervention Research

Having answered the question about academic integrity, the thesis will now turn to the practical application of intervention research. Therefore, reflection and feedback (Axiom III) that are next to action also two essential parts for the practical application of intervention research will be explicated in more detail in the following chapter of this thesis.

Reflection is crucial to grant a research free of bias and initiate self-enlightenment (Krainer & Lerchster, 2012). How to reflect accordingly throughout the intervention research process will be explained in greater detail with the three modes of inquiry of intervention research: first-person research, second-person research and third-person research (Torbert & Starr, 2005).

First-person research: As already mentioned in the previous chapters, all human beings are biased. In order to be able to get to the core of these biases, the egos of researchers themselves are centre of the research. The first-person research is an inquiring approach that addresses the researchers' own life (Reason & Bradbury, 2011). That means that researchers are examining themselves to raise self-awareness via reflection. Torbert and Starr (2005) divided the analyses of the researchers' experiences in four territories:

- The outside world: The researcher is actively aware of what is seen.
- One's own sensed behaviour and feeling: The researcher is actively aware of what is felt.
- The realm of thought: The researcher is actively aware of what is thought.
- Vision/attention/intention: Identifies discrepancies or similarities within the first three territories.

For the practical application, it is therefore necessary to be aware of which territory the researcher is in at the moment of observation. What situation is currently observed (what I see)? Which personal thoughts (what I think) or feelings (what I feel) come up during the observation and how do these affect the perception of the observation? Through identifying discrepancies or similarities in the first three territories and being aware of that is creating self-consciousness within the mind-set of the researcher (Torbert & Starr, 2005).

Similar to that, Taylor (2004) refers to the two-column case (Argyris, Putnam, & Smith, 1990) to use one's own tacit knowledge in order to create self-awareness. Here, the actual dialogue is recorded (what I see), and then the researcher's thoughts (what I think) are registered in the first column and finally the resulting feelings (what I feel) in the second column. That ensures that both parts (the actual happening and the researchers' perspective) of the experience are available for the analyses. The rise in self-awareness leads to a change of the researcher's mind or behaviour which is in turn necessary because that will consequently result in the change of other people.

Both of the above mentioned methods for first-person research are based on the actual happening, the personal feelings and/or thoughts and the analysis of those. Changing one's own mind-set and behaviour consequently results in the change of the outside world. Therefore, using one's own tacit knowledge and getting aware of it to create self-awareness is the core topic of first-person research.

Second-person research: The actual verbal conversation between at least two people is the most important way of action (Torbert & Taylor, 2011). To test the efficiency of a conversation the single-, double- and triple loop inquiry can be applied. The single-loop inquiry tests if the speaker's message is understood by the dialogue partner(s), the double-loop inquiry investigates if a probable alternative conversational strategy may be more fruitful, and finally, reflecting on the strategy itself (for example shifting the attention from satisfying the partner's needs to one's own feelings) consequently changes the awareness of the researcher in the third-loop inquiry. Reframing/changing the situation enables finding a solution that was perceived as impossible until then. Worth mentioning here is that the conduction of second-person research is crucial for first-person research because the interaction and the analyses of it initiates that researchers can learn about themselves (Taylor, 2004).

Third-person research: The third-person research inquires actions on a third party, for example on a group level, although there does not necessarily need to be a direct action going on (Torbert & Taylor, 2011). It in-

quires the structure, norms and behaviour of the groups and raises awareness about their settings in order to change it. As the third-person research is about analysing and consequently influencing a third party, the researcher is acting as a change agent. That demands that intervention researchers are highly aware of themselves which implicates in turn that first-person research is crucial in order to be able to act accordingly as a third person (Taylor, 2004).

Summarising the above, it can be drawn that first-person research is about the reflection and analyses of researchers themselves, second-person research is about the action and reflection of that action happening between at least two people and third-person research inquires and reflects on the established norms and structures of groups and will ideally show the way for a possible strategy to improve the groups' settings. To grant a research that is almost free of bias at least two of these three modes of intervention research, if possible, are applied. Nevertheless, Taylor (2004) states that researchers do not have to be experts in order to analyse their own practice.

