

UNIVERSITY OF EASTERN FINLAND
Faculty of Social Sciences and Business Studies
Department of Business

**ORGANIZATIONAL CHANGE AS A PROCESS OF ORGANIZATIONAL
BECOMING:
A Multidimensional View of Appreciative Intelligence®**

Master's thesis, Innovation Management
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ABSTRACT

UNIVERSITY OF EASTERN FINLAND

Faculty of Social Sciences and Business Studies

Master's Program in Innovation Management

PARKKINEN, IDA A.: Organizational Change as a Process of Organizational Becoming: A Multidimensional View of Appreciative Intelligence®. Organisaatiomuutos jatkuvan kehityksen prosessina: Moniulotteinen näkemys Arvostavasta älykkyydestä®.

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The purpose of the study is to explore organizational change. The existing literature introduces multiple ways to explore organizational change, and organizational becoming is chosen to appreciate the continuous nature of change in organizations. Organizational becoming is a novel approach to extend the understanding about organizational change. Entering this field of organizational research, a comprehensive understanding about organizational change is adopted to illustrate the complexity of change-related considerations. In addition to organizational becoming, an appreciative line of research leverages a positive approach to organizational change. This study embraces the appreciative approach as a comprehensive understanding about organizational processes. The synthesis of organizational becoming and the appreciative approach constitutes the theoretical framework.

On the basis of the theoretical discussion and the presented empirical conclusions, the objective of the study is to develop a deeper understanding of the continuous change process in the case organization. The organization has initiated the change due to the external pressure for effectiveness and efficiency. The ultimate goal of the organization is to transform into an expert organization which remains vital in the future. The concrete objectives of the change process include the development of leadership culture, decision-making, and operational efficiency.

An action research approach is applied to conduct the empirical study. The appreciative approach is comprehensively adopted to enquire into the organizational change process and to allow the social construction of the research phenomena. In this study, the data collection includes an individual interview, focus group research and observation. The empirical data consists of the appreciative inquiry materials, transcripts of an individual interview and focus group discussions, post-it notes, observation notes and the research notes made by the researcher.

This study tackles the interrelationship between the change in the world and the related pressure on organizations, which induces organizational development. A gap in the existing literature is addressed by examining the link between organizational becoming and the appreciative approach. The primary interest of the study is to understand how Appreciative Intelligence® shapes organizational change. Based on the empirical findings, a multidimensional view of Appreciative Intelligence® is advanced. The individual, collective and organizational dimensions of Appreciative Intelligence® are thoroughly described to highlight the applicability of these dimensions in the ongoing change. Recommendations for cultivating the change in the case organization are made.

TIIVISTELMÄ
 ITÄ-SUOMEN YLIOPISTO
 Yhteiskuntatieteiden ja kauppatieteiden tiedekunta
 Kauppatieteiden laitos
 Innovaatiojohtaminen

PARKKINEN, IDA A.: Organizational Change as a Process of Organizational Becoming: A Multidimensional View of Appreciative Intelligence®. Organisaatiomuutos jatkuvan kehityksen prosessina: Moniulotteinen näkemys Arvostavasta älykkyydestä®.

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Pro gradu -tutkielma käsittelee organisaatiomuutosta. Olemassa oleva kirjallisuus esittelee useita tapoja tutkia organisaatiomuutosta. Tämä tutkielma perustuu näkökulmaan, joka tarkastelee jatkuvaa muutosta ja kehitystä organisaatioissa (organizational becoming). Jatkuvan kehityksen näkökulma on uusi lähestymistapa, joka laajentaa käsitystä organisaatiomuutoksesta. Tähän tutkimusalueeseen liittyen tutkielma omaksuu kattavan käsityksen organisaatiomuutoksesta, mikä mahdollistaa monimutkaisten muutokseen liittyvien näkökohtien kuvaamisen. Jatkuvan kehityksen näkökulman lisäksi arvostava tutkimussuunta hyödyntää myönteistä lähestymistapaa organisaatiomuutokseen. Tämä tutkielma sisällyttää arvostavan lähestymistavan kokonaisvaltaisena käsityksenä organisaatioprosesseista. Teoriaviitekehys rakentuu jatkuvan kehityksen ja arvostavan lähestymistavan yhdistelmänä.

Tutkielman keskeisenä tavoitteena on luoda syvempää ymmärrystä jatkuvasta muutosprosessista tutkimuksen kohteena olevassa organisaatiossa. Teoreettinen keskustelu ja empiiriset päätelmät rakentavat kuvaa organisaation muutosprosessista, joka on käynnistetty ulkoisten paineiden takia tehokkuuden ja suorituskyvyn lisäämiseksi. Organisaation perimmäisenä tavoitteena on muodostua asiantuntijaorganisaatioksi, joka säilyttää elinvoimaisuutensa tulevaisuudessa. Muutosprosessin konkreettiset tavoitteet ovat johtamiskulttuurin, päätöksenteon ja toiminnan tehokkuuden kehittäminen.

Empiirisen tutkimuksen suorittamiseksi käytetään toimintatutkimusta. Arvostava lähestymistapa omaksutaan kattavana menetelmänä tutkia organisaation muutosprosessia ja mahdollistaa sosiaalinen konstruktio osana tutkimusta. Aineisto kerätään haastattelun, fokusryhmätutkimuksen ja havainnoinnin menetelmillä. Empiirinen aineisto koostuu arvostavan kehittämisen materiaaleista, haastattelun ja fokusryhmäkeskusteluiden teksteistä puhtaaksikirjoitettuna, post it –lapuista sekä havainnointi- ja tutkimusmuistiinpanoista.

Tutkielma käsittelee ympäröivän muutoksen ja siitä organisaatioille aiheutuvan paineen keskinäistä suhdetta, mikä saa aikaan organisaatioiden kehityksen. Tutkimusaukko, johon tämä tutkielma kohdistuu, on jatkuvan kehityksen ja arvostavan lähestymistavan yhteys. Tutkielman tavoite on ymmärtää, kuinka Arvostava älykkyyks® muokkaa organisaatiomuutosta. Empiirisiin tuloksiin perustuen tutkielma kehittää moniulotteisen näkemyksen Arvostavasta älykkyydestä®. Henkilökohtainen, kollektiivinen ja organisatorinen ulottuvuus kuvataan perusteellisesti, jotta näiden ulottuvuuksien soveltuvuus jatkuvan muutoksen yhteydessä voidaan osoittaa. Tutkielma antaa suositukset muutoksen edistämiseen kohdeorganisaatiossa.

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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Appreciative Intelligence® in Organizational Change

This study examines the process of organizational change. The need and necessity for change often emerge outside the organization as the current business life involves a continuous flow of events. With a fast pace of change, the contemporary world is characterized by constant evolution (Cooperrider et al., 1995; Gergen & Thatchenkery, 2004; Watkins & Mohr, 2011). Considering the ongoing synchronization of adjustments and the related challenges, the effect of the extrinsic environment on the execution of organizational change merits attention (Helms Mills et al., 2009).

Organizations often face the pressure for change presented by the external environment. This pressure causes the organizations to re-examine their operations and objectives. To appreciate the external change, the contemporary world has been described by volatility, irregularity and ambiguity (Watkins & Mohr, 2011). Based on various investigations of contemporary business life, several researchers have acknowledged the incessantly changing nature of the world (Chia, 2002; Tsoukas & Chia, 2002; Van de Ven & Poole, 2005; Watkins & Mohr, 2011). Therefore, this study aims to understand how the change can be leveraged for organizational success in the long term (Barge & Oliver, 2003).

The existing literature introduces multiple ways to explore organizational change and development. Considering the necessity of change, an incongruity between the current and ideal conditions often engenders revisions (Helms Mills et al., 2009). Suffice it to say, the current research concentrates on investigating the organizational development in terms of change resistance (Tsoukas & Chia, 2002; Ford et al., 2008; Thomas et al., 2011) and change management (Pawar & Eastman, 1997; Chatman & Eunyoung Cha, 2003; Alimo-Metcalfe & Alban-Metcalfe, 2005; Caldwell, 2005; Helms Mills et al., 2009; Sackmann et al., 2009; Brookes, 2011; Oreg & Berson, 2011; Pandit & Jhamtani, 2011; Seo et al., 2012; Lehtimäki et al., 2013; Vyas, 2013).

With regard to the current organizational research, the initiatives to examine organizational change are welcomed as an inviting direction. The postmodern literature recognizes the

organizational state of constant change, and considers the prior efforts scarce in describing the continuous construction in organizations (Cooperrider et al., 1995). Therefore, researchers have been invited to expand their interests in investigating the various ongoing processes of the postmodern phenomena (Gergen & Thatchenkery, 2004). For example, Watkins and Mohr (2011) advanced change as an inherent construct of the world which deserves a reformulation in organizational research.

In postmodern research, organizational becoming is a novel approach to extend the understanding about organizational change. It appreciates the continuous change that is inherent in the contemporary organizations. Several researchers have demonstrated the cohesion of organizational becoming and organizational change (Tsoukas & Chia, 2002; Carlsen, 2006; Sackmann et al., 2009; Jian, 2011; Thomas et al., 2011). Entering this field of organizational research, I adopt a comprehensive understanding about organizational change, which contributes to the attainment of favorable results (Sackmann et al., 2009; Parkkinen et al., 2014; Parkkinen et al., 2015). I perceive organizations as constantly evolving entities where an ongoing development is a natural occurrence (Tsoukas & Chia, 2002; Carlsen, 2006; Sackmann et al., 2009; Thomas et al., 2011). This perception opposes the view of change as a phenomenon that is executed in stages (Clegg et al., 2005; Jian, 2011; Weik, 2011).

In addition to the novel approach of organizational becoming in postmodern literature, an appreciative line of research has gradually emerged to leverage a positive approach to organizational change. In this study, the appreciative approach involves organizational members in the change process and shapes the collective understanding about the positive organizational characteristics (Barge & Oliver, 2003; Gergen & Thatchenkery, 2004; Behara et al., 2008; Dewar & Sharp, 2013; Parkkinen et al., 2014; Parkkinen et al., 2015). I advance the appreciative approach as a distinctive means of organizational development (Watkins & Mohr, 2011). In this way, the organizational strengths and the positive outcomes of appreciation shape the basis for constructing change which emerges in the cooperation of organizational members (Barge & Oliver, 2003; Gergen & Thatchenkery, 2004).

In this study, I engage in the appreciative approach. Following Watkins and Mohr (2011), I embrace the appreciative approach as a comprehensive understanding about organizational processes. As a result of the organizational change, I illustrate how the comprehensiveness of the appreciative approach shapes the pursuit of a better organizational future (Barge & Oliver,

2003). In this regard, I highlight Appreciative Intelligence[®] in sustaining the favorable effects of the comprehensive appreciation (Thatchenkery & Metzker, 2006). Appreciative Intelligence[®] arises from an individual capability to acknowledge the advantageous conditions while it can be leveraged for organizational change by the collective interplay in organizations (Thatchenkery, 2013).

This study addresses a gap in the existing literature by examining the link between organizational becoming and the appreciative approach. Despite the similarity between organizational becoming and the appreciative approach, no empirical evidence for connecting these concepts can be found in the existing literature. Both lines of theorizing are based on the same methodological foundation within postmodernism. Social constructivism has been closely associated with the foundation of the appreciative approach (Cooperrider et al., 1995; Barge & Oliver, 2003; Gergen & Thatchenkery, 2004; Watkins & Mohr, 2011). Similarly, organizational becoming connects with the social constructivist conception of ongoing change (Cooperrider et al., 1995; Gergen & Thatchenkery, 2004). In this regard, organizational becoming establishes the opposition to the traditional view of change that is completed in fixed stages (Clegg et al., 2005; Jian, 2011; Weik, 2011). Appreciative Intelligence[®] contributes to the theorizing of organizational becoming by connecting with the continuously changing organizations (Tsoukas & Chia, 2002; Carlsen, 2006; Sackmann et al., 2009; Thomas et al., 2011).

Considering the gap that this study addresses, the emerging view of the organizations and the social activity are central considerations. I join postmodern researchers who have supported social constructivism as an approach to understand organizational change (Cooperrider et al., 1995; Gergen & Thatchenkery, 2004; Watkins & Mohr, 2011). With a social constructivist methodology, I gain insights into organizational life (Gergen & Thatchenkery, 2004). Barge and Oliver (2003) underlined the centrality of communication in social construction. Therefore, I join in and highlight dialog and reflective action in addition to the ongoing nature of change (Gergen & Thatchenkery, 2004).

This study responds to several invitations within postmodern literature. My investigation of organizational change as a process of organizational becoming with the appreciative approach provides an innovative discovery of the change process. Innovative investigations in organizations have explicitly been encouraged and summoned (Gergen & Thatchenkery, 2004). Similarly, investigating the phenomena of contemporary change has been encouraged to update

the current views of embracing ongoing change in organizations (Watkins & Mohr, 2011). Engaging in the appreciative approach, I adopt the novel terms and habits of research, which was appealed by Cooperrider et al. (1995). Specifically, I join in a proposal presented by Thatchenkery and Metzker (2006) to advance the knowledge of the dynamic Appreciative Intelligence®. They recognized the variable nature of this construct together with its responsiveness to novel forms of application across manifold levels.

1.2 The Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to enhance the understanding about organizational change and extend the application of the appreciative approach to the ongoing change. My study embraces the understanding about change in the contemporary world which is in a constant state of flux (Cooperrider et al., 1995; Chia, 2002; Tsoukas & Chia, 2002; Gergen & Thatchenkery, 2004; Van de Ven & Poole, 2005; Watkins & Mohr, 2011). In this regard, I focus on organizations which are also described being constantly changing entities (Tsoukas & Chia, 2002; Carlsen, 2006; Sackmann et al., 2009; Thomas et al., 2011). Drawing on this postmodern configuration in terms of pervasive change, I relate the research problem to the interrelationship between change in the world and the related pressure on organizations which induces organizational development.

Based on the purpose of my thesis research study and the research problem, I address the following research question:

How does Appreciative Intelligence® shape an organizational change process?

Following the tridimensional concept of Appreciative Intelligence® including individual, organizational and societal levels presented by Thatchenkery and Metzker (2006), this study advances another multidimensional view of Appreciative Intelligence®. This view explicates the diffusion of appreciation within the process of organizational change and leverages Appreciative Intelligence® for future success in the changing organization.

To tackle the research question, I address the following research objectives in my thesis research:

- To explore the existing literature on organizational change as a process of organizational becoming.
- To examine organizational change with comprehensive appreciation.
- To empirically investigate collective intelligence on organizational change.

I explore the theoretical background of organizational change from the perspective of organizational becoming. This contributes to the fulfillment of the second research objective by highlighting the appreciative approach and connecting it with the organizational becoming perspective on change. Finally, the third objective is to empirically investigate organizational change by appreciatively enquiring into the collective intelligence on change in the case organization.

This study makes three contributions to the existing literature. First, I extend the understanding about organizational becoming in the context of organizational change by applying Appreciative Intelligence[®]. Responding to several invitations, I engage in an innovative investigation into organizational life to enhance the current views of ongoing change in organizations (Gergen & Thatchenkery, 2004; Watkins & Mohr, 2011). Second, I demonstrate that Appreciative Intelligence[®] is applicable in the context of organizational change as a multidimensional construct. This study proposes a multidimensional view of Appreciative Intelligence[®], which contributes to the tridimensional concept of Thatchenkery and Metzker (2006) including individual, organizational and societal levels of Appreciative Intelligence[®]. Third, the embrace of the appreciative approach continues the work initiated by Cooperrider et al. (1995). In this regard, I contribute to the comprehensive view of the appreciative approach (Barge & Oliver, 2003; Fitzgerald et al., 2010; Watkins & Mohr, 2011).

In addition to the theoretical contributions, I explicate the implications for the case organization and other actors working with the ongoing change. This study provides insights into practical organizational life (Gergen & Thatchenkery, 2004). Based on the empirical results, I underline the practical applicability of the comprehensive appreciative approach (Barge & Oliver, 2003; Fitzgerald et al., 2010; Watkins & Mohr, 2011). I also explicate how the organizational change is utilized to construct a better organizational future (Barge & Oliver, 2003). In this regard,

Appreciative Intelligence[®] provides the multidimensional understanding of sustaining the favorable effects of comprehensive appreciation (Thatchenkery & Metzker, 2006). It also contributes to the special requirements of continuously changing organizations (Tsoukas & Chia, 2002; Carlsen, 2006; Sackmann et al., 2009; Thomas et al., 2011).

1.3 Key Concepts of the Study

The key concepts in this study are postmodernism, social constructivism, organizational change, organizational becoming, an appreciative approach and Appreciative Intelligence[®]. In this section, I explain each of these concepts.

Postmodernism is an overarching direction in scientific research, and it includes various lines of research. Postmodernism has emerged as a response to the current conditions that need investigation and understanding (Cooperrider et al., 1995; Gergen & Thatchenkery, 2004; Watkins and Mohr, 2011). In this study, the postmodern contribution to the view of the world is essential. Postmodernism embraces the continuously changing world (Chia, 2002; Tsoukas & Chia, 2002; Van de Ven & Poole, 2005; Watkins & Mohr, 2011) and ongoing evolution (Cooperrider et al., 1995; Gergen & Thatchenkery, 2004; Watkins & Mohr, 2011). Therefore, the integral role of postmodern research in producing relevant insights into the present needs to be appreciated (Gergen & Thatchenkery, 2004).

Within postmodernism, social constructivism has gained acceptance as an inviting direction for research. For example, Watkins and Mohr (2011) embraced the social constructivist ideas in promoting organizational development. Cooperrider et al. (1995) noted the support for the constant change in organizations, which was provided by social constructivism. The contribution of social constructivism to reconstructing the modernist views has especially been emphasized as social constructivist research allows for investigating organizational life as a social process (Gergen & Thatchenkery, 2004).

Social constructivism has a specific emphasis on social interaction and dialog. Social constructivism underlines how social interaction and discourse influence the construction of various contextual phenomena (Watkins & Mohr, 2011). In this regard, the social constructivist focus on language practices is widely recognized (Cooperrider et al., 1995; Gergen &

Thatchenkery, 2004; Watkins & Mohr, 2011). Furthermore, the social constructivist shift to embrace collectiveness and interaction is peculiar to this line of research (Cooperrider et al., 1995; Gergen & Thatchenkery, 2004).

I utilize social constructivism for my understanding about organizational change. I adopt a current comprehensive view on organizational change (Sackmann et al., 2009; Parkkinen et al., 2014; Parkkinen et al., 2015) as a process of organizational becoming. Following Thomas et al. (2011), I define organizational becoming as a process of producing collective intelligence on the basis of interaction and discussion among organizational members. According to the organizational becoming perspective, organizations are constantly evolving entities where change and ongoing development are natural occurrences (Tsoukas & Chia, 2002; Carlsen, 2006; Sackmann et al., 2009; Thomas et al., 2011).

Organizational becoming extends the understanding about continuous organizational change by opposing the conventional definition of change. In organizational becoming research, the active nature and the constant development of organizations are extensively recognized (Chia, 2002; Tsoukas & Chia, 2002; Clegg et al., 2005; Van de Ven & Poole, 2005; Carlsen, 2006; Sackmann et al., 2009; Jian, 2011; Thomas et al., 2011; Weik, 2011). In terms of change execution, the existing literature on organizational becoming demonstrates the effect of organizational communication (Sackmann et al., 2009; Thomas et al., 2011) and organizational collectiveness (Carlsen, 2006; Sackmann et al., 2009; Thomas et al., 2011).