Having elaborated on the importance of reflection for intervention research, the importance of feedback will now be demonstrated. As already mentioned, to initiate a change in/of the system (Lerchster, 2012) feedback that is constantly provided in a productive manner is crucial for intervention research. Through feedback, own experiences and experiencing oneself while doing so can be expressed. In order to be able to give feedback properly the findings of "authentic discourse" can be used. Bristol (2013) equated authentic discourse to the "t-group" that was originated by Kurt Lewin (1946) and can be described by five elements:

- **Aware choice (self-referential dynamics):** Becoming aware of one's self-values, feelings, goals, reactions, thoughts, etc. at the moment ("here and now") towards a project allows choosing to take different ones. That implicates for intervention researchers that they need to be highly aware of themselves and their inner

world. That in return allows intervention researchers to be able to choose on what viewpoints they want to take.

- Making “I” statements: Using “I” statements emphasises statements about one’s perception and experience in one’s own world and leaves room for others to express themselves as well in the plenary. This allows comparing one’s own reality with those of others to see if there are commonalities. Furthermore, one’s focus on certain events and how one reacts to those (learned choice) is an indicator for triggers. Changing the focus and reaction (aware choice) allows influencing the situations. That implicates for intervention researchers that there is a need of using “I” statements to not intimidate the group. Furthermore, they are able to influence the situation by changing their own focus and reactions (aware choice).
- Disclosing emotions and feelings: Becoming aware of one’s feelings and emotions and what triggers them allows oneself to change one’s impulsive reactions. The aim is not to cut off one’s feelings but directing them. For feedback that implicates that one does not react impulsively (unreflectedly) to feedback, actions or statements but consciously (reflectedly).
- Attending to “here and now” dynamics: Lewin (1946) states that telling a story is connected to the past. The more important aspects of it are the “here and now” feelings and emotions of the story teller while telling the story. That indicates for intervention researchers that biases will be reduced because through telling the story the awareness of actual triggers and what impacts these have on their present life will be raised.
- Giving and receiving feedback: This process is based on the willingness of all members to share and accept their own and the others “here and now” experiences. Feedback is seen as another way of expressing one’s feelings and emotions. Also for intervention research, the collaboration and willingness of the whole team is necessary because they either hinder or support the process with their collaboration. What also needs to be considered is that

giving feedback in an organisational setting needs to be linked to a certain task or mission otherwise it will be taken personally.

Bristol (2013) updated these five elements but the author decided to elaborate on the initial elements because they were perceived as suiting better to highlight the implications of reflection and feedback for the intervention research process. Again, the necessity of acting in the present or the “here and now” is reinforced (Bristol, 2013; Lewin, 1946). Furthermore, the aforementioned elements highlight that giving feedback is strongly linked to self-awareness (reflection). Being fully aware of one's own feelings and how to express these feelings and experiences to others is crucial for the process of intervention research. The researchers need to remain utterly true in an “earthed” manner. It is not so much about what is happening on the outside but rather on what is happening on the inside.

In conclusion, feedback and reflection are closely linked together. In order to give a constructive feedback and reflect on what has happened, a high level of self-awareness is demanded.

2.1.5 *Insider Intervention Research*

Having learned about implication of reflection and feedback for intervention research, this chapter will now explain the method of intervention research that is applied to this master thesis: insider intervention research. Firstly, the classifications of intervention research in the social research paradigm will be explained. Secondly, aspects about insider intervention research itself will be explicated, and thirdly, the research process of insider intervention research will be outlined in more detail.

As already mentioned, intervention research is a method that researches on interventions of any kind or a research that initiates interventions itself (Krainer & Lerchster, 2012). It can be classified in different categories (Cassell & Johnson, 2006): experimental, inductive, participatory and deconstructive intervention research. Attention has to be paid to the dif-