With regard to the appreciative approach, it is based on social constructivism. The social constructivist foundations of the appreciative approach are acknowledged by postmodern researchers (Barge & Oliver, 2003; Gergen & Thatchenkery, 2004). I adopt a comprehensive view of appreciation which highlights the variety of issues available for appreciation (Barge & Oliver, 2003; Fitzgerald et al., 2010; Watkins & Mohr, 2011). I embrace the appreciative approach as a comprehensive understanding about organizational processes (Watkins & Mohr, 2011). This allows me to support the postmodern view of change resistance as a contributor to organizational change (Tsoukas & Chia, 2002; Ford et al., 2008; Thomas et al., 2011). In this regard, Appreciative Intelligence[®] is essential in sustaining the favorable effects of comprehensive appreciation (Thatchenkery & Metzker, 2006).

I employ Appreciative Intelligence® as an organizational becoming approach to examining organizational change. Appreciative Intelligence® originates from the appreciative approach that involves organizational members in the change process (Barge & Oliver, 2003; Gergen & Thatchenkery, 2004; Behara et al., 2008). As Thatchenkery and Metzker (2006) noted, the manifestation of Appreciative Intelligence® facilitates appreciative processes in the organization. Consequently, Appreciative Intelligence® enables the examination of the multidimensional activity in the continuously changing organizations (Tsoukas & Chia, 2002; Carlsen, 2006; Sackmann et al., 2009; Thomas et al., 2011). Following these ideas, I define Appreciative Intelligence® as a comprehensive ability to reflect on the positive dynamics of change and to project the desired future emerging from the change.

1.4 The Case Organization

The empirical study was conducted in the Orthodox Church of Finland. Due to the external pressures of the current operating environment, the organization initiated a change process to revise the administrative and operational practices. Although the Church had a long history based on a strong value base, the organizational change was needed to address the increasing demands for efficiency and effectiveness. Developing an expert organization was considered a pathway to success which would ensure that the Church remains vital in the future. In this section, I describe the case organization by explicating the main objectives of their change efforts and the nature of the Church organization.

The empirical context provided by the Orthodox Church of Finland is ideal for my appreciative investigation of continuous change. The ongoing development activity, which is occurring in the Church, connects with the organizational becoming theorizing while the organization has adapted to the appreciative approach. An appreciative inquiry intervention was initially used to engage organizational members in the change process and to build a shared understanding about positive organizational characteristics (Barge & Oliver, 2003; Gergen & Thatchenkery, 2004; Dewar & Sharp, 2013). Drawing on this background, I elaborate on the diffusion of appreciation and the emergence of the expert organization. In the changing organization, this study presents the multidimensional view of Appreciative Intelligence® to highlight the recommendations for achieving the desired objectives (Thatchenkery & Metzker, 2006).

The goal of the organization is to transform into an expert organization where operational effectiveness, leadership culture, and decision-making are developed to match the current and future needs. The organizational members define the expert organization to consist of experts addressing their areas of responsibility based on their specialized knowledge. In this way, the experts provide the justification and argumentation for efficient organizational operations and initiatives. In terms of operational effectiveness, the change involves the secular organization that needs to balance between the changeless Orthodox tradition and the current demands in terms of efficiency and effectiveness. Specifically, the reform of the administration, a modern organizational structure, and an increased organizational discussion are the main objectives of the operational change.

Decision-making is another major area in the change as it affects the annual rotation of the organization. Considering the multifaceted structure of decision-making, development is desired to build processes that serve both decision makers and the preparing parties. The objectives of the development include the quality of decisions, open discussion and an improved technique for making decisions. With regard to the development of the leadership culture, management presence is identified as a primary objective. An active style of leadership is preferred to enable the balancing between the administrative and religious issues in the Church organization.

In relation to the continuous nature of the change, the organizational members refer to several concrete changes although the change is projected to last for several years. For example, clarified responsibilities and a renewed collective agreement are highlighted as advancements. Improved preparation, sleeked processes and a clear argumentation between the decision maker and the preparing party are identified as already visible changes in the decision making. Therefore, small changes and adjustments are taking place in a continuous and gradual manner in the organization. The change is stated to be moving in the right direction and the formulation of the expert organization is deemed to be a strength of the Church in the future. In the beginning of 2020, the goal is to have the new form of administration in the Church.

The Orthodox Church of Finland is a national church of Finland together with the Evangelical-Lutheran Church. The Orthodox Church obtained its position as a national church when Finland became independent in 1917. Since 1923, the Church has belonged to the Patriarchate of Constantinople as a self-governing archbishopric. (www.ort.fi.) Nowadays, there are

approximately 62,000 members, and the number of the members has been increasing since the 1990s in the Orthodox Church in Finland (Aikonen & Okulov, 2013). The challenge of the Church is to maintain its members and to discover ways to be attractive to contemporary people. There are three dioceses of the Finnish Orthodox Church, which include Karelia, Helsinki and Oulu dioceses. The Archbishop is the head of the Karelia diocese while metropolitans direct the dioceses of Helsinki and Oulu. In addition, the Orthodox Church has 24 parishes in Finland which are entitled to collect taxes. (www.ort.fi.) A convent and a monastery maintain the Orthodox traditions and treasure the Orthodox culture in Finland (Aikonen & Okulov, 2013). In the future, the vitality of the small local communities and the development of know-how, for instance, are the desired adjustments that would be visible in ten years.

In terms of administrative authority, the Synod has the responsibility for administration and execution activities in the Church. Furthermore, the Church Assembly and the Council of Bishops are the governing bodies with legislative power. (www.ort.fi.) The Archbishop is responsible for leading the Church together with the above-mentioned bodies in addition to representing the Church in different functions. In the Synod, lay representatives, bishops, priests, and cantors are involved to discuss a variety of issues concerning, for example, legislation, finances and spirituality. In the parishes, the Council has the ultimate jurisdiction in terms of spiritual life, finances and administration. (Aikonen & Okulov, 2013.)

A major organizational characteristic of the Church is its position as an entity subject to public law. The position of the Church poses obligations to maintain certain procedures and standards of operation at the Church. Accomplishing the necessary procedures may cause waiting in advancing organizational initiatives. Therefore, changes tend to proceed slowly, and the relevant schedules need to be followed. For example, the law-drafting work is a time-consuming process that includes working groups of the Church representatives, the ministries, and the parliament.

With regard to the operational culture of the Church, the organization is dedicated to advancing a dynamic culture. Changing the rigid culture is considered time-consuming as the limitations posed by the public law and the Orthodox tradition need to be addressed. Considering the traditions of the Church, there is also a unique culture of asking for a blessing on every initiative. The blessing is considered a prerequisite for progress, which is a fundamental idea in the

Orthodox tradition and upbringing. Therefore, the organizational members acknowledge the influence of this blessing culture on the practical work in the Church organization.

1.5 Structure of the Thesis

In Chapter 2, I discuss the theoretical background and illustrate the interrelated nature of the key concepts. I start my theoretical discussion by describing the primary streams of research on organizational change. In my thesis research, I aim to understand change as a significant theme in contemporary organizations. To fulfill this purpose, I discuss organizational becoming and the related theorizing. Organizational becoming not only highlights the centrality of change in organizations, but it also defines the main characteristics of organizational change. Therefore, organizational becoming forms the basis for understanding and conceptualizing change in this study. The appreciative approach provides a comprehensive embrace of the change in organizations. I utilize the appreciative approach as a primary component to examine organizational change, and it is the underlying dynamic in this study.

Within the appreciative approach, I highlight positive collectiveness to illustrate the interrelationship between organizational becoming and the appreciative approach. The discussion on positive collectiveness is based on the central features of organizational becoming that can be identified in the appreciative literature as well. To substantiate the foundation for my empirical research, I concentrate on Appreciative Intelligence® to expose a factor that shapes the process of organizational change. Similarly, I discuss collective intelligence as a meaningful construct in an emerging organization. Finally, I present the theoretical framework of this study. This framework involves the combination of organizational becoming and the appreciative approach with the relevant constructs described in the Chapter.

Chapter 3 includes the methodological approach utilized in this study. I specify my action research approach to examining organizational change in the case organization. In this regard, I refer to social constructivism as a basis for the research methodology. I also draw attention to the appreciative methodology that forms the foundation for the empirical investigation of ongoing change. With regard to the action research, I elaborate the data collection by referring to the appreciative inquiry intervention, an individual interview, focus group research and observations. As the focus group research and the related appreciative facilitation are the main

considerations of this study, I describe these aspects in detail. I concentrate on the data analysis and introduce the categories of my empirical analysis. Finally, I pay special attention to the evaluation of the methodology.

Chapter 4 covers the results of the empirical study. The analysis categories presented in the methodology chapter form the basis for discussion in this chapter. Specifically, I highlight continuous change, organizational collectiveness, organizational communication and positive collectiveness as the main categories. Each category includes various general categories and sub-categories that I highlight in this Chapter. I utilize the categories to illustrate the ongoing change process and gather evidence for the existing appreciation in the case organization. Finally, I present a summary of the key results.

Chapter 5 includes the final reflection on this study. In the discussion part, I combine the key findings of the empirical research with the existing literature. In this way, I illustrate the theoretical implications of these key findings. I also highlight the key contributions of this study by referring to the initial objectives and my research question. Based on these discussions, I provide my recommendations for the case organization to cultivate their continuous change process by utilizing the multidimensional view of Appreciative Intelligence®. Finally, I present an evaluation of the study, future research potential on this topic and managerial implications of my key findings.

2 THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

2.1 Introduction to Organizational Change

Organizational change is a widely studied subject in organizational research. Although an exhaustive review of studies on organizational change is outside the scope of my paper, I highlight the most relevant streams of contemporary research. In this way, I form a basis for my discussion on organizational change as a process of organizational becoming. In general, current literature on organizational change can be divided into two streams of research. First, change management has been extensively studied (Pawar & Eastman, 1997; Chatman & Eunyoung Cha, 2003; Alimo-Metcalfe & Alban-Metcalfe, 2005; Caldwell, 2005; Helms Mills et al., 2009; Sackmann et al., 2009; Brookes, 2011; Oreg & Berson, 2011; Pandit & Jhamtani, 2011; Seo et al., 2012; Lehtimäki et al., 2013; Vyas, 2013). Second, change resistance has received increasing attention (Tsoukas & Chia, 2002; Ford et al., 2008; Thomas et al., 2011; Parkkinen et al., 2014).

I begin my introduction to organizational change by highlighting the established nature of change. In the existing literature on organizational development, planned change processes are often discussed. These discussions refer to the traditional conceptions of change (Helms Mills et al., 2009; Sackmann et al., 2009). Although there is a myriad of reasons for organizational revisions, a change is often initiated when current and ideal conditions do not match (Helms Mills et al., 2009). For example, Thomas et al. (2011) examined a case company that was undergoing a process of cultural change. Sackmann et al. (2009) specifically addressed the realization of a strategic change. They facilitated the change process by illustrating the conflicting views of organizational relationships and behavioral areas that could be developed.

In terms of change management, I concentrate on the current trends of research. The leadership activities significantly contribute to the execution of organizational change (Alimo-Metcalfe & Alban-Metcalfe, 2005; Lehtimäki et al., 2013; Vyas, 2013). Pandit and Jhamtani (2011) acknowledged that active leaders recognize the circumstantial effect on the leadership activities and employ different manners of leading to inspire people. Specifically, the effect of situational factors on change management activities has been widely identified (Pawar & Eastman, 1997; Helms Mills et al., 2009; Pandit & Jhamtani, 2011). On the other hand, the potential for

advancing leadership activities has been examined (Pandit & Jhamtani, 2011; Lehtimäki et al., 2013). For example, Chatman and Eunyong Cha (2003) depicted how leaders can utilize the organizational culture to manage change in the organization.

The existing literature highlights the application of various leadership theories to organizational change (Caldwell, 2005; Helms Mills et al., 2009). For instance, Caldwell (2005) emphasized the collective theories of leadership, which allowed creative views to be formed. Brookes (2011) investigated how appreciative leadership contributes to inspiring the involvement of the personnel in a change. In a similar way, several researchers have been intrigued by transformational leadership (Pawar & Eastman, 1997; Helms Mills et al., 2009; Oreg & Berson, 2011; Seo et al., 2012; Vyas, 2013). Helms Mills et al. (2009) highlighted transformational leadership as a proactive way of encouraging and inspiring the pursuit of ultimate organizational targets. In the long term, transformational leadership facilitates the emotional involvement of the organizational members in the change and influences their reactions to the change (Seo et al., 2012; Vyas, 2013). In this way, transformational leadership contributes to a comprehensive positive change in the organization (Vyas, 2013).

Concerning change resistance, it has received increasing attention as a component of organizational change. The existing literature widely discusses the opposition to change (Tsoukas & Chia, 2002; Ford et al., 2008; Oreg & Berson, 2011; Thomas et al., 2011; Parkkinen et al., 2014). It is acknowledged that people often encounter challenging issues in organizational change (Vyas, 2013). Therefore, discomfort and uncertainty tend to be connected with a change process, and these reactions are easily interpreted as opposition without further consideration (Ford et al., 2008). However, to ensure the success of the change, it is confirmed that trust needs to be established in the organization (Sackmann et al., 2009). Managers who fail to re-establish trust and compensate for the losses experienced by the employees within the change process have been shown to confront resistant behavior (Ford et al., 2008).

Prior research has established the connection between change management and change resistance. Change managers may subjectively interpret opposition to exist based on employees' demeanor while the managerial inability to effectively communicate and adequately justify the change can cause opposition (Ford et al., 2008). On the other hand, exhibiting transformational leadership can reduce the likelihood of opposition and moderate the existence of opposition in a change situation (Oreg & Berson, 2011). Opposition can be

anticipated rather than unexpected if the various reasons for a negative attitude toward change are understood (Helms Mills et al., 2009). Employees' understanding about the change likely evolves while the change proceeds and, therefore, expediting the acceptance of change and imposing predetermined values on employees cannot be recommended (Sackmann et al., 2009). As a result, investments in the relationship between change leaders and employees are crucial to reaching a successful outcome in the change process (Ford et al., 2008).

According to the postmodern view, change is not viewed as a consistent event (Cooperrider et al., 1995; Gergen & Thatchenkery, 2004; Watkins & Mohr, 2011). Instead, change resistance is considered an active dynamic that contributes to the execution of change. A common conclusion indicates that the opposition is not necessarily a negative factor (Ford et al., 2008; Thomas et al., 2011). Initiatives for the redefinition of change resistance have been issued to extend existing knowledge of the phenomenon (Ford et al., 2008; Thomas et al., 2011). These initiatives are based on the remark that the opposition is not seen as destructive in the other fields of business research as in the change management literature (Ford et al., 2008).

Especially the researchers who argue for the emergence of social constructivism and organizational becoming have addressed the contribution of change resistance to the overall execution of change. The advocates of organizational becoming avoid labeling change opposition as a negative phenomenon (Tsoukas & Chia, 2002; Thomas et al., 2011; Parkkinen et al., 2014). This tendency has emerged due to the contributory role of change resistance in advancing the conceptions of change (Thomas et al., 2011). Researchers have demonstrated the benefits of opposition in activating employees and engaging them in the change process (Ford et al., 2008). Therefore, a positive view of change resistance is included in the theorizing of my study as well.

2.2 Organizational Becoming Perspective on Change

In this section, I provide an overview of the organizational becoming perspective on change to justify its applicability in my investigation of organizational change. Organizational becoming has its basis on social constructivism. Therefore, it highlights the state of constant change and the significance of the collective action and discourse within organizational life as I illustrate in the following paragraphs. In many respects, organizational becoming contributes to the social

constructivist literature within postmodernism by opposing the conventional definition of change. Thus, it extends the understanding about organizational change. In the organizational becoming theorizing, change is an emerging process and, therefore, it cannot be viewed as a phenomenon that is executed in fixed stages (Clegg et al., 2005; Jian, 2011; Weik, 2011).

In the field of organizational research, I enter the organizational becoming discussion to investigate the continuing change process. I adopt a current comprehensive view on organizational change, which enables the attainment of favorable results across various organizational functions (Sackmann et al., 2009; Parkkinen et al., 2014; Parkkinen et al., 2015). Organizational becoming is a novel approach to appreciate the continuous nature of change in organizations (Tsoukas & Chia, 2002; Carlsen, 2006; Sackmann et al., 2009; Thomas et al., 2011). Several researchers have made significant advancements by demonstrating the applicability of organizational becoming perspective on organizational change (Tsoukas & Chia, 2002; Carlsen, 2006; Sackmann et al., 2009; Jian, 2011; Thomas et al., 2011). Therefore, it can be understood how the business life with a fast synchronization of events and the related challenges affects the execution of organizational change (Helms Mills et al., 2009).

Organizational becoming provides a multifaceted platform for examining the organizational change that is a continuous process in organizations. Based on various investigations, there are opportunities to extend the application of organizational becoming to understand change (Tsoukas & Chia, 2002; Sackmann et al., 2009; Thomas et al., 2011; Parkkinen et al., 2014; Parkkinen et al., 2015). For example, Tsoukas and Chia (2002) examined the literature to demonstrate the applicability of organizational becoming in the context of organizational change. On the other hand, Sackmann et al. (2009) associated the discussion on organizational becoming with the permanence of strategic revisions. Thomas et al. (2011) connected organizational becoming with organizational change by focusing on the interplay between organizational discourse and resistant behavior.

Although a detailed ontological discussion is outside the scope of my paper, I discuss the basic elements of organizational becoming to illustrate the positioning of my study. The principles of process theory are inevitably underlying this study due to the organizational becoming theorizing. The process theory is a useful premise for the discussion on ongoing change. Suffice it to say, the process theory focuses on how various processes emerge over a particular period (Clegg et al., 2005; Van de Ven & Poole, 2005; Jian, 2011; Weik, 2011). I join several

researchers whose investigations into the various processes of changing and becoming are based on the process theory of organizational change (Clegg et al., 2005; Van de Ven & Poole, 2005; Jian, 2011; Weik, 2011; Langlely et al., 2013).

Within the scientific community, the continuous ontological discussion highlights the importance of understanding the basic principles of organizational becoming theorizing. As remarks about the limitations and contradictions of existing knowledge have been made (Jian, 2011; Nasim & Sushil, 2011; Weik, 2011), I give support to the restructured views. I concur with Weik (2011), who has critiqued the original principles of organizational becoming, insomuch that a form of a constant subject, such as an organization, needs to exist. Similarly, Chia (2002) conceptualizes organizations as observable constructs striving for conquering and restraining the disorder of change. Instead of considering every aspect of the world to alter continuously, an ontological reference point needs to be maintained (Weik, 2011). This alignment enables meaningful work with various other constructs.

2.2.1 Continuous Change

There are various definitions of organizational becoming emphasizing the slightly different aspects of the phenomenon. Following Thomas et al. (2011), I define organizational becoming as an ongoing process of producing collective intelligence on the basis of interaction and discussion among organizational members. I adopt the comprehensive view of organizational change that acknowledges the need to address multiple organizational constructs (Sackmann et al., 2009; Parkkinen et al., 2014; Parkkinen et al., 2015). I join the advocates of organizational becoming by conceptualizing change as a continuous character of organizations (Tsoukas & Chia, 2002; Carlsen, 2006; Sackmann et al., 2009; Thomas et al., 2011).

Continuous change is a major theme in the organizational becoming discussion, which opposes the conventional definition of change. In this way, organizational becoming contributes to postmodern organizational research with a social constructivist focus. I include continuous change in the theoretical framework that is later presented in Figure 1. I justify the incorporation of continuous change into my framework by the active nature and the constant development of organizations. These aspects are extensively recognized in organizational becoming research (Chia, 2002; Tsoukas & Chia, 2002; Clegg et al., 2005; Van de Ven & Poole, 2005; Carlsen,

2006; Sackmann et al., 2009; Jian, 2011; Thomas et al., 2011; Weik, 2011; Parkkinen et al., 2014; Parkkinen et al., 2015).

Organizational becoming connects with the discussion on organizational learning, which extends its conception. This discussion is closely related to my understanding about ongoing organizational change and, therefore, I include a brief overview of organizational learning. In this regard, Clegg et al. (2005) have made significant advancement. They join the discussion on organizational becoming by concurring with Tsoukas and Chia (2002) in terms of organizations being constantly evolving instead of established objects. Clegg et al. (2005) advance the idea that organizational becoming enables the reappraisal of organizational learning that can be comprehended as a background development of the organization.

The connection between organizational becoming and organizational learning can thus be inferred from the existing literature although explicit remarks on this connection may rarely be made. For example, the work of Thomas et al. (2011) on organizational discourses highlighted the reconstruction of organizational knowledge and the creation of novel insights, which can be seen in the context of organizational learning. On the other hand, the significance of the learning organization (Caldwell, 2005; Sackmann et al., 2009) has been emphasized elsewhere to illustrate the effect of organizational cooperation and decentralization on successful performance. The integrated phenomena of organizational becoming and organizational learning coincide, thus being adaptable and jointly constructed elements in the active nature of organizations (Clegg et al., 2005).

2.2.2 Organizational Collectiveness

To further expose the multifaceted nature of organizational becoming, I discuss the aspect of organizational collectiveness as an essential construct. In relation to my definition of organizational becoming, I emphasize collective intelligence that is produced on the basis of interaction among organizational members. As Thomas et al. (2011) demonstrated, organizational becoming is realized in the process of constructing collective meaning that I term collective intelligence in my thesis research. Therefore, organizational collectiveness is closely related to my conception of organizational becoming as a social constructivist approach to organizational change.

In my thesis research, the contribution of organizational collectiveness is a central idea and, therefore, it is included in the theoretical framework presented in Figure 1. Organizational collectiveness facilitates the advancement of various organizational processes in the change (Barge & Oliver, 2003; Gergen & Thatchenkery, 2004; Carlsen, 2006; Parkkinen et al., 2014; Parkkinen et al., 2015). In a similar way, Carlsen (2006) emphasized the collective nature of an organizational configuration which contributes to the development of the organization. In postmodern literature, the advocates of social constructivism deem the change to be shaped by the cooperation of organizational members (Barge & Oliver, 2003; Gergen & Thatchenkery, 2004).

Other results have also been established to substantiate the importance of organizational collectiveness within the organizational becoming perspective. For example, Thomas et al. (2011) avoided the juxtaposition of change initiators and receiving parties by promoting an idea of an interactive and balanced change execution. It is also confirmed that trust needs to be established to ensure the success of a change in the organization (Sackmann et al., 2009). As a result, the interconnected nature of organizational collectiveness and the ongoing organizational change can be deduced from the existing literature.

2.2.3 Organizational Communication

In addition to the interactive and interminably changing nature of organizations, the communicative elements have been recognized in organizational becoming literature. Therefore, I incorporate discussion among organizational members into my definition of organizational becoming and include organizational communication in the theoretical framework of this study in Figure 1. With regard to the significance of organizational communication, the existing literature demonstrates the influence of contextual and communication-related factors on the change execution in organizational becoming (Sackmann et al., 2009; Thomas et al., 2011; Lehtimäki et al., 2013).

According to the postmodern view, organizations are essential constructions in empowering and facilitating communication. Amid the disorder of change, Chia (2002) argues that organizations are entities that enable the realization of interaction among organizational

members. Although identity construction is outside the scope of my study, I concur with Carlsen's (2006) ideas on the collective and communication-related aspects of organizations highlighting the significance of organizational communication in the organizational becoming perspective. She conceptualizes organizational becoming as a series of regularly occurring initiatives that depend on the interplay between identities and experiences at the individual and collective level of activity in organizations.

With regard to the existing discussion on organizational communication, organizational discourses have received attention from organizational becoming researchers. For example, Jian (2011) offered the results of an ethnographic research study that revealed insights into organizational discourses occurring interdependently. The interdependent discourses produced a multi-tier form of becoming and thus, these facilitated changing in the organization. Similarly, Thomas et al. (2011) drew attention to the differences between constructive and destructive organizational discourses and their influence on the realization of organizational becoming. Specifically, the constructive discourses were demonstrated to promote organizational becoming while the destructive discourses prevented its realization. As a result, organizational communication is closely related to the continuous change process in organizations.

2.3 Appreciative Approach to Organizational Change

The appreciative approach provides a meaningful understanding about organizational change. Favoring the positive attitude as well as focusing on the highest potential and the virtuous nature of human action are central to this line of theorizing (Cameron & McNaughtan, 2014). The appreciative approach is based on social constructivism within the postmodern literature (Barge & Oliver, 2003; Gergen & Thatchenkery, 2004). Due to the similar theoretical foundations, organizational becoming and the appreciative approach can be connected. In this section, I illustrate my comprehensive understanding about the appreciative approach and join my discussion with positively oriented research on organizational change. I elaborate on the connection between the appreciative approach and organizational becoming by highlighting positive collectiveness. Finally, I discuss Appreciative Intelligence® and collective intelligence on change to complete the theoretical framework of this study.

Within the postmodern literature, the appreciative line of research has emerged to embrace the various views of how to apply and modify the positive constructs and phenomena. Following Watkins and Mohr (2011), I advocate expanding the appreciative approach to a comprehensive understanding about organizational processes. Following the comprehensive view of organizational change (Sackmann et al., 2009; Parkkinen et al., 2014; Parkkinen et al., 2015), I also support the comprehensive perception of the appreciative phenomena (Barge & Oliver, 2003; Fitzgerald et al., 2010; Watkins & Mohr, 2011). Specifically, Watkins and Mohr (2011) advance the appreciative approach as an attitudinal change to restructure organizational processes, which enables the appreciative approach to be viewed as an inclusive philosophy of organizational change.

The existing literature provides substantial evidence in support of the comprehensive approach to appreciation. Comprehensiveness is highlighted as an essential feature of the appreciative approach (Barge & Oliver, 2003; Hornstrup & Johansen, 2009; Fitzgerald et al., 2010; Watkins & Mohr, 2011). The existing contributions illustrate the endeavor to encourage other researchers to consider the comprehensiveness in their work with the appreciative approach. For example, Barge and Oliver (2003) recommended comprehensively expressing an appreciative attitude instead of merely acting positively and employing the suggested frameworks. In addition, Hornstrup and Johansen (2009) advanced an idea of the inquisitive and interested mindset which enables the comprehensive understanding about the research phenomena.

Previously, I adhered to the postmodern view of change resistance as a contributor to organizational change (Tsoukas & Chia, 2002; Ford et al., 2008; Thomas et al., 2011). I associate this view of change resistance with the comprehensive appreciation (Barge & Oliver, 2003; Hornstrup & Johansen, 2009; Fitzgerald et al., 2010; Watkins & Mohr, 2011). The appreciative approach tends to transform opposition into enthusiasm and curiosity for the change (Parkkinen et al., 2014). In this regard, it can be challenging to remain faithful to the principles of the appreciative approach due to the potential for an unfavorable reception (Barge & Oliver, 2003). However, I support Hornstrup and Johansen (2009) who suggested embracing the variety of potential reactions as ignoring challenging issues or suppressing critique do not belong to the comprehensive appreciation. Therefore, my view is also based on the remark by Barge and Oliver (2003) in terms of appreciating challenges and difficulties depending on the situation.

In my thesis research, I connect with positively oriented research on organizational change by employing the appreciative approach. This stream of research is an emerging and novel area of applying the appreciative approach. For instance, Cameron and McNaughtan (2014) noted that the current trend is gradually embracing the positive view on organizational change. Mills et al. (2013) also indicated the current tendency to favor positive psychology in organizational science by recognizing the contagious and interconnected nature of positivity in the literature. However, the existing literature is still mostly concerned with identifying the adverse conditions and challenging issues in organizational change (Cameron & McNaughtan, 2014).

As the purpose of this study is to advance the understanding of continuous change in organizations by utilizing the appreciative approach, I contribute to the current knowledge of the positive theorizing. Specifically, Mills et al. (2013) drew attention to the need to develop, substantiate and extend our knowledge of positive psychology due to its recent establishment as an area of study. Cameron and McNaughtan (2014) explained the foundations of the positive theorizing on organizational change by denoting the endeavors to extend and restructure the investigation of organizational change. They highlighted studies that resulted not only in the improvement of positive organizational practices but also in other favorable achievements in the critical areas of operations.

Based on the existing literature, I recognize various opportunities for the appreciative approach in terms of promoting the positivity in organizational research. For example, the appreciative approach has been applied to collective discussions, which demonstrates the value and suitability of positivity in practical organizational life (Verma & Pathak, 2011). The power of appreciative discussion in terms of engaging organizational representatives in the continuous change and learning processes is also recognized (Barge & Oliver, 2003). In this way, Appreciative Intelligence® (Thatchenkery & Metzker, 2006; Thatchenkery, 2013) is elicited and stimulated within the participants who are energized and stimulated for the forthcoming discussions in the organization (Verma & Pathak, 2011).

In the field of organizational change, the main elements of positive theorizing are made explicit. In this study, I utilize these positive elements to enquire into the ongoing change process of the organization. In terms of favorable behavior and positive action, the positive theorizing values exceptional efforts that are divergent from standard behavior (Cameron & McNaughtan, 2014). In this study, the appreciative approach is utilized to initiate activity in the organization. This

approach enables the main elements of the postmodern tendency including a multifaceted investigation, a constructive critique through reflection and innovative development within organizational life (Gergen & Thatchenkery, 2004). Cameron and McNaughtan (2014) emphasize that due to the appreciative approach, various issues can be reappraised in a positive way.

With regard to the promotion of positivity in organizational research, positive emotions have received attention in the current literature. Especially the appreciative approach is likely to elicit positive emotions. Barge and Oliver (2003) explicitly determined that the positive emotions tend to inspire organizational members to shape a better organizational future as a result of an organizational change. Positive emotions and their effects are also discussed in the field of positive psychology (Fredrickson, 2001; Barge and Oliver, 2003; Fredrickson & Losada, 2005). For instance, Fredrickson and Losada (2005) drew attention to the favorable effects of positivity and argued for the permanent nature of positive means that were generated in positive circumstances in reserve for future use. Similarly, extending the notion of positive emotions in the field of positive psychology, Fredrickson (2001:219) utilized ‘the broaden-and-build theory’ to highlight the long-term influence of positive emotions on the personal development and welfare.

2.3.1 Positive Collectiveness

Prior research provides various interpretations and applications of the appreciative approach. I view concepts referring to appreciative collectiveness as essential components (Barge & Oliver, 2003; Verma & Pathak, 2011; Mills et al., 2013; Parkkinen et al., 2014; Parkkinen et al., 2015). In particular, appreciative discussion and interaction capture my interest in relation to my thesis research (Barge & Oliver, 2003; Gergen & Thatchenkery, 2004; Cameron & McNaughtan, 2014). Therefore, positive collectiveness is the focus of my discussion on the appreciative approach, and I involve it in the theoretical framework of this study in Figure 1. I connect this alignment with my previous discussion on organizational becoming. Following Thomas et al. (2011), my conception defined organizational becoming as an ongoing process of producing collective intelligence on the basis of interaction and discussion among organizational

members. As a result, the following discussion indicates the similarity of the appreciative approach to the organizational becoming theorizing that I previously presented.

Based on the purpose of my thesis research, I utilize the appreciative approach to examine continuous organizational change. According to the perspective of organizational becoming, I conceptualize change as an ongoing process (Chia, 2002; Tsoukas & Chia, 2002; Clegg et al., 2005; Van de Ven & Poole, 2005; Carlsen, 2006; Sackmann et al., 2009; Jian, 2011; Thomas et al., 2011; Weik, 2011). In addition to the theoretical foundations in terms of social constructivism, the organizational becoming theorizing of change and the appreciative approach share similar qualities and principles (Watkins & Mohr, 2011). As Barge and Oliver (2003) noted, the construct of appreciation is constantly changing and evolving according to the situational and human factors that affect the realization of appreciation. Therefore, I advance the emerging nature of appreciation in this research.

Organizational becoming and the appreciative approach share a similar view of the world, which justifies the utilization of these perspectives together. The advocates of the appreciative approach, especially Watkins and Mohr (2011), acknowledge the persistent nature of change, the multiformity of the world and the changeable situations. Similarly, Gergen and Thatchenkery (2004) acknowledge the ongoing nature of change. These views of change connect with the main ideas of organizational becoming that construct change as a natural and permanent dimension of our world (Chia, 2002; Tsoukas & Chia, 2002; Clegg et al., 2005; Van de Ven & Poole, 2005; Carlsen, 2006; Sackmann et al., 2009; Jian, 2011; Thomas et al., 2011; Weik, 2011).

I deem the appreciative approach to be a valuable means of cultivating organizational collectiveness in terms of collaboration and constructive collective activity. This collective emphasis is connected to the organizational becoming perspective on organizational collectiveness (Barge & Oliver, 2003; Gergen & Thatchenkery, 2004; Carlsen, 2006). Based on the existing evidence for collaboration, appreciative collectiveness is a key construct of the appreciative approach (Barge & Oliver, 2003; Verma & Pathak, 2011; Mills et al., 2013; Parkkinen et al., 2014; Parkkinen et al., 2015). Mills et al. (2013) acknowledged the various opportunities for applying the appreciative approach in organizational life to promote cooperation and to develop a shared culture. Based on practical success, Verma and Pathak (2011) also demonstrated the applicability of the appreciative approach in collective situations

to shape energized cooperation. The appreciative approach enables the reflective responses of the organizational members to specific circumstances while focusing on the generative potential that is collectively created (Barge & Oliver, 2003).

In addition to cultivating collectiveness in organizational life, the appreciative approach contributes to the existence of organizational communication and interaction. This contribution connects with the organizational becoming emphasis on organizational communication (Carlsen, 2006; Sackmann et al., 2009; Thomas et al., 2011). Interaction and discussion are highlighted in the appreciative literature (Barge & Oliver, 2003; Gergen & Thatchenkery, 2004; Cameron & McNaughtan, 2014). The appreciative approach emphasizes the significance of organizational communication by drawing attention to the organizational discussions and the favorable aspects and productive resources within organizations (Barge & Oliver, 2003). For example, existing studies on the appreciative conversation (Barge & Oliver, 2003) and appreciative dialog (Dewar & Sharp, 2013) denote the significance of appreciative interaction in the process of organizational development.

Following the connection between organizational becoming and organizational learning, I underline the favorable effect of positive collectiveness on cooperative learning and change process. This effect contributes to the comprehensiveness of appreciative collectiveness in organizational change (Barge & Oliver, 2003; Watkins & Mohr, 2011; Dewar & Sharp, 2013). Watkins and Mohr (2011) suggested a novel understanding about the appreciative approach as a regenerative attitude toward organizational life, change, and learning. Barge and Oliver (2003) underlined that an organizational spirit affects the advancement of change and learning, which explains the distinctive approach of appreciation in nurturing this spirit. Finally, encouraging constant appreciative dialogs contributes to an innovative series of investigations into the interrelated learning processes in the organization (Watkins & Mohr, 2011).

In addition to the connection between the appreciative approach and organizational becoming, a future orientation is typical of the appreciative approach. As collaboration and interaction have a determining nature, cooperative investigations into the current and future states of a particular organization are intertwined (Cooperrider et al., 1995). The current reality and the future are continuously constructed and ultimately based on the subjectively dependent representations (Watkins & Mohr, 2011). In relation to a vision of future prospects, Cooperrider et al. (1995) drew attention to organizational envisioning that is highlighted by the

interconnected knowledge and construction in organizational life. Specifically, the appreciator can see the vision of the future while appreciating the current state of affairs (Watkins & Mohr, 2011).

Especially the comprehensive appreciative approach enables the embrace of future prospects. In this regard, Watkins and Mohr (2011) note that the appreciative approach allows the participants to project their plans of achieving the future aspirations. Additional dialogs can be endorsed by appreciating the organizational conceptions of challenges and difficulties (Gergen & Thatchenkery, 2004). Similarly, Barge and Oliver (2003) note that confidence can be inspired in the organizational members by the reconstructed discussions about future prospects. According to Watkins and Mohr (2011), being receptive to and interested in novel ideas is an essential feature of constant dialogic investigations that enable the future orientation.

2.3.2 Appreciative Intelligence®

Notwithstanding the diverse applications of the appreciative approach, Appreciative Intelligence® merits further attention in my thesis research. I aim to understand how Appreciative Intelligence® shapes organizational change and, therefore, this construct is essential in my discussion on the appreciative approach. In my theoretical framework in Figure 1, I position Appreciative Intelligence® together with positive collectiveness to signify the crucial elements of the appreciative approach when examining the change in organizations. In this section, I define Appreciative Intelligence® as a multidimensional construct and justify its application as an organizational becoming approach to examining organizational change.

Following the appreciative approach as a valuable way to involve organizational members in the change process, Appreciative Intelligence® is the consequential capability to sustain organizational success. As Thatchenkery and Metzker (2006) noted, Appreciative Intelligence® promotes the favorable effects of the appreciative process in organizations. Drawing particular attention to the connection between appreciative inquiry and Appreciative Intelligence®, there is a crucial difference. It is essential to notice that appreciative inquiry provides a useful framework for examining organizations, which is not equivalent to Appreciative Intelligence® (Thatchenkery & Metzker, 2006). Appreciative inquiry is a tool for initiating constructive discussions especially in change processes (Barge & Oliver, 2003). It encourages mutual

conversations that enable encounters and cooperation among the organizational members (Fitzgerald et al., 2010).

Nevertheless, the cooperative investigation among the organizational members is a critical dimension of the appreciative approach (Barge & Oliver, 2003; Gergen & Thatchenkery, 2004; Behara et al., 2008). As Thatchenkery and Metzker (2006) emphasized, appreciative inquiry concentrates on discovering the functional aspects of an organization by means of an appreciative process while Appreciative Intelligence® enables the recognition of existing favorable development opportunities. In order to successfully implement the necessary processes of change, it is crucial to appreciate the positive outlook, the importance of reorganization and the act of visioning the future despite challenge (Thatchenkery, 2013). Therefore, Appreciative Intelligence® sustains the favorable effects of the comprehensive appreciation (Thatchenkery & Metzker, 2006).

Concerning Appreciative Intelligence®, the existing definitions of this concept are not extremely varied as it has only recently been established. I highlight Appreciative Intelligence® as a comprehensive ability to reflect on the positive dynamics of change and to project the desired future emerging from the change. Therefore, I agree with Thatchenkery and Metzker (2006) who provide an idea of Appreciative Intelligence® by describing it as a capability to distinguish the intrinsic opportunity for achievement in the current situation. Similarly, I support Thatchenkery (2013) who highlights Appreciative Intelligence® as an essential feature to reappraise, acknowledge the favorable conditions and be future-oriented. By focusing on the favorable and fruitful opportunities, Appreciative Intelligence® enables the awareness of the latent talent (Thatchenkery & Metzker, 2006).

My understanding about Appreciative Intelligence® entails a comprehensive view of its potential dimensions that can be reached in the change process. The individual dimension of Appreciative Intelligence® is evident when it is defined as a personal capability (Thatchenkery & Metzker, 2006; Thatchenkery, 2013). As Thatchenkery and Metzker (2006) revealed, Appreciative Intelligence® had its origins in studying executives and other business innovators and, therefore, its individual dimension is apparent. In addition, certain personal characteristics, such as persistence and patience, have been connected with Appreciative Intelligence®, and these contribute to managing innovative initiatives in organizations (Thatchenkery & Metzker, 2006; Thatchenkery, 2013).

In addition to the individual dimension, I use the existing evidence to advance a collective dimension of Appreciative Intelligence[®]. The collective dimension can be deduced from the prior research as Appreciative Intelligence[®] has been enhanced in collective situations (Thatchenkery & Metzker, 2006). Specifically, Thatchenkery (2013) illustrated that organizational members have an opportunity to adopt active and initiative demeanor if managerial figures acquire Appreciative Intelligence[®] as part of their role. According to him, this enables the constructive development of the organizational practices. Therefore, Appreciative Intelligence[®] as an organizational becoming approach can be investigated both at the individual and collective levels of activity.