ferent pitfalls that every category entails. The experimental approach, for example, challenges researchers to cope with natural organisational settings. The inductive one has to pay attention to whether the socially constructed version of reality is captured right, and participatory approaches are endangered to present desired outcomes that are distorted by power relations. Focusing on participatory approaches (Cassell & Johnson, 2006), the participatory research practices that are initiated by the employees of an organisation are contrary to participatory intervention research – chosen for this thesis – where the researcher acts as consultant for the management. That means that the research is initiated by the management to analyse and develop the own company. Emphasis needs to be put on the way of communication. The information given by the management obliges the workforce to cooperate which demonstrates the commitment of the management to the research project. Yet, the workforce has not agreed to change and may either oppose, resist, tolerate, support or embrace the process of change (Lippitt, 1973). Intervention researchers acting as change agents must understand that the role of the employees in the research process is highly important. How employees react to the targeted change is influenced by a number of factors including employees' emotions and cognitions, communication, and participation in decision making" (Wittig, 2012, p. 27). With this respect and since the intervention researcher is acting under direction of the management, special attention has to be paid to not get abused by and solely act in the spirit of the management (Cassell & Johnson, 2006). Stensaker and Meyer (2011, p. 121) also considered that "one group of employees may effectively implemented change", whereas "another group of employees may implemented change in a passive manner without any enthusiasm". Therefore, the intervention researcher has to make sure that all employees are engaged in the process.

After having clarified the issue about the importance of the way of entering into intervention research, the methodology itself will be elucidated. Research that is conducted in one's own company is defined as insider intervention research (Barth, 2018). Insider intervention research can be conducted either by an internal or external research agent (Barth, 2018).

The internal agent has already worked for a longer period of time for the company and is now shifted into a new role. The external agent is specifically hired for the research project. There are several aspects of insider intervention research that come along with specific implications for the internal as well as the external insider intervention researcher role. Moreover, other aspects of insider intervention research need to be considered regardless internal or external approaches (Barth, 2018; Torbert & Starr, 2005):

- The first two major aspects about insider intervention research that need to be highlighted are the ability to have access to the organisation and the ability to have access to specific parts of the organisation that are relevant for the intervention research (Coghlan & Brannick, 2001). The access is granted by the management (Barth, 2018) which implicates that the decision is influenced by the commitment of the management and the organisational politics. The access to the relevant information will be easier for internal agents as they already know the company for a longer period of time and already have established close relationships with various stakeholders. On the contrary, the risks for internal agents are that they may become strangers in their own company due to the necessity of distance and that they may be sucked in the process due to the necessity of proximity (Barth, 2018). In order to be able to find a good balance between distance and proximity, the researcher needs to constantly reflect on what is demanded at the moment (First-person research).
- Intervention research that is initiated by the management need to serve the company mission as well as the research project. These two objectives may cause stress for the insider intervention researcher (first-person research) (Barth, 2018).
- Other aspects of insider intervention researchers that have to be taken into account when being an internal or external research agent are (Björkman & Sundgren, 2016) damaging one's own reputation, disturbing the col-league's one and the constant anxiety about making a mistake. Here, the external agents are ad-

vantaged because they do not have that close relationships endangered to get disrupted. Furthermore, they are likely to leave the company after finishing the research. Here, researchers need to deal with their own anxiety and reflect on it (first-person research). The disadvantage for external agents, on the contrary, is that trust and relationships are a crucial basis in order to conduct the research appropriately (Barth, 2018).

- Insider intervention research aims at identifying dysfunctions that need to be reduced through interventions that fit the company. That means that every company needs a well-adapted procedure to meet the company's individuality (Barth, 2018).
- The research itself is very time consuming what needs to be considered if the research is simultaneously conducted with tasks of daily business (Barth, 2018). So the time budget for the research needs to be negotiated with the responsible stakeholder.
- Lastly, one important factor that relates to the internal as well as the external insider intervention researcher is the role duality between the researcher role and the practitioner role (Coghlan, M. Sloyan, Roth, & Shani, 2014). At the beginning, the researchers are separated from the research objects and researchers are acting solely in the researcher role. As researchers are gaining more confidence, they are acting in the researcher role or the practitioner role and keep swapping between these two roles. Worth mentioning here is that researchers are acting in the researcher role as well as the practitioner role also during the actual intervention (Coghlan et al., 2014). Björkman and Sundgren (2016) suggest that it is recommendable for insider intervention researchers to express their feelings in a research journal to cope with role duality (first-person research).