Appreciative Intelligence[®] enables the examination of organizational change as a process of organizational becoming. The appreciative approach highlights the involvement of organizational members in the emerging and socially constructed change process (Barge & Oliver, 2003; Gergen & Thatchenkery, 2004; Watkins & Mohr, 2011; Parkkinen et al., 2014; Parkkinen et al., 2015). This approach avoids placing emphasis on change initiators and their actions (Ford et al., 2008; Thomas et al., 2011). Instead, the appreciative approach promotes the collective inquiry and cooperation as critical dimensions in studying change (Barge & Oliver, 2003; Gergen & Thatchenkery, 2004; Behara et al., 2008; Parkkinen et al., 2014; Parkkinen et al., 2015). Consequently, it is possible to enter into constructive discourses that enable the adjustment of the organizational perspective (Thomas et al., 2011).

Due to its multidimensional nature in terms of promoting the collective emphasis and the positive approach, the applicability of Appreciative Intelligence[®] in the context of organizational becoming is justified. Following Parkkinen et al. (2014), I apply Appreciative Intelligence[®] as an organizational becoming approach to examining organizational change. Thatchenkery (2013) highlighted that Appreciative Intelligence[®] shapes the organizational activity that enables creativity and novel endeavors. In this way, he focused attention on the ways of Appreciative Intelligence[®] to allow all members of the organization to continuously vision, negotiate and contribute to making the change. Appreciative Intelligence[®] approach thus connects with the organizational becoming theorizing of change by shaping the multidimensional activity in the continuously changing organizations (Tsoukas & Chia, 2002; Carlsen, 2006; Sackmann et al., 2009; Thomas et al., 2011; Parkkinen et al., 2014; Parkkinen et al., 2015).

2.3.3 Collective Intelligence on Change

In my theoretical framework, Appreciative Intelligence® and collective intelligence are the major elements of the discussion on the appreciative approach to organizational change. Specifically, I address Appreciative Intelligence® as an organizational becoming approach to understanding how it shapes organizational change. In this study, I concentrate on collective intelligence that emerges on the basis of positive collectiveness. According to my reasoning, positive collectiveness serves as an overarching process between Appreciative Intelligence® and collective intelligence. I argue that in this context, collective intelligence is a feasible result of social interaction and at the same time, a natural way of enquiring into a change process.

Concerning prior research, manifold forms of intelligence have received attention in the postmodern literature. The advocates of the appreciative approach identify the potential for producing a multi-level understanding based on the individual contributions. As a result of the collective nature of cooperative dialog, the multidimensional intelligence is recognized by Gergen and Thatchenkery (2004). Thus, ‘the process of collective inquiry’ (Barge & Oliver, 2003:124) affects the construction of novel ideas and practices. On the other hand, attention has been drawn to emotional intelligence in social constructivist research (Thatchenkery & Metzker, 2006; Behara et al., 2008). Thatchenkery and Metzker (2006) also discussed various other types of intelligence, such as social intelligence, which are prevalent in postmodern research. Consequently, these discussions highlight the dynamic nature of intelligence that is appreciated in the current literature.

Based on the existing evidence, I consider collective intelligence a welcome contribution to the field of organizational change. I substantiate this consideration by highlighting a few examples of the current studies that have employed focus group research to generate collective intelligence. For example, Mantere et al. (2012) utilized collective intelligence to produce grounded theory in their case study of a strategic change process. In the health care sector, collective intelligence has also been applied to study the organizational engagement of the personnel (Papinczak, 2012) and to promote administrative advancements (Grønkjær et al., 2011).

In relation to my investigation of organizational change, I introduce collective intelligence as a crucial construct. By enquiring into the collective intelligence in an organization, more specific

insights can be obtained into the relevant phenomenon than with individual interventions (Newby et al., 2003). Therefore, collective intelligence enables the comprehensiveness of information (Morgan, 1996). This aspect contributes to the comprehensive view of organizational change (Sackmann et al., 2009; Parkkinen et al., 2014; Parkkinen et al., 2015) and to the comprehensive appreciation (Barge & Oliver, 2003; Hornstrup & Johansen, 2009; Fitzgerald et al., 2010). Thus, critique and challenging issues are not ignored but collectively appreciated in a constructive way (Barge & Oliver, 2003; Hornstrup & Johansen, 2009).

To further substantiate the connection of collective intelligence with my examination of organizational change, I highlight its similarities to the appreciative approach and the organizational becoming perspective. The existing discussion on collective intelligence underlines interaction and communication in collective discussions (Morgan, 1996; Puchta & Potter, 2002; Stewart et al., 2007; Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2008). Concerning organizational becoming, the advocates of this theorizing emphasize the essential role of organizational interaction and collective discussions (Carlsen, 2006; Jian, 2011; Thomas et al., 2011). Moreover, the engagement of organizational members is considered a crucial aspect of facilitating organizational change (Sackmann et al., 2009).

In the appreciative approach, the members of the organization are involved in the change. Based on the organizational strengths and the positive outcomes of change, they engage in proactively and collectively constructing the change (Barge & Oliver, 2003; Gergen & Thatchenkery, 2004; Watkins & Mohr, 2011). ‘The change agent–centric view’ (Ford et al., 2008:362) is thus opposed by the appreciative approach. Instead, it promotes the collective inquiry and cooperation as central dimensions in the study of change (Barge & Oliver, 2003; Gergen & Thatchenkery, 2004; Behara et al., 2008; Parkkinen et al., 2014; Parkkinen et al., 2015). In this way, it is possible to enter into constructive discourses that enable the adjustment of the organizational perspective as demonstrated by organizational becoming (Thomas et al., 2011).

Considering the aforementioned components of my thesis research, I argue for the importance of generating collective intelligence on organizational change. I base this argument on the central element of collective intelligence that is the emphasis on the interaction among a group of people (Morgan, 1996; Puchta & Potter, 2002; Stewart et al., 2007; Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2008). As the organizational members communicate with each other in collective discussions, a collective judgment and a shared understanding about the phenomenon in question are

enabled (Morgan, 1996; Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2008). I term the constructs of the collective judgment and the shared understanding collective intelligence for the purpose of my study.

As a result, it is reasonable to establish the construct of collective intelligence in the organizational becoming discussion with the appreciative approach. As the previous discussion illustrated, the construct of collective intelligence connects with the organizational becoming perspective on change and the appreciative approach. As noted by Behara et al. (2008:288), ‘the investment of emotional and cognitive energy by participants’ in the reconstruction of organizational knowledge can be achieved in the collective discussions of the appreciative approach. The creation of novel insights as a result of the constructive discourses (Thomas et al., 2011) is also likely to be fulfilled according to the organizational becoming perspective.

2.4 Theoretical Framework of the Study

In Figure 1, I illustrate the theoretical framework of my thesis research study. The framework is entirely based on the preceding discussion on the theoretical background. I have thus covered the constructs of the framework in the previous sections of this Chapter. The overall context of the framework is organizational change. Inside this context, there are two major components of my theoretical discussion in terms of organizational becoming and the appreciative approach. The interconnection between these components constitutes the theoretical background to my discussion on continuous organizational change.

Concerning organizational change, I provided a brief outline of the existing literature on this phenomenon. I illustrated how the current research investigates change resistance and change management that can also be considered intertwined. In terms of change management, I highlighted transformational leadership to manage organizational change effectively and to inspire the involvement of the organizational members in the change process. Following the organizational becoming theorizing, I embraced the positive view of change resistance as a contributor to organizational change. In this regard, the connection between transformational leadership and embracing change resistance was evident.

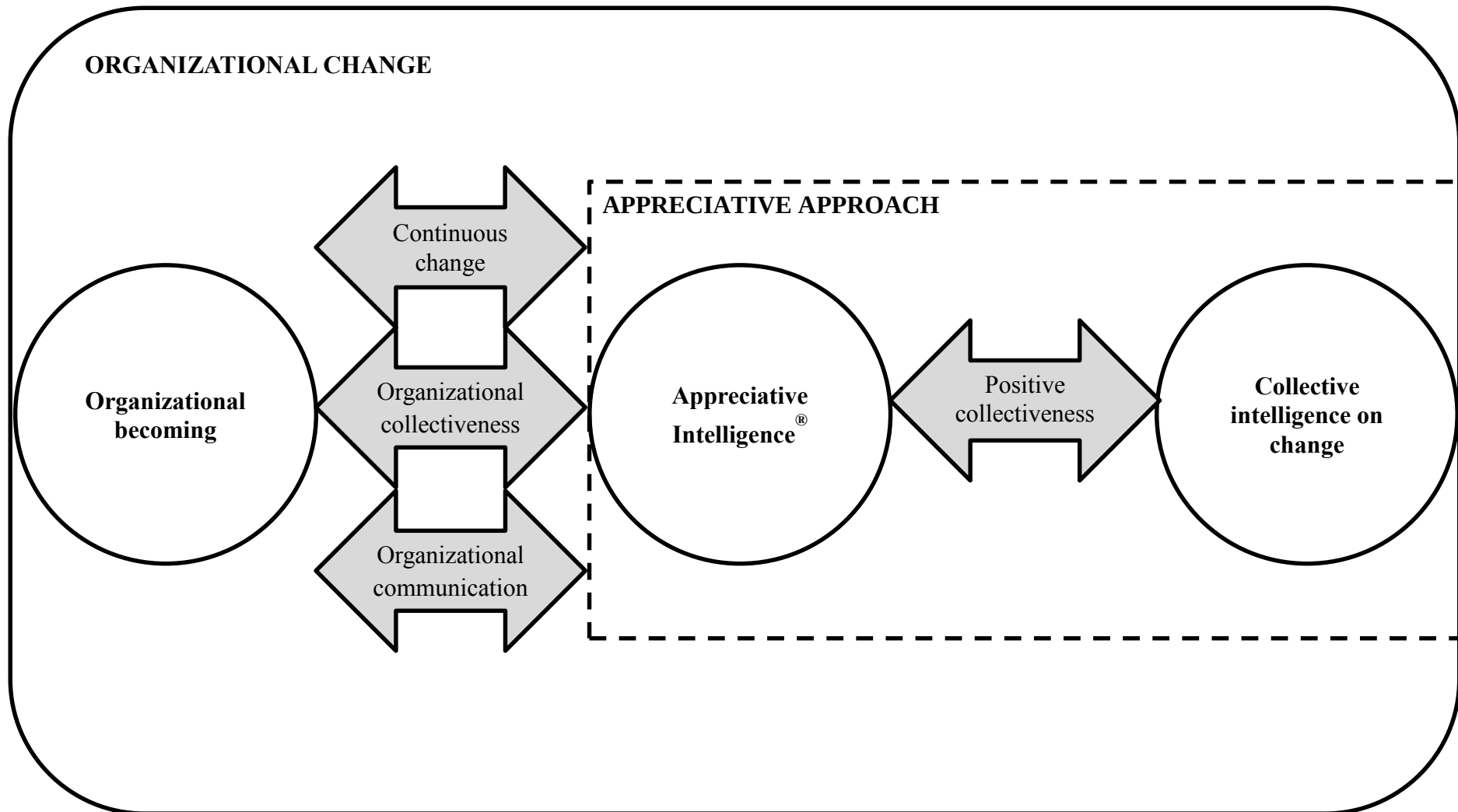


Figure 1. Theoretical framework.

As explicated in the preceding discussion, continuous change, organizational collectiveness and organizational communication were the essential features of the organizational becoming theorizing. According to my reasoning, these features highlighted the principles of organizational becoming in a changing organization. My definition of organizational becoming signified it as an ongoing process of producing collective intelligence on the basis of interaction and discussion among organizational members. Therefore, these features included in Figure 1 are closely related to my conception of organizational becoming.

The essential features of organizational becoming enabled the connection with the appreciative approach. I demonstrated how continuous change together with organizational collectiveness and organizational communication had been discussed in the appreciative literature. These features were considered to be in the continuous process of construction in the changing organization. Originating from the interconnection between organizational becoming and the appreciative approach, positive collectiveness underlined the compound effect of organizational collectiveness, organizational communication and future orientation on organizational change. In Figure 1, I deem positive collectiveness to be an overarching process that unites Appreciative Intelligence[®] and collective intelligence on change.

The connection between organizational becoming and the appreciative approach allows for treating Appreciative Intelligence[®] as an organizational becoming approach. Appreciative Intelligence[®] adheres to the nature of emerging and constantly changing organizations. Specifically, I advance the multidimensional view of Appreciative Intelligence[®] including the individual and collective levels which can be leveraged for the organizational development activity. I also develop an argument for defining Appreciative Intelligence[®] as a comprehensive ability to reflect on the positive dynamics of change and to project the desired future emerging from the change in organizations undergoing the continuous change process.

Within the appreciative approach, I separate two types of intelligence including Appreciative Intelligence[®] and collective intelligence. The difference between these types of intelligence is that Appreciative Intelligence[®] shapes the process of organizational change while collective intelligence is the source of information on organizational change. I establish collective intelligence on the basis of the collective judgment and the shared understanding in appreciative discussions. When taking steps backward in Figure 1, I determine that collective intelligence is enabled by the positive collectiveness that originates from the interrelationship between

organizational becoming and the appreciative approach. In this regard, Appreciative Intelligence® is essential in shaping the positive change in the organization. This inquiry into organizational change is ultimately enabled by the process of organizational becoming.

In terms of the visual representation, I highlight the constructs of my theoretical framework. Organizational change is the foundation of my theoretical background and, therefore, it is depicted as a round rectangle including the other constructs of my theoretical discussion. I utilize another rectangle with a dashed line to illustrate the appreciative approach. This alignment highlights the comprehensiveness of the appreciative approach. At the same time, the rectangles underline the interconnected division between organizational becoming and the appreciative approach in this study. The circles are reserved for organizational becoming, Appreciative Intelligence® and collective intelligence, which are the main areas of interest in my thesis research. In this regard, the essential features of organizational becoming and positive collectiveness within the appreciative approach are represented by the two-way arrows as this underlines the social constructivist approach of this study.

Based on my theoretical framework and the preceding discussion, I address a gap in the existing literature by examining the unequal link between the organizational becoming perspective on change and the appreciative approach. Although both streams of research share a similar foundation and have received considerable attention in the literature, the efforts to unite these streams remain scarce. Therefore, I highlight the connection between these constructs in my theoretical framework and provide further support for this relationship based on the final results of my thesis research.

In Figure 1, the two-way arrows depicted in light gray illustrate the constructs that I will discover from the empirical data. Specifically, in Chapter 4, I will focus on identifying continuous change, organizational collectiveness, organizational communication and positive collectiveness. In this way, three circles will be available for the synthesis of the theoretical discussion and the empirical results. Therefore, I will explicitly return to this framework in Chapter 5. I will demonstrate how the results of the continuous change, organizational collectiveness, and organizational communication reveal the processes of organizational becoming in the organization. I will also illustrate how the realization of positive collectiveness contributes to the appreciative approach.

3 METHODOLOGY

3.1 Applying Action Research to Study Organizational Change

In my thesis research, I adopt an action research approach that entails the researcher joining the organization as a developer in the process of organizational change evolving in the long term (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2008). I follow Sackmann et al. (2009) who conducted a long-term action research including various research methods to reinforce the opportunities for executing strategic revisions in an organization. They initiated the longitudinal project of cooperative advancement and assisted the managers in executing the change in the organization. When planning this study, their example served as an illustration of action research in which researchers engage in the research environment and become immersed in the process of finding organizational resolutions (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2008).

I continue the action research project initiated by the appreciative inquiry intervention that was executed in the Orthodox Church of Finland in the fall of 2013. The initial intervention engaged organizational members in the change process and facilitated the building of a shared understanding about positive organizational characteristics (Barge & Oliver, 2003; Gergen & Thatchenkery, 2004; Dewar & Sharp, 2013). My current study is an investigation to discover how Appreciative Intelligence® shapes organizational change as a process of organizational becoming. The data was collected at different stages during the research process. Therefore, my approach is equivalent to the execution of the action research approach at phased intervals (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2008). As the appreciative inquiry intervention was executed as a separate project, the methodological discussion in this paper concentrates on my thesis research study.

In addition to focus group research, an individual interview and observations constituted the components of my action research approach. I employed these methods of data collection to obtain insights into the organizational life and to establish a rich understanding about the organizational change process based on the appreciative inquiry intervention. All these methods have been cited as frequently used in the data collection of action research processes (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2008). In addition, the vast application of interviews as part of the qualitative research has been recognized (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2008; Roulston, 2011). For example,

Comi et al. (2014) illustrated the combination of interviews and focus group discussions to substantiate individual visions with collective intelligence.

3.1.1 Social Constructivism as a Basis

I draw on social constructivism to shape the methodological approach of this study. Instead of embracing social constructivism in its entirety, I adopt an applied version of this epistemology. Specifically, I consider the world to be subjectively constructed to a certain extent by people together in a way that can be shaped in a stimulating collective situation. Therefore, my methodological discussion is based on moderate constructivism as applied by Comi et al. (2014) in the context of focus group research. They deemed the real world to be captured by subjectivity that depends on collective experiences. They employed this view of moderate constructivism to investigate subjective creations that they considered the fundamental elements of the real world. Although their interest was in investigating the power of visuals in interviews, the collective emphasis of their view contributes to this study.

In this study, I join several postmodern researchers who have supported social constructivism as an approach to understand organizational change (Cooperrider et al., 1995; Gergen & Thatchenkery, 2004; Watkins & Mohr, 2011). Cooperrider et al. (1995) already argued for the emergence of social constructivism to acknowledge the state of constant change in organizations. Social constructivism has also been highlighted as significant advancement updating the modernist views. As Gergen and Thatchenkery (2004:234) noted, ‘In terms of positive potentials, we feel the most promising forms of critique are social constructionist in character.’ Furthermore, Watkins and Mohr (2011) provided a review of the prior literature on the procedures of organizational development to compare traditional and contemporary methods, which led them to support the central ideas of social constructivism.

In my thesis research, social constructivism forms the ultimate basis for my understanding of changing organizations. I perceive organizations as constantly evolving entities where change and ongoing development are natural occurrences (Tsoukas & Chia, 2002; Carlsen, 2006; Sackmann et al., 2009; Thomas et al., 2011). The perception of evolving organizations contributes to the social constructivist conceptualization of organizations as incomplete entities presented by Cooperrider et al. (1995). They advance an argument for organizations that are

‘made and imagined’ (ibid:159). Responding to an invitation, this view of emerging organizations also continues and elaborates the discussion on social constructivism (Gergen & Thatchenkery, 2004).

This study responds to social constructivism by acknowledging the emerging effect of positive collectiveness on organizational collectiveness and organizational communication. Based on the primary social constructivist ideas, the constantly evolving nature of social situations is prevalent (Cooperrider et al., 1995; Gergen & Thatchenkery, 2004; Watkins & Mohr, 2011). Cooperrider et al. (1995) argued that knowledge is an interconnected endeavor with a continuously evolving nature, which emphasized the significance of the social activity and interaction in the organizational pursuit. Furthermore, Gergen and Thatchenkery (2004) viewed organizational life and interaction as the primary aspects of social constructivism. They shifted the focus from the individual level to the collective dialog and highlighted the centrality of language and social practices in organizations. As a result, social constructivism proceeds to emphasize the impact of social interaction and discourse on the construction of organizational phenomena that are circumstantially dependent (Watkins & Mohr, 2011).

With regard to the social construction of organizational phenomena, a significant aspect of social constructivism relates to organizational communication. In contemporary research, Gergen and Thatchenkery (2004) argued for the diminishing significance of research methodologies and instead, they emphasize the critical role of language in gathering, organizing and analyzing research data. Synthesizing prior work on social constructivism, Cooperrider et al. (1995:165) also defined language as significant:

What this suggests is that people have at their disposal a range of vocabulary that expands and contracts the repertoire of possible actions that are likely to follow. Each relational scenario is an ongoing negotiation process and the available expressions are like steering devices that lay out a possible pattern of interaction.

As Watkins and Mohr (2011) condensed the main message of social constructivism, language is utilized to assemble the world that is then encountered based on the linguistic imagery.

When referring to social constructivism, postmodernism merits attention as a response from the science community to the current conditions. Watkins and Mohr (2011) acknowledged the

demand for the novel understanding and the investigation of contemporary phenomena in research and society in general. In postmodern research, novel ideas are expected to develop innovative ways of investigating contemporary organizations (Gergen & Thatchenkery, 2004). Cooperrider et al. (1995) promoted postmodernism by arguing for the development of an updated theory that would fulfill the current needs. Specifically, Gergen and Thatchenkery (2004) proposed the extension of the research conception to include novel insights that enable the exploration and discovery of the unforeseen prospects and phenomena in organizations.

The primary contribution of postmodernism to this study relates to the view of the world as an unstable and constantly advancing construction. The contemporary world is undergoing alteration processes and thus, it is under persistent pressure. Although this observation is evident in the present, postmodern researchers have acknowledged the incessantly changing nature of the world (Chia, 2002; Tsoukas & Chia, 2002; Van de Ven & Poole, 2005; Watkins & Mohr, 2011). Specifically, postmodernism has emerged to accept the ideas of constant evolution that are prevalent in the present (Cooperrider et al., 1995; Gergen & Thatchenkery, 2004; Watkins & Mohr, 2011). In addition to continuous change, volatility, irregularity and ambiguity are determined to be the characteristics of the present (Watkins & Mohr, 2011).

Drawing on this background, I provide a brief description of postmodernism. Although a detailed examination is outside the scope of my discussion, I highlight the basic elements of postmodernism to substantiate the social constructivist basis of my methodology. The fundamentals of postmodernism can be elaborated by comparing these with the main assumptions of modernism (Gergen & Thatchenkery, 2004). In general, postmodernism adopts a critical stance towards any overarching arrangement and instead, it advances a proposal for accepting diverse and circumstantial phenomena (Watkins & Mohr, 2011). Unlike modernist stability, a central idea of postmodernism is transience which contributes to the fluid and circumstantial nature of social action in organizations (Cooperrider et al., 1995). Gergen and Thatchenkery (2004) noted that contemporary literature has gradually begun to critically assess the presumptions of modernism including, among others, individual insight, objectivity and empiricism.

The advocates of postmodernism have expressed their willingness to initiate a dialog between the field of scientific research and the research environment. Specifically, the connection between the ambient conditions and scientific research is deemed to be essential. For instance,

Watkins and Mohr (2011) argued for a redefinition of change as an inevitable phenomenon of the modern world thus meriting appreciation in the field of organizational research. As Cooperrider et al. (1995) proclaimed, prior efforts in organizational research have been inadequate in describing the uninterrupted development activity and construction in organizations.

3.1.2 Appreciative Methodology

In response to the aforementioned postmodern invitations, I consider social constructivism an inviting direction for empirical research. Social constructivism serves my research interests as it focuses on the centrality of social action within the organization (Cooperrider et al., 1995; Gergen & Thatchenkery, 2004). Thus, social constructivism facilitates the embrace of the appreciative approach (Cooperrider et al., 1995; Barge & Oliver, 2003; Gergen & Thatchenkery, 2004; Watkins & Mohr, 2011). According to Gergen and Thatchenkery (2004), social constructivist research can provide insights into organizational life and operations, which facilitates the depiction of an organization as an influential human activity.

Social constructivism embraces collective dialog, highlights the organizational life and promotes interaction. Therefore, I deem the appreciative approach to be appropriate in this field of research. In relation to social constructivism, the appreciative approach evidently represents the new line of thinking, and it provides a useful outline for investigating postmodern phenomena (Watkins & Mohr, 2011). I respond to the proposal by Cooperrider et al. (1995) who appealed to the research community by encouraging a shift in the terms and habits of research. Furthermore, I concur with Mills et al. (2013) who highlight expanding the methodological work by focusing on longitudinal research designs. Following their proposition, I adopt the action research approach to generate valuable understanding about the applicability of the positive approach to organizational life and development.

In relation to the appreciative approach, its roots are in social constructivism. For example, Gergen and Thatchenkery (2004) explicitly positioned the appreciative approach within the social constructivist direction in academic discussion on postmodern organizational science. Barge and Oliver (2003), in turn, joined the postmodern direction in organizational science by drawing attention to the centrality of language and verbal communication in social construction.

Consequently, they developed the appreciative concept into a comprehensive tool for endorsing and accepting various phenomena within organizations.

Concerning the endeavors of the appreciative methodology, it serves the interests of social constructivist research by constructing a comprehensive view and an elaborated understanding about social phenomena. For instance, Watkins and Mohr (2011) highlighted that the appreciative methodology specifically acknowledges the interpersonal and intricate nature of reality, which empowers the significance of linguistic actions and interaction. It has been emphasized that the ‘appreciative ways of knowing are constructively powerful’ (Cooperrider et al., 1995:188). Based on a vision of future and its opportunities, the appreciative methodology enables an engagement in collective activity, while accepting the multiformity of the world with the ongoing development (Watkins and Mohr, 2011).

The final connective factor between social constructivism and the appreciative methodology is related to the role of a researcher. This factor is a crucial construct of my thesis research as I join the organization as a developer according to the action research approach (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2008). In this regard, my involvement in social situations is inevitable and enables the constructed reality in the research environment to be partly influenced by me (Cooperrider et al., 1995). This involvement allows me to engage in the organizational life and a two-way interaction with organizational representatives (Gergen & Thatchenkery, 2004). Similarly to the social constructivist idea of subjectivity, the role of the researcher is significant in this process of embracing the appreciative methodology in this study (Cooperrider et al., 1995).

With regard to the methodological distinctions of the appreciative approach, it enables the investigation of organizational capabilities. As a discourse-based approach, the appreciative methodology focuses on the successful experiences of the organizational members and thus, allows for highlighting the functional features of the organization (Gergen & Thatchenkery, 2004; Barge & Oliver, 2003). In relation to the linguistic dimension of the appreciative methodology, Gergen and Thatchenkery (2004) highlighted discourse and reflective action in addition to the ongoing nature of change. While other dialogic methods concentrate on recognizing difficulties, the appreciative methodology stimulates emotional involvement in organizations by enabling affirmative discussions on the vital characteristics (Barge & Oliver, 2003; Watkins & Mohr, 2011).

I adopt a comprehensive appreciative attitude toward the case organization to reveal what has worked well in the ongoing change process. I enforce the appreciative methodology in its entirety as it contributes to organizational discourse and reality. I advance the appreciative methodology as an inclusive philosophy that engages the participants in change and encourages a valuable judgment of the situation as a whole (Watkins & Mohr, 2011). In this context, the realization of appreciation is dependent on the situation involving a variety of issues in need of appreciation (Barge & Oliver, 2003). Therefore, I concur with the idea of the appreciative methodology as a useful procedure in investigating organizational life (Thatchenkery & Metzker, 2006).

3.2 Data Collection

In this section, I describe the data collection that was executed as part of the action research approach. Although my thesis research was the major part of the research process, the initial stages of the process need to be discussed to highlight the longitudinal nature of this approach. I treated the previous results of the process as additional insights into the organizational life to enable a preliminary focus on my thesis research.

I started by reviewing the initial intervention in the organization that was executed by means of the appreciative inquiry. This initial stage was followed by an individual interview, which I conducted to gather additional evidence for the organizational change process. Finally, the empirical part of my thesis research included focus group research as the major element and additional observations to substantiate the other findings. Table 1 provides a summary of the data collection.

The initial stage included a two-month appreciative inquiry intervention. Three other students and I conducted this process at a Master's level course at the University of Eastern Finland, Kuopio Campus, during November 2013 and January 2014. The course provided the initiative and guidelines on how to conduct the appreciative inquiry project. The Orthodox Church of Finland was eager to participate in the research process due to their recent efforts in terms of organizational change. The appreciative inquiry intervention was conducted in close collaboration with the organizational members. The goal was to find ways to foster an approving attitude towards change among the members of the organization.

Table 1. Data collection.

	TYPE AND AMOUNT OF DATA	DATE OF COLLECTION	PARTICIPANTS
APPRECIATIVE INQUIRY INTERVENTION	Post-it notes 21 interview records and transcripts 30 possibility propositions	<u>First workshop:</u> November 22, 2013 <u>Interviews:</u> between November 18 and December 13, 2013 <u>Second workshop:</u> December 16, 2013	36 participants; 15 women and 20 men
INDIVIDUAL INTERVIEW	One interview record and a transcript	<u>Interview:</u> June 3, 2014	One participant
OBSERVATIONS	Observation notes	<u>A working group meeting:</u> November 19, 2014 <u>A decision-making assembly:</u> November 24, 2014	N/A
FOCUS GROUPS	Two interview records and transcripts Post-it notes Research notes	<u>First discussion:</u> December 18, 2014 <u>Second discussion:</u> January 8, 2015	Five participants; three women and two men

The process involved the identification of organizational core values and life-giving forces. Specifically, sharing positive stories, the formulation of possibility propositions and the prioritization of possibility propositions were the major phases of the appreciative inquiry intervention. The first workshop focusing on the identification of core values was held on November 22, 2013, and individual interviews were conducted between November 18 and December 13, 2013. The second workshop for confirming the initial results was organized on December 16, 2013.

The workshops were held on the organization's premises in Kuopio. This environment allowed for casual interaction with the participants, increased the visibility of the research project in the organization and allowed for understanding the distinctive characteristics of the Church as an organization. The interviews were conducted in various ways. Although face-to-face interviews

were preferred, telephones and Skype were used for interviewing some participants due to the geographical dispersion of the organization.

The initial intervention included altogether 36 representatives of the Church working in different regions and organizational levels. The contact person in the church was responsible for recruiting people to participate in the workshops and interviews. Specifically, 15 women and 20 men participated in the process. The data collected comprised post-it –notes including four primary values of the organization, 21 semi-structured interview records and transcripts and 30 possibility propositions formed on the basis of the first workshop and evaluated in the second workshop.

Six months after the initial intervention in the organization, I conducted a follow-up interview on June 3, 2014. The interviewee was an organizational representative who was involved in the organizational development. I administered the interview to appreciate a personal encounter with the organizational change. Therefore, my method resembled an emotionalist interview that focused on revealing the individual experience and insights in terms of the phenomenon being investigated (Silverman, 2001 cited in Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2008:79).

My aim was to engage the interviewee in reflecting the change process and visioning the future prospects of the organization. According to a pre-specified outline (see Appendix 1), I posed questions within the major themes while allowing an informal discussion with the interviewee. Therefore, the interview was semi-structured by nature (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2008; Gibson & Brown, 2009). This allowed a further analysis of the case organization and the change process. The interview took one hour and five minutes and was conducted in the organization's premises. The interview was recorded with the permission of the interviewee and transcribed afterward. Therefore, a record and a transcript of the individual interview were produced.

With regard to the empirical data obtained in my thesis research, I utilized focus group research as a primary source of data. Focus group research provided rich data and the participants' collective ideas of the research topic (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2008). I organized two focus group discussions; one session was held on December 18, 2014, and the other on January 8, 2015. The first focus group session took approximately one hour and 20 minutes and the second discussion lasted one and a half hours. Altogether five organizational representatives participated in two focus group discussions; two of these were men and three women. I recorded

the discussions with the permission of the participants. Afterward, the records were transcribed verbatim, and additional notes were made to document insights into the situational factors of the focus group discussions. The data obtained from the focus groups included two records, two transcripts, post-it notes written by the participants and a set of research notes.

In my thesis research, I was also granted an opportunity to collect data by observing two organizational events. I appreciated this opportunity as observations are frequently used to substantiate data collection in action research processes (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2008; Sackmann et al., 2009). I conducted the first observation on November 19, 2014. This observation focused on a meeting among an established working group that included five organizational representatives and an outside consultant. The meeting lasted two hours, and I was present from beginning to end. I executed the second observation on November 24, 2014 in the Church Assembly that is annually organized to gather people with a position of trust. I participated in the assembly in its entirety, and it took approximately two hours and 15 minutes.

During the observed events, I made notes about the progress and the main contents in a general template (see Appendix 2). Without a rigid scheme, I focused my attention on the main occurrences. Therefore, the data included observation notes or, in other words, ‘fieldnotes’ (Gibson & Brown, 2009:104). Sackmann et al. (2009) conducted participant observation as part of their action research process, which encouraged me to include observations in my research approach. As my aim was to observe individual events and not to become involved in the organizational culture, I conducted non-participant observation (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2008; Gibson & Brown, 2009). In this way, I was able to gain access to the inside information and monitor the organizational life following the idea of unstructured observation (Gibson & Brown, 2009).

In summary, the major elements of the data collection are presented in Table 1. Within this period, several sources of data were included in this action research process. Therefore, the phased nature of the research process resembled the action research tradition (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2008). Overall, the process of collecting empirical data was conducted between November 2013 and January 2015 in cooperation with the organization. In addition to engaging the organizational members in the appreciative inquiry, I executed an individual interview in the transitional phase from the initial intervention to my thesis research. In my current study, I conducted two focus group discussions and observed two organizational events to enquire into

the organizational life. The discussion on the data collection process and the type of data that was obtained at different stages of the process formed the basis for explicating the analysis of the data in the next section.

3.2.1 Focus Group Research

Concerning the empirical data obtained in my thesis research, I utilized focus group research to understand the underlying dynamics of organizational change. Focus group research contributed to my research context by providing the generous and inclusive data of the group communication and the participants' collective ideas of the research topic (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2008). It appeared that interaction was a critical issue in defining focus group discussions. Several authors indicated the significance of people interfacing with each other (Morgan, 1996; Puchta & Potter, 2002; Stewart et al., 2007; Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2008). Focus groups could be employed as 'group depth interviews' (Stewart et al., 2007:1) or 'to collect data from multiple individuals simultaneously' (Onwuegbuzie et al., 2009:2).

According to my definition, focus groups were organized as a collective forum for shaping collective intelligence on organizational change. This definition highlighted the significance of organizational collectiveness and organizational communication as part of the organizational becoming theorizing (Carlsen, 2006; Sackmann et al., 2009; Thomas et al., 2011). The aim of the focus group discussions was to make the research participants communicate with each other instead of solely interacting with me as the researcher (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2008). Consequently, focus group discussions proved more comprehensive than individual interviews due to the collective judgment and the participants' responses to each other's ideas (Morgan, 1996; Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2008). In this way, more accurate insights into the research phenomenon were obtained than with survey and interview research (Newby et al., 2003).

I considered focus group research a research method as it enabled the application of collective forums for group discussions. Due to the complexities of characterization and organization, I deemed it reasonable to argue for accepting focus group research as a research method. Obtaining a rich understanding about communication and a collective judgment of the research topic justified the view of focus groups as a research method instead of a mere technique of collecting data (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2008). Similarly, Coule (2013) referred to focus groups

as a research method. Other authors did not differentiate the nature of focus group research or vaguely used the concepts, such as ‘a research technique’ (Morgan, 1996:130).

With regard to the implementation of the empirical research, I utilized two sets of considerations offered by Morgan (1996) as a basis for explicating the execution of focus group research. There were universal accounts, ‘project-level design issues’ (ibid:141), at the general level of organizing focus group research. Detailed specifications, ‘group-level design issues’ (ibid:142), determined the precise procedures to collect the type of data that was necessary for the research. In my thesis research, I examined how Appreciative Intelligence® shapes organizational change. Therefore, I organized the collective forums around the theme of organizational change according to the appreciative methodology. The research question was the basis for planning and determining the topic of focus group discussions (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2008).

In terms of the project-level decisions, participant selection was a major issue. Considering that the case organization had a hierarchical structure underlying the organizational processes, my focus groups were composed of people representing the same organizational level. I conducted the sessions with organizational representatives involved in the continuous change process. Selecting the homogeneous group of participants, who had a similar background, characteristics, and ideas, assisted the smooth progress of the discussion (Morgan, 1996; Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2008). On the other hand, the composition of mixed groups with dissimilar features had been endorsed to collect varied ideas (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2008).

In this study, cooperative investigation (Barge & Oliver, 2003; Gergen & Thatchenkery, 2004; Carlsen, 2006; Behara et al., 2008; Thomas et al., 2011) and avoiding contrast between change agents and receiving parties (Thomas et al., 2011) were admittedly important theoretical considerations. However, in practice, my ultimate goal was to produce high-quality collective intelligence on the change of the case organization. Therefore, I aimed to ensure that the circumstances were favorable for a casual conversation and an uninhibited presentation of ideas (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2008). If I had composed mixed groups of organizational representatives, I would have been at risk of restraining the insights shared in a collective discussion. As Hofmeyer and Scott (2007) noted, subordinates might conform to the ideas and views of the superior to convey a particular image of themselves in a group situation.

Focus group sampling had received attention in the literature. In my thesis research, the theme of organizational change was not extremely sensitive but rather an overarching issue in the organization. Therefore, my focus groups were composed of participants who were already familiar with each other. This aspect allowed me to immerse myself in organizational collectiveness. As Eriksson and Kovalainen (2008) noted, organizing a discussion among participants who were familiar with each other allowed the researcher to enter into natural circumstances where the participants based their comments on collective knowledge and experiences. Appropriate sampling procedures and the level of acquaintance among the participants, therefore, attracted my attention (Hofmeyer & Scott, 2007; Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2008).

In my thesis research, the focus group sessions were not completely unstructured as each session had two main discussion themes including the reflection of the change process and the projection of the future. These themes originated from the appreciative methodology which highlighted the reflective attitude (Barge & Oliver, 2003; Gergen & Thatchenkery, 2004; Thatchenkery & Metzker, 2006; Behara et al., 2008; Hornstrup & Johansen, 2009; Dewar & Sharp, 2013) and the discussion of future prospects (Barge & Oliver, 2003; Watkins & Mohr, 2011). Within the major themes, I planned sets of general questions that were presented to elicit the involvement of the participants (see Appendix 3). Therefore, in terms of harmonization, my semi-structured sessions were positioned between strictly established agendas and open discussions (Morgan, 1996).

Considering my research purposes, I was convinced that two separate focus group discussions were adequate for my thesis research including various sources of data. I believed that sufficient insights into the change process could be obtained by meeting with the groups once. It had been advised to address the frequency of meeting with a particular group while also considering the appropriate number of focus groups sessions (Onwuegbuzie et al., 2009). Usually, at least two focus group sessions were recommended, and insights into the topic tended to become saturated after eight sessions were held (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2008).

The detailed specifications related to practical considerations of executing focus group research. In this regard, it was reasonable to consider how many participants ideally participated in the discussion. I planned to compose groups of four to five people to keep control of the situation. The group size directly affected the facilitator's ability to engage everyone in the

discussion and control the group (Morgan, 1996). Onwuegbuzie et al. (2009) acknowledged that a big group of people could restrain the communication, and a small group might not generate enough versatility in opinions. Usually, a focus group discussion occurred among a group of more than two but no more than ten people; varied ideas could be obtained and the researcher was able to handle the group situation if there were four to eight people per group (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2008).

I organized two focus group discussions with the organizational representatives. Based on the preliminary agreements, the sessions were planned to include three and four participants, respectively. This plan was realizable considering the tight schedules of the prospective participants. However, the realization of the discussions diverged from the preliminary plans as I slightly anticipated based on the advice provided by the existing literature (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2008). In the first session, one participant was unable to keep the appointment while other joined belatedly and, therefore, two participants were included. The second session was also shrunken to involve three participants. Altogether five organizational representatives participated in two focus group discussions.

In relation to other detailed specifications, there were certain practical considerations that I covered to practically execute the focus group research. In terms of the discussion atmosphere, I conducted the focus group sessions in the organization's premises to ensure the comfortability and ease of access for the participants. I reserved two hours per session, and the participants were provided with the necessary details about the practical execution of the group discussions (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2008). Due to the tight schedules of the participants, the pre-planned two-hour discussions needed to be condensed. As a result, the first focus group session took approximately one hour and 20 minutes and the second discussion lasted one and a half hours.