All these aspects can be negotiated about and elaborated on while conducting the intervention agreement (Barth, 2018). After having confirmed the agreement, the actual research starts. As the insider intervention researcher needs to serve the company mission as well as the research project, the question where to start arises (Barth, 2018). At the beginning

of the insider intervention research process, the researchers are, as already mentioned (Krainer & Lerchster, 2012), unknowing. The insider intervention researchers need to gain knowledge and collect data before the actual interventions. Going to the grounds for intervention too early may be counterproductive because interventions need to be based on theoretical framework. Therefore, the research has to start with the research objective rather than the company mission (Barth, 2018). Having decided on that, insider intervention researchers are attending the grounds for observations, interviews, and meetings and record their observations with a focus on situations that have an emotional context for the researcher. However, already the negotiating process can be examined. These records will then be analysed by themselves and/or within the resonance group (distance) with the various tools that have been mentioned so far and their theoretical framework. This is necessary for insider intervention researchers to get to know themselves and the underlying structures and assumptions of the organisation better. As this process is iterative, new hypotheses are derived with every further research on the grounds which will then be tested during the actual interventions. Interventions can be either very quiet and gentle or very loud and strong. If it is too quiet and gentle, the actors may not be able to understand or take it. If it is too loud and strong, the actors may react with refusal or resistance. That is another contradiction that needs to be well-balanced by the researcher.

Besides the actual process that demands the management's commitment, insider intervention researchers themselves have to be legitimised by the management. Therefore, following aspects can grant the legitimacy for insider intervention researchers (Barth, 2018):

- The position of the researcher: The aim, the position and a detailed description of the mission of insider intervention researcher needs to be communicated in a clear and transparent manner.
- The question of neutrality: Being truly neutral during the insider intervention research is impossible because already the knowledge that the research is conducted disrupts ordinary daily

happenings. The necessary distance may also occur suspicious because of the uncertainty what the researcher may find. To reduce suspicion, a high level of informal and formal communication is demanded.

- The language of the researcher: Adopting the vocabulary of the organisation will create confidence. Since the literature of intervention research is highly philosophical, the insider intervention researcher consequently is endangered to speak philosophically and may be perceived as esoteric. So there is a need to translate academic literature into tangible language.
- Manipulation: Cassell and Johnson (2006) state that insider intervention researchers that are integrated in the organisation are exposed to manipulation and the result may be distorted by power relations. Barth (2018) mentioned in that context the necessary proximity that is even stronger with internal agents. The high level of immersion causes a higher risk of bias. Also, organisational politics play an important role because researchers may be misused by the management as tool to transfer its thoughts and ideas. To avoid manipulation, regular withdrawals from the grounds are recommendable.
- The “decontamination” device: To enable the withdrawal that is necessary to avoid manipulation, decontamination devices can be created. These range from time-off for literature review, data analysis, etc. to spending time with research colleagues.

These aspects to gain legitimacy, again, highlight the contradiction of proximity and distance for insider intervention researchers. Only if the management is committed to the research project and the research agents are legitimized, insider intervention research will be likely to succeed.

Throughout the process, the derived hypotheses are getting reformulated, compared, grouped and tested as the research project advances and a temporary concept is elaborated. That concept “gains its legitimacy in its confrontation with the facts” (Barth, 2018, p. 146). That means that

concepts are verified by pointing out various observed actions that have led to the hypotheses of the concept. Raising the awareness about the concept will initiate a change in the organisational settings because the established, supposedly counterproductive behaviours, beliefs, norms etc. are evaluated and questioned. Consequently, “new” organisational settings will be established and subsequently evaluated. And this is where, in best case, the organisation will become self-autonomous and the research project ends.

Summarising the previous chapters, intervention researchers need to proceed very sensitively and with a high level of tact. They need to be highly aware of themselves and what triggers their emotions, feelings and reactions. This will result in a change of the intervention researcher's mind-set itself. And precisely that can somehow already be seen as intervention because the change of the researcher's mind-set that will result in a change of the researcher's behaviour may already initiate a change of others. That indicates for the organisational context of intervention research that the organisation can profit from conducting an insider intervention research project because it solely needs a change in the mind-set of one to improve a whole system (Etlin, 2004).

2.2 Organisational and Group Dynamics

So far, the thesis has focused on the method of intervention research. The explanation of the theoretical background of intervention research was necessary to understand why intervention research was chosen for conducting a research with a focus on organisational and group dynamics. So, this chapter will now have a detailed look at organisational and group dynamics in order to be able to support the planned group dynamic intervention and selected observations on the grounds.

According to Krainz, hierarchies are the predominant social structures of organisations (Krainz, 2011). Hierarchies in organisations consist of individuals, pairs, and groups that are interacting with each other. Organisational and group dynamic processes can be observed and brought to the