The focus group discussions were recorded with the permission of the participants. I utilized voice recording to facilitate data analysis as my research methodology based on the moderate constructivism (Comi et al., 2014) did not demand the use of videotaping. After the discussions, I transcribed the records verbatim and made additional notes to document insights into the situational factors of the focus group discussions.

With regard to the specification of the data collection techniques, I recognized that the participants could be engaged in other activities than merely discussing the relevant matter with

each other. I employed extra materials in the collective forums for discussion on change by utilizing post-it notes. Due to the appreciative inquiry intervention, the organizational members were familiar with the post-it notes employed in the workshops, which justified the utilization of these visuals in my thesis research study. As these extra materials were used to activate the focus group participants, I as a facilitator was prepared to manage the situation successfully (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2008; Onwuegbuzie et al., 2009).

While allowing the participants to discuss, they were encouraged to take notes of their progress in revealing the essential features of the organizational change process. Eventually, the post-it notes were collectively reviewed and organized to produce a snapshot of the change. By utilizing the post-it notes as a combination of projective and facilitative tools, I engaged the participants in the discussion and extracted the central ideas based on the collective discussion (Comi et al., 2014). Engaging the participants in the collective activity also enabled me to witness the natural circumstances of communication that are prevalent in the organization (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2008). In this way, active communication was evoked as the participants were stimulated and the self-adhesive labels were a useful tool for initiating discussion, collecting ideas, enabling mutual understanding and finally, organizing and combining the resulting ideas (Peterson & Barron, 2007).

3.2.2 Appreciative Facilitation

The appreciative methodology involved appreciative facilitation as a major element. In this regard, I contributed to redirecting organizational energy and enabling collective action in the facilitation of focus group events. According to the existing literature, facilitation had verifiably advanced appreciative interchange (Barge & Oliver, 2003; Dewar & Sharp, 2013). In addition, organizational discourse and reasoning had been revitalized by means of the appreciative facilitation. Dewar and Sharp (2013) highlighted the facilitator's role in enabling an appreciative atmosphere of collectivity that involved the participants in a shared review of practices to achieve cooperative results.

Acting as the appreciative facilitator allowed the emergence of insights into the organizational competencies and opportunities. My genuine interest in the research context enabled me to be inquiring when interacting with the participants (Hornstrup & Johansen, 2009). Reproductive

questions allowed imaginative discussion among the participants and the emergence of undiscovered opportunities and capabilities (Dewar & Sharp, 2013). As a result of these questions and discussions, an awareness of the latent talent in the organization arose (Thatchenkery & Metzker, 2006). In my focus group discussions, this contributed to the redevelopment of organizational discourse and reasoning to identify favorable potential in the organization (Gergen & Thatchenkery, 2004).

When proceeding with the focus group sessions, considering the role of a facilitator was essential. As a facilitator, I avoided excessively controlling the discussions but I ensured that the group did not digress from the overall subject of organizational change. Prior to the discussions, I prepared a general plan of appreciative facilitation to assist my work (see Appendix 3). According to appreciative facilitation, I stimulated the participants to share their viewpoints and experiences in the group discussion (Puchta & Potter, 2002). In this way, I addressed the extent of harmonization regarding the facilitator influence in terms of controlling the group discussion (Morgan, 1996). I also engaged in situational judgments because the involvement of the discussions depended on the situation and the participants (Barge & Oliver, 2003).

In general, I followed the advice provided by the existing literature to prepare for my facilitator tasks. I clarified the topic, the aims, and the plan of proceeding with the discussion while encouraging communication among the participants themselves (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2008). As people engaged in the conversation, I sustained their interest and gave them a chance to contribute to the discussion (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2008; Onwuegbuzie et al., 2009). I also applied the idea of organizing a hospitable atmosphere to make participants socially comfortable in the research situation (Rodriguez et al., 2011). For instance, I applied ‘careful curious questioning’ to illustrate the organizational opportunities and identify the positive potential (Dewar & Sharp, 2013:3). Similarly, I followed the advice provided by Hornstrup and Johansen (2009:10) by using ‘reflexive and generative questions’ as a means of stimulating innovativeness and development ideas.

Following the action research approach, I acknowledged that my personal characteristics would likely have an influence on the group discussion (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2008; Rodriguez et al., 2011). The facilitator influence on the outcome of the discussion had been critically evaluated (Morgan, 1996; Puchta & Potter, 2002). However, my role in producing the focus

group data was evident on the basis of my action research approach (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2008). To maximize the comfortability of the participants in my presence (Rodriguez et al., 2011), I maintained good social skills and established rapport with the group (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2008). I enforced the comprehensive appreciation in terms of my behavior and mindset as adopting the appreciative attitude was advantageous (Rodriguez et al., 2011). Therefore, as I approached the organizational change, I was prepared to facilitate the discussions in which criticism emerged (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2008).

With regard to the interplay between the participants and me as the facilitator, the relation evolved as the discussion progressed. I was already familiar with the organization and its representatives, which facilitated my assimilation into their culture. In the beginning, the participants clearly needed more activation, relied on my input and acknowledged my presence. Therefore, I posed more questions in the first 30 minutes of the discussions than in the final parts. Initially, both discussions resembled an interview situation in which I asked the questions, and the participants provided the responses (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2008; Gibson & Brown, 2009). However, as the ice was broken, and the ambiance relaxed, the participants were eager to participate in the discussion and focused more on interacting with each other. Towards the end, they were engaged in collective reflection. Especially in the second discussion, there was approximately a period of 20 minutes when I did not need to make any comments. Instead, I was able to concentrate on following the collective sharing of ideas between the participants.

3.3 Analysis of the Data

In my thesis research, I utilized the qualitative methods of analysis to analyze the data throughout the research process. Specifically, I performed qualitative content analysis (Elo & Kyngäs, 2008; Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2008; Tuomi & Sarajärvi, 2009). In this way, I extracted the central themes of the interview, the research notes, the focus group transcripts and the post-it notes. According to the definition of the qualitative content analysis provided by Eriksson and Kovalainen (2008), I aimed to discover frequently occurring themes in the data set based on a particular analysis unit. The planning and selection of a particular data analysis method were naturally dependent on my individual research foundation (Vicsek, 2007; Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2008; Onwuegbuzie et al., 2009).

With regard to the methods of data analysis, there were various alternatives available. Although I chose the qualitative content analysis due to its wide applicability (Elo & Kyngäs, 2008; Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2008; Tuomi & Sarajärvi, 2009), I considered other alternatives before making the final decision of the analysis method. In addition to the content analysis, Eriksson and Kovalainen (2008) highlighted ethnographic analysis concentrating on the social construction of the world according to the participants' views. On the other hand, systematic approaches had been incorporated into the data analysis methods by formulating procedures and schematic arrangements. For example, Onwuegbuzie et al. (2009) presented a framework for analyzing focus group data to demonstrate how many participants contributed to the emergence of an idea and how strongly it was supported or opposed.

As my methodological approach was based on the moderate constructivism (Comi et al., 2014), I was interested in analyzing the individual contributions of the research participants made in a collective situation. In other words, my focus was on analyzing the content and the context of the empirical data if applicable, instead of exclusively specifying the social constructivist details of the data. I connected thematic analysis with context analysis to obtain a deeper understanding about the data than it would have been possible by merely considering the content of individual contributions (Vicsek, 2007). Therefore, the ethnographic analysis (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2008) was not the actual objective of my study examining collective intelligence in the changing organization.

I thoroughly executed the analysis of the data to ensure sufficient familiarity with and a comprehensive representation of the data. In my thesis research, the data was variously collected on separate occasions, which allowed me to familiarize myself with the previous data before embarking on the next round of the data collection. This method was compatible with the overall idea of the action research as a phased process of investigating organizational life (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2008). In this way, all the relevant phenomena regarding relevant circumstances were incorporated into the analysis (Vicsek, 2007). I gradually started the examination of the available data by exploring the records and reorganizing the contents according to the research question as Eriksson and Kovalainen (2008) recommended.

After each round of the data collection, I listened to the available records, familiarized myself with the available post-it notes and compiled the research notes. I transcribed the interview and focus group discussions verbatim, which was sufficient for my research interests. In addition, I

reviewed the observation notes and utilized these notes to write an elaborate description of the observed phenomena. In this way, I ensured that all the data was in written format and available for the content analysis (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2008). With regard to the unit of analysis, I chose to focus on individual thoughts (Elo & Kyngäs, 2008; Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2008; Tuomi & Sarajärvi, 2009). The thoughts were most often expressed in one or two sentences.

In Table 2, I present the categories of the data analysis according to the abstraction process depicted by Elo and Kyngäs (2008). With the main categories of continuous change, organizational collectiveness, organizational communication and positive collectiveness on my mind, I approached the data that was in written format. Initially, I familiarized myself with the data by thoroughly reading the transcripts several times as advised in the existing literature (Elo & Kyngäs, 2008; Tuomi & Sarajärvi, 2009).

Following the advice of Elo and Kyngäs (2008), I reviewed the theoretical framework of my study to determine deductively the main categories of the content analysis which I organized in an unlimited form. In this way, I was allowed to complete the ‘unconstrained matrix’ (ibid:111) inductively by including the categories emerging from the data within the main categories derived from my theoretical discussion. Similar advice was provided by Tuomi and Sarajärvi (2009), and my analysis of the data resembled the abductive analysis as presented by them. Specifically, I employed existing theoretical concepts in formulating the main categories of analysis while approaching the data on its terms before enforcing it into the deductive categories.

Gradually, I began to understand the data and see the connections between the theoretical main categories and the data set. This understanding allowed me to start identifying simple expressions and denoting these in the printed transcripts (Tuomi & Sarajärvi, 2009). In other words, I engaged in open coding and listed the simple expressions (Elo & Kyngäs, 2008). I exposed the similarities and differences between these expressions to start combining them to sub-categories and general categories toward the complete main categories derived from the theoretical constructs (Elo & Kyngäs, 2008; Tuomi & Sarajärvi, 2009). Based on the inductive analysis, I did not need to compile additional categories as all the relevant issues fitted the theoretical constructs (ibid), which indicated the comprehensiveness of my theoretical framework.

Table 2. Categories of the data analysis.

MAIN CATEGORY	GENERIC CATEGORY	SUB-CATEGORY
Continuous change	Creativity	Variety
		Readiness for change
		Positive change
	Ongoing development	Incompleteness
		Premise of change
		Change management
Organizational collectiveness	Faith	Commitment
		Religiousness
	Collective spirit	Collaboration
		Collective interplay
Organizational communication	Humanity	Positive feedback
		Organizational dialog
	Communicative contribution	Change communication
		Communicative development
		Communicating the vision
Positive collectiveness	Joy of work	Collective energy
		Collective appreciation
	Future prospects	Future safeguard
		Future vision

In Table 2, the main categories, which were formulated according to the existing theoretical constructs, are shown in the left column. The middle and the right columns of Table 2 illustrate the inductive categories, which emerged from the data set. The data was collected in a Finnish-speaking organization and, therefore, the set of data was in Finnish. Therefore, I completed the analysis of the data in Finnish and translated the final categories emerging from the data in English. I also translated and listed several apposite quotations in reserve for the reporting of the results. When translating the categories and quotations from Finnish to English, I utilized several dictionaries and translation programs to ensure an adequate representation of the original ideas.

With regard to the analysis of the focus group data, Vicsek (2007) argued for the incorporation of dialogic circumstances into the content analysis. She demonstrated that the analysis can focus

on the content of the data if the research interests do not include the manners of communication. However, she suggested incorporating collective and circumstantial considerations in the analysis as these are central concerns in focus group research. It was also recommended to monitor the connections between the participants and document ideas in relation to that (Hofmeyer & Scott, 2007).

Following the advice of Vicsek (2007), I made the decision of connecting the content analysis with the context analysis of focus group data. Therefore, I conducted a lightweight circumstantial analysis at the same time with analyzing the content of discussions. I initially executed the circumstantial analysis according to the circumstantial dynamics of focus group discussions. To appreciate a focus group discussion in its entirety, Vicsek (ibid) elaborated on her research practices that included an initial circumstantial analysis followed by content analysis. Specifically, her system focused on six circumstantial dynamics; interplay, participant features, facilitator, surroundings, temporal dimension and contextual components.

3.4 Critical Evaluation of the Methodology

As the major contribution of my thesis research to the action research process was focus group research, the majority of this section is devoted to its evaluation. Various favorable outcomes can be reached by enquiring into the collective intelligence of research participants although this approach entails the potential for challenges. The appreciative inquiry intervention was executed as a separate project. Therefore, it is not discussed in this section. The other stages of the process including the individual interview and observations provided additional evidence for the organizational change, and I present a brief evaluation of these methods before initiating the discussion on focus group evaluation.

Different philosophical approaches inevitably differentiate research designs despite the same method would be employed. Therefore, I have explicated the foundations of my methodological discussion and fastened on moderate constructivism as applied by Comi et al. (2014). In addition, I have highlighted the comprehensive appreciative methodology that directs the choices in my thesis research. In organizational studies, the need for understanding the traditions that form the foundation for research has been underlined (Stewart et al., 2007; Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2008; Coule, 2013).

I made the methodological choice to pursue the action research approach in investigating ongoing organizational change on the basis of the comprehensiveness that this approach entails. Eriksson and Kovalainen (2008) noted that the action research approach can yield unique data on the organization that would be difficult to obtain with other approaches. As Sackmann et al. (2009) demonstrated, action research is a relevant choice in the context of the organizational change to enquire into and substantiate the organizational change efforts. However, I needed to address the ethical issues in terms of appropriately interacting with the organizational representatives and ensuring their informed consent to participate in the research (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2008). I acknowledged that the action research approach did not provide an easy access to information on organizational life as it required, for instance, collaboration with the case organization, properly establishing trust with the participants and adaptable skills (ibid).

Concerning observation, this method of data collection can produce accurate information about organizational life that is not dependent on unsynchronized individual descriptions (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2008). To address the relevant research ethics, I ensured that the participants were aware of the observation (Gibson & Brown, 2009). A major defect of observations is related to the lack of individual insights into the researched phenomenon as the participants do not have an opportunity to reveal their personal ideas and concerns (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2008). Therefore, the individual interview provided the personal visions of the interviewee that were later substantiated by the collective intelligence on the research phenomenon (Comi et al., 2014). Similarly, I needed to ensure the informed consent in terms of disclosing sufficient information and establishing trust with the interviewee in the interview process (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2008).

Concerning the experience of engaging in the appreciative research, it was likely favorable for the participants who seemed to be empowered and enthusiastic after the discussions. This observation was evident in the appreciative inquiry intervention as the participants were clearly energized by the workshops. In addition to the opportunity to gain collective ideas on a given phenomenon under study (Morgan, 1996; Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2008), Eriksson and Kovalainen (2008) referred to the positive effect on the research participants who are given the chance to voice their views and directly interact with the researcher.

I justified focus groups as effective forums for producing collective intelligence on organizational change based on the individual contributions. Specifically, the participants had

an opportunity to elaborate comprehensively on their personal experiences. They developed their ideas and considered their statements while hearing others' contributions, which would not usually be possible in individual interviews requiring rather immediate responses (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2008). Individual backgrounds and opinions were contrasted (Morgan, 1996) while personal experiences were also contemplated in the group situation (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2008). Furthermore, the participants developed a shared understanding about the discussion topic that was more comprehensive than individual opinions (Morgan, 1996).

Focus group research elicited valuable data in my research study due to the meaningful connection between the appreciative discussions and the involvement in organizational change. Focus group discussions clearly engaged research participants in a natural and insightful discussion, which provided a generous description of the research phenomenon (Newby et al., 2003). This also benefited the case organization as the appreciative approach involved organizational members in the change process and thus, promoted the ideas of change (Barge & Oliver, 2003; Gergen & Thatchenkery, 2004; Behara et al., 2008).

In my thesis research, the favorable effect of the appreciative dialog on cooperative learning and change process (Barge & Oliver, 2003; Watkins & Mohr, 2011; Dewar & Sharp, 2013) was crucial for the case organization. Other dialogic methods would have concentrated on the reasoning among a group of participants to recognize difficulties (Barge & Oliver, 2003; Watkins & Mohr, 2011). Instead, the appreciative approach stimulated emotional involvement in the organization by enabling affirmative discussions on the vital characteristics and highlighting the functional features (Barge & Oliver, 2003).

However, there were certain defects in my focus group research. Specifically, prior to the data collection, I acknowledged the potential for challenges in terms of scheduling the focus group discussion and encouraging the participants to involve themselves in the discussions. To address the scheduling issue, I contacted the prospective participants early enough while being flexible with scheduling the sessions according to the participants' agendas. However, it proved challenging to gather a certain group of people at a specific place at the same time (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2008) in my thesis research.

In relation to the participant involvement, I recognized the potential for challenging and unexpected situations in the interviews (Roulston, 2011). As the collective context affected the

direction of the discussions (Morgan, 1996), it was not natural for everyone to start sharing their views and thoughts with others (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2008). The participants might have felt uncomfortable discussing a particular issue in the research situation (Morgan, 1996). They might have also preferred restraining themselves from sharing their experiences if they had had unique ideas that could not have been easily expressed in a group situation (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2008). To tackle these issues, I included warm-up questions to ensure that the atmosphere was relaxed and comfortable (see Appendix 3). I believed that the collectiveness was a strength of focus group research although the collective nature had received criticism (Morgan, 1996; Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2008).

I took charge of facilitating the focus group sessions as academic researchers usually do to monitor the effectiveness of the discussion in terms of achieving its goals (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2008). I recognized that my behavior and communication could alter the direction of the discussion (Puchta & Potter, 2002) and, therefore, I prepared myself to manage properly the collective forums to elicit collective intelligence. However, my involvement in the research environment was compatible with my research methodology based on social constructivism and applying the action research approach (Cooperrider et al., 1995; Gergen & Thatchenkery, 2004; Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2008). Considering the longitudinal nature of my thesis research, I was already familiar with the case organization and, therefore, I believed the participants better accept me as part of the discussions than an unfamiliar facilitator.

4 EMPIRICAL EVIDENCE OF ORGANIZATIONAL CHANGE

4.1 Continuous Change

In the comprehensive data set, I create continuous change with its main elements as a main category to illustrate the discussion on organizational becoming at the Orthodox Church of Finland. The general categories of continuous change include creativity and the ongoing development. In the following sections, I discuss these general categories together with the various sub-categories that reveal the nature of continuous change in the organization. Continuous change is part of organizational becoming and this connection is elaborated in the next Chapter when discussing the key results of this study.

4.1.1 Creativity

Different themes related to creativity emerged from the discussions throughout the research process. Therefore, creativity is a central issue in the continuous change process of the Church. I chose the construct of creativity as the first general category under the main category of continuous change. The participants depicted the existing variety, readiness for change and positive change as the crucial elements of creativity in the organization. Creativity was an evident choice for the general category as the participants engaged in discussions on the various forms of being creative and receptive to new ideas in terms of the organizational change.

With regard to variety, multiple external changes and alterations were recognized to have an impact on the organization. Stability in the organizational operations was deemed impossible as the surrounding society and the world are continuously changing. This ultimately forces the organization to change as the Church is willing to remain operative in the contemporary environment. Therefore, one participant noted that ‘there is no excessive sense of security’ as the changes are necessary in the present situation. As a result of the external pressure, the need for change was explicitly considered a positive aspect.

To promote and benefit from the existing variety in the extrinsic environment, ‘readiness for change’ constituted another crucial element of creativity. Several explicit remarks were made

on the readiness for change throughout the research process while the general atmosphere and the attitude of the participants clearly conveyed an internal readiness for change in the organization. Readiness for change was highlighted to see the need for change instead of insisting that everything has to remain changeless. In this regard, exiting the safe area was mentioned as a prerequisite: ‘...being able to exit one’s own circle of security and to see what the actions would be and what the changes should be to secure the future’. Readiness for change and the willingness to look to the future with a positive mind were recognized as powerful forces behind the development.

The participants identified several positive experiences in the change process and therefore, I extracted positive change as the final sub-category of creativity. The participants appreciated the ongoing development and the realization of certain advancements. The organizational culture was seen to be evolving and ‘the direction of the change’ was assessed to be appropriate. The participants thought that the operational culture and the principles of the Church have been modernized, but they also recognized a need to vision the future instead of merely living in the present: ‘one should look more beyond [this moment]...to the future...one should probably think further’. For example, the prospective and desired changes included establishing discussion forums, developing the meeting technique of the Church Assembly and clarifying the roles in the decision-making process.

4.1.2 Ongoing Development

In addition to creativity, I highlight ongoing development as the other construct of the continuous change in the organization. The participants engaged in discussions which clearly embraced the ongoing development that is the crucial dynamic of the organizational change. In this regard, incompleteness, the premise of change including the major needs and objectives and change management emerged as the constructs of the ongoing development.

Based on the empirical data, the incompleteness of the organizational change is clearly associated with ongoing development. The change was viewed as ‘an ongoing change in the organization’ and as an emerging process since ‘everything has newly begun’. The change was said to last for several years: ‘In a year, probably something has been achieved, and in ten years, a new organization has been formed’. The change in its entirety takes time, and ‘a maximum of

ten years' was specified as an appropriate time frame. For example, a major aim is that 'in the beginning of 2020, the church administration would be in its new form'. Due to the short-term change initiated in 2012, the participants were hesitant about evaluating the concrete results and achievements. The visibility of the change was said to be limited: 'It is difficult to see the signs of change'. A process of continuous evaluation was considered crucial and identified as a major area of future development in the organization.

In terms of the incompleteness, a gradual progress was acknowledged as 'discussion is initiated and it is alive' in the organization. At the moment of the research, everything was considered being at the initial stage. One participant stated that 'there are many major issues coming and we are still making the first steps towards the change'. In a similar way, the change was described being 'still such small steps of the first meters, here everything is still awfully in the beginning'. The processes of change were said to be in progress although annual achievements were stated to be modest. In the Church organization, a permission needs to be granted from the decision-making body before proceeding to a concrete level of activities, which affects the overall progress of change.

With regard to the premise of change, the initial stage and the beginning of the change process were reflected. 'Sector thinking in terms of drawing clear lines between the units and valuing security and privacy' was prevalent in the beginning of the change. This thinking affected the strict boundaries between the different sections and caused lack of a general view. It was reported that secrecy was overly emphasized and everything was physically 'behind locked doors'. The atmosphere was described as reserved and anticipatory due to the limited information on change and a fear of the end results. Therefore, change training was organized as part of the preparations for change to alleviate the distress of the personnel.

There had been several challenges causing the pressure for change in the beginning. The main challenges of change were identified as 'lack of confidence', insufficient communication and isolation when 'everyone stays in their own foxholes'. Lack of confidence was especially discussed as a factor that increased the pressure for change. Ameliorating the overall lack of confidence in the organization was seen as time consuming although the participants admitted that some progress had already been made in that regard: 'we are going on the positive side'.

As the change was initiated a few years ago, ‘the need for change was concrete’ in the organization. One participant explicated the need for change in the following words:

‘The change was based on necessity as something needed to be done and now we have started doing...we are making such a change which is indicated, [the change is] necessary.’

Specifically, a need for evaluation formed the background to the change. Comparing the change of the organization with that of the world and society was needed to ensure the survival of the Church. There had been changes in the surrounding environment and legislation. Therefore, evaluation was needed to determine whether the Church was keeping up with the prevailing advances. ‘Economic threats’ were another main reason for initiating the change and there was a need for evaluation from an economic perspective at all levels of the organization.

Considering the concrete need for change, varied objectives were set for the change process. The overall goal ‘to ensure the survival process of the Church’ included a restructured administration, new operational models and an updated structure. Other main objectives of the necessary change were related to ‘harmonization’ and ‘increasing clarity’ in the organizational operations. ‘Economic and functional efficiency’ was highlighted together with ‘a reasonable usage of available resources’. ‘A need for expediency and rationality’ was also a major force behind the change and enabled the pursuit of modernization in the organization. It was important to ensure that current operations and processes serve modern needs instead of focusing on the past. At the same time, ‘the teachings of the Church could be tested and clarified’ to ensure their functionality today.

In relation to the objective set for the functional organization, the division of operations between ‘different areas of responsibility’ and ‘a service-oriented culture’ instead of a bureaucratic way of thinking were considered crucial in the change process. For example, concrete objectives included clarifying job descriptions, increasing resources and improving the preparation work. The change was initiated by scrutinizing the fundamentals of the organization and the common rules. In addition to ‘adopting a helpful role’, one participant highlighted:

‘I thought that the central administration should be able to collaborate in a seamless way before any major initiatives are realized at the organizational level, so it should be harmonious and function smoothly’.

This view highlighted the phased view of the change as an ongoing development process in the organization.

A reform of decision making emerged as the final objective for the organizational change. The concrete propositions covered an appropriate documentation of decisions and acknowledging the manifold effects of decisions. The themes of decision making recurred throughout the data in various forms and ideas. As a result, decision making was clearly an essential area of development in the change process. Due to the major effect of the decision making on the annual rotation, it was considered a crucial aspect of the organization as ‘everything culminates in the decision making’. The participants confirmed that the clarity of decisions and the overall quality had already improved.

A major theme of ongoing development was change management. A general distinction was made between ‘administrative and religious leadership in the Church’. This distinction highlighted the effect of the spiritual dimension on the administrative tasks while also emphasizing the two-dimensional nature of the Church. The change management activities were initiated by the central administration and the role of major executive bodies was emphasized. Especially ‘management presence’, which underlined the active presence of the managers in the work community, received attention throughout the research process.

The conditions for managing the change in the organization were also noted. For example, attention was drawn to managing the necessary change in the organization:

‘Finding the changes required by the necessity and what they demand...when these [changes] have been executed, the methods of working and the processes can thus be clarified.’

A general view was considered essential in change management and it was noted that it is impossible to analyze change-related issues ‘from an individual operator’s perspective’. ‘A

seamless integration’ and communication between the decision-making and executive bodies were also considered essential.

Management issues engendered a slight controversy in the discussions. Mostly this was based on the controversial reconciliation of the religious and administrative aims. However, a general agreement was that ‘the coaching leadership’ is needed to support a professional work community. Leading in a coaching manner was specified to advance the interaction and development in the work community. In this regard, the participants agreed on the importance of facilitation, guidance and a helpful attitude. The connection between the coaching leadership and ‘a learning organization’ was also highlighted. As a result, the central role of management was visible in the discussions on ongoing development.

4.2 Organizational Collectiveness

I construct organizational collectiveness as the second main category of organizational becoming. Organizational collectiveness emerged from the empirical analysis based on the discussions in which the participants engaged throughout the research process. In addition, my observations substantiated the existence of organizational collectiveness in the Orthodox Church of Finland. The general categories of organizational collectiveness include faith and collective spirit with the relevant subcategories, which are covered in the following sections.

4.2.1 Faith

With regard to organizational collectiveness, I identify faith as one general category that emphasizes this aspect of organizational becoming. Faith and the religious dimension in general were extensively discussed throughout the research process, which illustrates the inherent nature of organizational collectiveness at the Church. According to the results of my empirical analysis, the sub-categories of faith included commitment and religiousness. These also stress the significance of organizational collectiveness which is based on the shared value base in the Church organization.

In terms of commitment, a major cause of working in the Church is ‘to have a vocation’ for the work. Therefore, the personnel were considered committed and dedicated to their work. For example, the Orthodox Church of Finland was described as follows:

‘It is small, but operating in an extensive area as it covers the whole Finland and the individual parishes are small but in an extensive area. It is maybe slightly dispersed, not ideologically, but physically.’

Despite the geographical dispersion, the Church membership affects the overall commitment to the organization and to the change process. One participant noted that by being part of the change, ‘it is possible to serve the best interests of the organization, this is how I noble-mindedly think’. This underlines the effect of faith on the involvement of the organizational members in the development activity.

In addition, the connection between the commitment to the Church and the meaning of the work was evident as the participants indicated the importance of recalling ‘for what reason this job is done here’. The vocation for working in the Church was evident and several participants mentioned that the involvement of the employees was clearly a strength. As one participant noted, ‘the Church has an element which can be loved and one can commit oneself to’. As a result, ‘when one loves one’s job, results can be generated’.

The religiousness clearly contributes to security amid the continuous change process. The participants noted that the Orthodox religion is visible in the workplace due to the Orthodox traditions. Certain principles were deemed to be an inherent part of the Church and therefore, these could not be changed. Adhering to Orthodox values and principles was considered ‘respectful’ and important although ‘it requires self-control’. In this regard, a remark was made about ‘the fear of losing something’ if extensive reforms are performed. In addition, the use of non-Orthodox language was slightly criticized and it was questioned whether the Church needs to discuss and develop its ‘strategy that is related to warlike preparations’.

Despite the extrinsic change, it was considered important to ensure that the teaching and the Church remain changeless. Especially ‘guarding the riches’ of the Orthodox tradition was highly appreciated as a source of pride. The long tradition of the Orthodox Church and its ‘strong identity’ were widely discussed. ‘High principles’ and ‘noble goals’ were identified in

addition to the clear teachings of the Church, which refer to the ‘spiritual struggle involved in the religious life’. The stable, original and universal nature of the Orthodox Church was viewed as valuable and therefore, it was considered important to support and advance this rich heritage, while ‘ensuring the retention of the heritage for future generations’.

The religious base of the Church was extensively discussed in relation to the change process. It was clear that some type of discrepancy between the Orthodox religion and the need for reformations in the organization exist. Based on the primary aim ‘to ensure the survival process of the Church’, all secular opportunities cannot be realized due to the restrictive nature of the Church’s tradition and teachings. In this regard, the challenge appeared to be a reconciliation of the modern requirements and the traditional views of the Church. The doctrinal issues are deep in the teaching of the Church and therefore, these have a major effect on the development of organizational operations. The liturgical life directs organizational life, which cannot be ignored in the change process.

There are the fundamentals that are changeless and therefore, these affect the potential for changing the organization. The tradition, principles and teaching of the Church form the boundaries that set the direction for the development of the Church. For example, there are certain limits to administrative and structural changes. A reflection of the opportunities to be ‘attractive’ and ‘interesting’ for contemporary people also highlighted the contradiction between religion and secular aims. However, I consider it remarkable that the participants engaged in collective discussions on the role of the religiousness in the change process and were willing to find a compromise between the different views of religion and secularity.

The religiousness was also a visible dimension of the organizational events. For example, the participants sometimes engaged in a shared prayer in the beginning of a meeting. In addition, several ecclesiastic representatives of the Church were dressed in their uniforms and there were icons of different sizes on the walls. As an opening speech highlighted in one meeting, ‘administrative, economic and religious knowledge’ was combined, and inevitably ‘the liturgical life directs administrative work’. Especially ‘the Orthodox identity’ was seen to affect decision-making processes, while the role of ecclesiasticism was said to be crucial in making decisions.

4.2.2 Collective Spirit

In addition to faith, my analysis reveals the construct of collective spirit in the data set. I chose to highlight the collective spirit as the other general category of organizational collectiveness. Numerous remarks were made about the importance of collaboration in the organizational change process and the collectiveness was conveyed by the discussions that I had an opportunity to observe and conduct in the research process. Therefore, my analysis connected the sub-categories of collaboration and collective interplay with the general category of collective spirit within organizational collectiveness.

Collaboration was highlighted and the participants clearly valued this aspect of their work. It was evident that the participants derived pleasure from working in teams, pondering issues together with others and being part of a work community. Their appreciation for collaboration and cooperative activity was evident and it was referred to as a crucial source of pride. For example, teamwork received a positive status in the discussions on organizational collaboration. The participants mentioned several strengths and major positive experiences of teamwork. They reported that instead of 'highlighting more the individual performance', the current organizational trend was to favor collaboration and working in teams. One participant eagerly admitted 'being proud of our team' in which 'we can work together and share ideas'. Mutual understanding, a shared goal and trust in each other were seen to contribute to collaboration.

Major progress was identified in terms of collaboration in the organization. Especially 'the positive intervention' by the central administration was highlighted in increasing openness, discussion and collaboration. Consequently, the participants recognized a positive development in trust, team spirit and transparency. The participants also acknowledged an increase in the overall cooperative activity, which contributed to achievements and cost saving. Collaboration was clearly improved as 'a culture of co-operation', a shared vision of change and mutual tackling of challenges were mentioned by the participants. In this way, commitment had increased and a diverse view on issues had been reached due to recent developments in the collaborative action.

In terms of the work community, the main construct included 'a professional community'. The participants shared their experiences in terms of networking with various stakeholders and utilizing the difference between people. Especially the development activity was considered

important in the professional community. In this regard, mutual tasks, shared goals, ‘taking one’s profession seriously’, social skills and ‘understanding one’s own role’ were discovered as crucial. In addition, the low hierarchy, open discussion atmosphere and mutual decision making were associated with a good work community. These constructs highlighted the organizational collectiveness. Although some challenges were connected with specific tasks and duties, no major challenges were mentioned in the overall collectiveness of the organization.

With regard to collective interplay, I highlight collective reasoning, collective ambiance and the collective impact on the discussions. The collective reasoning was evident in several discussions throughout the research process. As all participants were familiar with the ongoing change process, which somehow affected their work, they had shared knowledge of the change. This formed a solid basis for a comprehensive discussion on change and a comparison of individual views. In several instances, the participants relied on each other when constructing their views and individual comments. For instance, while one participant began to tell a story or formulate an idea of the discussion topic, the others contributed to this narration by adding their own views. Sharing ideas occurred either spontaneously and eagerly one on the other or complementarily during the silent gaps in the conversation.

The collective ambiance in researched groups was uninhibited and communicative. Mostly, the participants were familiar with each other, which naturally affected the group dynamics. This made the discussions proceed smoothly in a friendly manner. The focus groups seemed to be rather balanced in terms of their composition. I could not observe that any of the participants would have clearly dominated the discussion. Instead, the participants represented the similar organizational level and had rather similar features in terms of their work duties. As the participants were part of existing working groups, their interplay was casual and confidential. They were eager to interact with one another and clearly expressed the collective spirit. For example, stories from the inside and friendly teasing were present in several discussions. They clearly discussed matters that had recently been covered elsewhere while making references to shared memories and experiences.

The collective impact on the participant interplay was rather explicit in the discussions. For example, the participants tended to study each other’s expressions and reactions during the discussions. Occasionally, some participants sought support for their arguments and ideas from

the others. If the others nodded as a sign of agreement or otherwise showed support, the discussion proceeded animatedly. However, diverging views were also expressed, which sometimes caused controversy in a constructive way. This illustrated good and confidential relations between the participants. As a result, the appreciative collectiveness in the discussions contributes to the organizational collectiveness of the Church.

4.3 Organizational Communication

The final main category of organizational becoming is organizational communication. This construct emerged from the empirical results as the participants depicted humanity and communicative contribution as the general categories of organizational communication. Therefore, organizational communication is an essential construct of organizational becoming and in the context of the case organization, communicative development has a major role in the future development efforts.

4.3.1 Humanity

With regard to organizational communication, I identify humanity as a general category that emphasizes this final aspect of organizational becoming. Humanity thus includes the components of organizational communication which are considered inherent in the organization. With the sub-categories of positive feedback and organizational dialog, humanity underlines the importance of the communicative aspects which are closely related to organizational collectiveness. In this regard, humanity depicts caring for others and interaction in the organization.

Positive feedback constituted an area of organizational communication in relation to the successful change experience. In general, the participants admitted that receiving feedback is important to ensure the ongoing development. In several occasions, it was noted that positive feedback had been received from various sources. For example, the feedback had been given to compliment ‘the discussion culture in the personnel meetings’ in terms of its openness and purpose orientation. The process of collective bargaining had also been commented positively:

‘Positive feedback has been received that an endeavor to reach a good result has been shared in good spirit.’

In relation to organizational dialog, the participants highlighted different forms of organizational communication that are prevalent in their work. They expressed that the ‘willingness to engage in an open discussion’ was crucial at the workplace. Furthermore, cooperative results, such as ‘obtaining diverse opinions on issues’, was extensively emphasized. Especially the contribution of increased dialog to effective cooperation was recognized. These factors were considered crucial as the continuous change seemed to be present in the current and forthcoming work in the organization. ‘A positive atmosphere’ and lively discussions were highlighted as the strengths of working in teams which are focused on communicating with each other.

4.3.2 Communicative Contribution

In addition to the humanity, I create the general category of communicative contribution. This category highlights the role of communication in the continuous change process of the organization. Therefore, the sub-categories of communicative contribution include change communication, communicative development and communicating the vision.

Attention was focused on the details of organizational communication in the change process. It was said that effectively managing change is an issue which challenges communications as ‘the flow of information needs to be sufficient’. Communication was seen as an important part of change operations since adequate information on change activities and progress needs to be ensured. In this way, trust and transparency can be maintained and improved. Both external and internal communication is essential to create a correct image of activities and progress. The central message was condensed into the following idea: ‘making change culminates in the communication’.

Although it was noted that organizational discourses have already changed in a positive direction, communicative development was highlighted as a major area of the change process: ‘Communication is still weakness that needs to be advanced.’ By clarifying the job descriptions and responsibilities, it was made possible to add resources in the development activity of

communication. After an appropriate update, ‘a communication strategy’ was said to direct the development of organizational communication. Lack of feedback and evaluation system was also discussed as part of the communicative development. Current feedback was received directly from various sources without a proper system. Therefore, it was acknowledged that evaluation needs to be executed at certain intervals, which was demonstrated to be another area of development in the near future along with the communications.

Communicating the vision was critical in terms of the communicative contribution. The central role of organizational communication in advancing the chosen vision of the future was emphasized. It was noted that various means of communication can be used to contact and connect with various stakeholders in the change process. Some examples were shared to illustrate how organizational communication could be used to enhance organizational change and to achieve desired outcomes. For instance, one participant described the communication of the vision being a longitudinal process as ‘...in the [following] years, we just start seeing and constructing the vision with the means of communication and every which way possible’.

4.4 Positive Collectiveness

Drawing on the appreciative approach, I identify positive collectiveness as the main category under Appreciative Intelligence®. The general categories of positive collectiveness, in turn, include the joy of work and the future prospects, which I describe in the following sections. Positive collectiveness emerge from the empirical results to highlight the appreciative collectiveness that is inevitably prevalent in the organization. Although the participants clearly exhibited an appreciative attitude, major observations were made in terms of the positive spirit in the Orthodox Church of Finland.

4.4.1 Joy of Work

With regard to positive collectiveness, I acknowledge the joy of work as one general category. The participants referred to this theme by discussing a variety of issues throughout the research process. As a result of my analysis of the data, the joy of work comprise collective energy and collective appreciation.

With regard to collective energy, the participants eagerly described their positive experiences of the change process. They engaged in describing and elaborating their joyful experiences at work. For example, ‘a continuous learning process’ was associated with the organizational change. Having an opportunity to gain experience and learn while working with change-related issues was considered ‘motivating and rewarding’. Therefore, I connected enthusiasm with the theme of collective energy. Enthusiasm was visible when the participants immersed themselves in the collective discussions and engaged in lively discussions on organizational strengths. Consequently, the collective discussions exuded energy and enthusiasm. Compared with individual interviews, the difference in the levels of energy and excitement was evident in collective situations where the participants engaged in the mutual pondering of the change-related phenomena. A crucial result was that collectiveness promotes collective energy in the organization.

In addition to the collective energy, collective appreciation was evident in the collective discussions. For instance, the participants shared their ideas about ‘appreciating others’ work’, ‘rejoicing in small things’ and receiving ‘appreciation from the stakeholders’. With regard to an appreciative description of the change, discussion on the early-stage change and its continuous nature was prevalent in the research. The participants expressed that ‘small steps’ toward the major adjustments were taking place in a continuous and ‘gradual manner’. The most concrete changes seemed to be taking place in individual areas of responsibility. This was only directing the way for organization-wide adjustments. Therefore, it was essential that the participants exhibited an appreciative attitude when discussing change-related phenomena.

Overall, an appreciative attitude was exhibited throughout the discussions on change and its progress. The participants identified several challenges in relation to the change but in collective discussions, they were able to construct positive ideas of the changes. This redirected the conversations to focus on the positive aspects of change. In this regard, several remarks were made about the motivational and rewarding effects of the challenges at work. The extent and volume of the change-related work were also seen as challenging in the present situation. For example, ‘In the present situation, it is challenging to see the right visions and read the right signs, which will likely affect the future.’ However, appreciation of the variety at work was expressed.

Several positive aspects of the organizational change were highlighted. Specifically, ‘the joy of change’ was explicitly highlighted by the participants. This joy was visible throughout the research process when enquiring into the organizational change process. Despite the challenges that are evidently included in the change process, the participants collectively focused on the positive constructs of change: ‘...there is something [positive] here’. In this regard, the participants interchangeably discussed numerous aspects of the change process by always acknowledging the positive potential in the challenging issues: ‘We see opportunities.’

To highlight the comprehensive appreciation, challenges were appreciated throughout the research process. Practical work, the position of the Church and change resistance were discussed in relation to the challenges of change. Some participants thought that the amount of work had increased and noted ‘the ambiguity in [organizational] endeavors’ while others described the ongoing development activity to be challenging. Although an attempt had been made to create ‘a service-oriented culture’ in the organization, ‘...the administrative body still has a certain directional and supervisory task as well, which is certainly not experienced as service’. In addition, various stakeholders at different levels involved in the change were recognized. It was seen as challenging to navigate a complex network of stakeholders while producing ‘visible achievements’ for them. However, some participants reported that they had heard ‘positive talk’ and ‘received support for advancing’ from the stakeholders.

The position as an entity subject to public law poses challenges to the work in the organization. This position ‘creates an image of a slow organization’ and practically affects the ‘inflexibility’ of the organizational operations and processes. The operational processes were said to be rigid and, for example, the change of the operational culture was described proceeding ‘slowly’ and ‘painfully’. The acceleration of the processes is inhibited by the schedules and protocols that are connected to the public obligations. The slow progress influences the practical work and the change-related activities. It was acknowledged that ‘the job of a bureaucrat is rather frustrating’ and ‘the job of a bureaucrat includes ... a trifling twiddle of papers’. For example, numerous reports and inquiries were mentioned as the aspects of the ‘invisible work’. Therefore, the Church administration is sometimes encumbered with bureaucracy. ‘The resources of a small Church’ were said to be limited when facing all the responsibilities relating to public law.

With regard to being subject to public law, the participants were able to identify also positive aspects of the procedures. They acknowledged a change for the better, for example, in decision

making processes and monitoring execution. The participants placed value on ‘an unhurried preparation phase’, ‘deliberation’ and the commitment of decision-makers, which are enabled by the slow procedure. Especially ‘multifaceted pondering’ and ‘mutual discussion’ as well as the responsibility of decision-makers for their decisions were recognized as the crucial positive aspects of the organizational practices relating to public law. The continuous development activity, which was described being the ‘step by step’ progress, was believed essential to initiate change in the rigid Church organization.

In support of the positive change, positive aspects were found in the challenging work. As one participant expressed, ‘...this job is very challenging, but it really is the positive aspect as it would be quite boring if one did such work which would go like clockwork.’ ‘Accepting the role’ with its requirements was identified as crucial to work effectively with various stakeholders. As a result, it was clear that the participants appreciated the work with the continuous change although everything does not happen exactly as planned. Challenges were appreciated due to their contribution to learning and developing know-how. Specifically, it was noted that the major challenges at work were based on social resistance to change instead of overly demanding tasks.

Leveraging change resistance is a major aspect of the positive change in the organization. The participants viewed change resistance as a major contributor to the survival process of the Church. Resistance was seen as ‘a double-edged sword’, one edge being opposition and the other being willingness and readiness to change. Opposition to change was extensively described as a fundamental reaction to the development activity that had been initiated in the organization. Ultimately, the participants emphasized change resistance as a positive challenge. The appreciation of resistance to change was evident as one participant expressed that ‘without change resistance, there would not be the stones that rub the diamond’. It was acknowledged that opposition contributes to the execution of the change as it enables a close examination of relevant issues from different perspectives before any final decisions or alignments are made.

4.4.2 Future Prospects

In addition to the initial objectives of organizational change, there were several ideas for the future change efforts. These constituted the general category of future prospects which includes

two sub-categories in terms of the future safeguard and the future vision. In general, ‘looking to the future’ and acknowledging the potential effect of initial small changes on the future development were mentioned as crucial. The operations of the Church were said to need further ‘evaluation at all levels’. For example, in relation to decision making, a specific goal was to promote decisions that would lead to ‘concrete actions’. This emphasized the strength of organizational cooperation and mutual goals towards which the participants seemed to be willing to pursue.

In terms of future safeguard, consciousness of the future was considered an essential objective. ‘Safeguarding the future’ was several times exposed and it was mentioned that ‘changes are needed in the present situation, so that the future would be safeguarded for the Church’. It was elaborated that there are certain changes and procedures that need to be identified to safeguard the Church’s future. In this regard, the discussion on future prospects was clearly connected with the significance of creativity as innovations were a distinct theme. The participants were willing to find new models, solutions and especially new ways of planning the operations in the Church. ‘A mutual vision’ was considered important to create an effective operational culture. Also, considering the Church as a whole and a shared review of practices were mentioned initiating innovative ideas and varied discussions on the future creativity of the organization.

Future vision clearly emerged from the empirical data as the participants engaged in discussing the future of the organization. Discussions on the future prospects revealed potential challenges and various opportunities. In terms of the concrete ideas of the future, the participants eagerly shared their views. Although some participants doubted whether they will be on duty in ten years, everyone engaged in envisioning the future together. In the following paragraphs, I highlight the uncertainty in terms of threats and challenges while concluding the discussion with the opportunities and a comprehensive vision of the future.

In terms of potential challenges, threats were recognized in the future. ‘A future-oriented discussion’ had been initiated in the organization and the importance of ‘pondering the potential threats’ of the Church’s future was especially highlighted. This discussion was seen as essential to enable ‘safeguarding the future for the Church’. For example, ‘the threatening images of the future’ were identified to include financial development and maintaining the operations of the Church.

Another threatening alternative was related to the potential ‘isolation of the Church’ in the society. According to one view, excluding external stakeholders would make the Church ‘introverted’. In relation to the current tendency to leave the Church, the participants expressed concern about the increased number of uncommitted people and the resultant changes in the Church members. One participant noted that the number of new members being baptized is less than the number of deceased members. In addition, a major threat was related to the Church becoming worldly and superficial. ‘A thinning connection to the deep tradition’ and a minor effort to advance religious matters were recognized as current trends, which emphasize the nature of the Church as a ceremony church and ‘an ornament’.

Despite the potential for challenges in the future, several concrete opportunities were also discussed. The participants envisioned various opportunities to prevent the Church from becoming ‘superficial and worldly’, which was seen as possible in administrative work. They expressed their trust in the solid and clear tradition of the Church which will endure even today. It is evident that the Church and its fundamental task remain, but opportunities for future development were recognized due to positive collectiveness.

The main areas of the discussion on future opportunities were related to the increased number and quality of opportunities. The participants were confident that the ideas of change will ‘diffuse to different [organizational] levels’. As one participant remarked, they have ‘the keys to the change’ and opportunities for positive effect on the organization have increased. The future of the Church ‘looks bright’ if discussion on structuring the operations of the Church to be modern continues. Increasing clarity and the effectiveness of operations were seen as opportunities to create visible changes.

The Church was envisioned to be part of the multicultural society in the future with a significant role in building discussion with various stakeholders. One example of the belief in the Church’s future was discussion on the cloister and its meaning for contemporary people. There is also a major social opportunity for the Church which is based on the experiences of immigration and being in the minority as refugees. It was highlighted that:

‘This [immigration] experience should be reclaimed when building the more multicultural Finland, where people are coming from different cultures and different religions to a greater extent than before.’

In this regard, the role of the Church in preventing displacement in society was emphasized. At the same time, the Church could act as a resource in small areas and promote the social welfare. Finding the right networks and stakeholders to support the change process as well as exiting the organizational and personal safe area to identify novel opportunities were emphasized.

Finally, a comprehensive vision of the opportunities and challenges was constructed in this research. Opportunities and challenges were considered two sides of the same thing in terms of being far from each other in the organization. In this regard, the distance is a challenge, but combining forces and uniting various actors is an opportunity. As one participant noted:

‘The challenges are maybe related to the way of living with the heterogeneity of the organization, so that this [central administration] does not change to be too distant for the organization. The danger is always existing that the central administration is somewhere...too far from the everyday action. How to maintain the connection alive and how to be present, it is clearly the target for development, how being present is fulfilled, it is the challenge.’

In this way, the ultimate vision for future development was formed on the basis of positive collectiveness.

4.5 Summary of the Research Results

In Table 3, a synthesis of the research results is presented. Continuous change, organizational collectiveness and organizational communication are evidence in support of organizational becoming while positive collectiveness is closely related to Appreciative Intelligence®. Below, a summary of these results is provided. The connection between the empirical results and the theoretical constructs is elaborated in the next Chapter.

With regard to organizational becoming, the Orthodox Church of Finland exhibits continuous change, organizational collectiveness and organizational communication based on the results of the empirical research. These themes were clearly visible in the collective discussions throughout the research process as the participants engaged in elaborating, for example, the nature and schedules of change, as well as the importance of collaboration and communication.

Taking into consideration the special nature of the Church as an organization, organizational characteristics received attention throughout the research process.

Table 3. A synthesis of the research results.

ORGANIZATIONAL BECOMING			APPRECIATIVE INTELLIGENCE®
Continuous change	Organizational collectiveness	Organizational communication	Positive collectiveness
Creativity - variety - readiness for change - positive change	Faith - commitment - religiousness	Humanity - positive feedback - organizational dialog	Joy of work - collective energy - collective appreciation
Ongoing development - incompleteness - premise of change - change management	Collective spirit - collaboration - collective interplay	Communicative contribution - change communication - communicative development - communicating the vision	Future prospects - future safeguard - future vision

Considering the particular case of the Church, creativity and ongoing development are the central themes of their continuous change. Creativity includes variety, readiness for change and positive change. The readiness for change is needed to address the variety of external events and adjustments. Positive change is a crucial construct of creativity as the organization has clearly embraced a positive view of the continuous change. In this way, the constant evolution is enabled in the organization. The ongoing development is constituted of incompleteness, the premise of change, which involves various needs and objectives for change, and change management. As a result, the organizational members have embraced the idea of the ongoing change that is said to last for several years. The premise of change is acknowledged to ensure the successful execution of the change activities. In this regard, the coaching leadership was a desired style of managing the change in the organization.

In terms of organizational collectiveness, faith is related to this construct of organizational becoming. Commitment and religiousness are highlighted in relation to faith. Loving one's job

and the Orthodox identity are the crucial elements of faith in the organization where the personnel is committed to their work. In addition, the collective spirit including collaboration and collective interplay are part of the change process. Collaboration has a positive status in the changing organization while the collective interplay is a significant indicator of organizational collectiveness. Collective thinking enables the sharing of knowledge and the construction of new ideas and visions while the collective ambiance can be described being open and communicative. Therefore, the collective impact on the interplay is evident.

The final construct of organizational becoming at the Church is organizational communication. In this regard, humanity underlines the communicative aspects. Positive feedback and constructive organizational dialog are the appreciated aspects of organizational becoming at the Church. The communicative contribution is also considered essential. The contribution of communication to the execution of the change process is evident. In a similar way, communication is significant in advancing the vision of the future. Therefore, a need for development in organizational communication needs to be prioritized.

As separately shown in Table 3, positive collectiveness as a component of Appreciative Intelligence[®] includes the joy of work and future prospects. Joy of work emphasizes the collective energy and collective appreciation. Collective energy is an evident result of the research process. Excitement is explicitly expressed in the changing organization and, therefore, collective energy is visible among the organizational members. The participants are clearly enthusiastic about the overall change and its opportunities. Collective appreciation is a representational label for the comprehensive appreciative attitude that is visible in the organization. In addition to identifying the strengths and opportunities of the organization and its future, appreciating the challenges is a crucial element of their appreciative attitude.

In terms of future prospects, the objectives for future development are clear in the organization. Based on these objectives, the organizational discussions on the opportunities and potential challenges are prevalent. In this way, the safeguard of the future is considered an essential aspect to ensure that the Church remains vital. Finally, the vision of the future is constructed as an individual theme due to the participants' comprehensive view of the future. They identify that the opportunities and challenges are intertwined. Therefore, it is essential to configure how to balance between these two interconnected dynamics to ensure the successful execution of the organizational change as a continuous process.

5 FINAL REFLECTION

5.1 Discussion on the Key Results

In my theoretical framework, I presented organizational change as an overarching theme within which I operate. I conceptualized organizational change according to the organizational becoming theorizing that constituted one major component of my theoretical framework in this study. The other component was the appreciative approach which entailed Appreciative Intelligence® and collective intelligence. In this section, I highlight the connection of my theoretical framework to the key results of my empirical study. In this way, I illustrate the significant contribution of my study to the existing body of literature and provide an updated framework based on the empirical results.

5.1.1 Insights into Organizational Becoming

With regard to organizational becoming, continuous change, organizational collectiveness and organizational communication are the essential features of this theorizing (Carlsen, 2006; Sackmann et al., 2009; Thomas et al., 2011). In my thesis research, these features receive support from the empirical research. Therefore, I construct a connection between the theoretical discussion and the empirical occurrence of these organizational becoming constructs. In the following paragraphs, I elaborate on organizational becoming based on the features mentioned above in connection with existing theoretical insights.

Based on the empirical results, a continuous change and the related ongoing development are major components of the organization. Specifically, the empirical results depict the change to be emergent and gradually taking shape in the organization. This finding relates to the ongoing nature of change which is fundamental to the organizational becoming perspective on change. The advocates of organizational becoming have established that change cannot be viewed as a phenomenon that is executed in fixed stages (Clegg et al., 2005; Jian, 2011; Weik, 2011). Therefore, this study substantiates the prior work with continuous change in organizations (Tsoukas & Chia, 2002; Carlsen, 2006; Sackmann et al., 2009; Thomas et al., 2011). Similarly, I join several researchers who have recognized the activity and constant development of

organizations in organizational becoming literature (Chia, 2002; Tsoukas & Chia, 2002; Clegg et al., 2005; Van de Ven & Poole, 2005; Carlsen, 2006; Sackmann et al., 2009; Jian, 2011; Thomas et al., 2011; Weik, 2011). My finding of the emergent organization also relates to the social constructivist conceptualization of organizations as incomplete entities (Cooperrider et al., 1995).

With regard to the effect of the current operating environment, multiple external changes are recognized to have an impact on the emergent organization. Stability in the organizational operations is deemed impossible as the surrounding world changes. A major need for change is identified in terms of the changing external environment, which poses an incentive to evaluate the current operations of the Church. Therefore, my empirical results provide support for understanding how the operating environment with the fast pace of events and the related challenges affects the execution of organizational change (Helms Mills et al., 2009). I also provide support for several postmodern researchers who have underlined the continuous adjustments occurring in the world (Cooperrider et al., 1995; Chia, 2002; Tsoukas & Chia, 2002; Gergen & Thatchenkery, 2004; Van de Ven & Poole, 2005; Watkins & Mohr, 2011).

Change management is considered essential in the organizational discussions on the continuous change and, therefore, I highlight the key results of change management provided by this study. Management presence is underlined as a desired outcome of the organizational development activity while the coaching leadership is considered crucial to support the work community in the changing organization. In this way, I join in and demonstrate the significance of leadership in the organizational change process (Alimo-Metcalfe & Alban-Metcalfe, 2005; Vyas, 2013). In relation to the coaching leadership, the empirical results resemble the collective theories of leadership (Caldwell, 2005) and the appreciative leadership (Brookes, 2011).

On the other hand, the discussion on the coaching leadership indicates the anticipated advancement of the interaction and development in the organization by means of facilitation and guidance. The coaching leadership is considered essential to the future development toward the expert organization. Similarly, the active nature of the leaders is desired in the organization. Therefore, I connect with the existing discussion on the transformational leadership (Pawar & Eastman, 1997; Helms Mills et al., 2009; Oreg & Berson, 2011; Seo et al., 2012; Vyas, 2013). Transformational leaders engage in proactive ways of encouraging and inspiring the pursuit of ultimate organizational targets (Helms Mills et al., 2009). In this way, they contribute to a

comprehensive positive change in the organization (Vyas, 2013) by facilitating the emotional involvement of the organizational members in the change (Seo et al., 2012; Vyas, 2013).

In the Orthodox Church of Finland, faith and the related commitment and religiousness emerge to emphasize the collectiveness of the organization. Faith is a unique character of this organization as it invites, embraces and engages people in the community. In this way, the overall religious dimension contributes to the organizational change as it enables organizational collectiveness and the consequential involvement in the change process. Especially the love for the work is a remarkable illustration of the Orthodox identity. Following the existing literature, I deem change and organizational development to be unfolded by the cooperation of organizational members (Barge & Oliver, 2003; Gergen & Thatchenkery, 2004; Carlsen, 2006). Specifically, my study concurs with Carlsen (2006) who emphasizes the collective nature of the organizational configuration enabling the development of the organization.

In relation to the collective spirit, collaboration and collective interplay emerge as the major characteristics of organizational collectiveness. The organizational members value teamwork and shared practices. They explicitly express the many forms of organizational collaboration to be a crucial source of pride. This finding implies that the organizational change includes collaborative action as a significant element, which is also acknowledged in the literature on organizational change. For example, I follow Thomas et al. (2011) who promote the interactive execution of organizational change without drawing clear lines between the change initiators and receiving parties. In relation to collective interplay, a positive development in the organizational trust has been achieved in the Church. This finding contributes to the existing confirmation that trust needs to be established to ensure the success of the organizational change (Sackmann et al., 2009).

Organizational communication is the final construct of organizational becoming that receives attention in my theoretical discussion and empirical results. Although organizational communication is intertwined with organizational collectiveness in the empirical research, humanity and communicative contribution emerge as the general categories of organizational communication. Specifically, the positive feedback and organizational dialog are considered crucial in the ongoing change process. In this regard, I contribute to the discussion on the significance of organizational discourses which has recently been highlighted, for example, by Jian (2011) and Thomas et al. (2011). The collective discourses facilitate the process of

changing in the organization (Jian, 2011). Positive communication can be seen to represent the constructive discourses which promote the process of organizational becoming (Thomas et al., 2011).

In the empirical results, the communicative contribution to the process of organizational change is highlighted as a crucial area. The communication in the organizational change is deemed to be significant, and the role of communication media is considered evident in advancing the organizational vision regarding the future. In addition, communicative development is recognized as a major direction for the future change efforts. Therefore, these views contribute to the significance of organizational communication in the successful change execution (Carlsen, 2006; Sackmann et al., 2009; Thomas et al., 2011).

As a result of the empirical analysis, a continuous learning process is associated with the organizational change. Having an opportunity to gain experience and learn while working on the change-related issues is considered motivating and rewarding. In this way, the reconstruction of organizational knowledge and the creation of novel insights are the related advancements of organizational learning (Thomas et al., 2011). Organizational learning is a vital organizational characteristic indicating the process of organizational becoming and thus, contributing to the ongoing organizational activity (Clegg et al., 2005). Therefore, I advance the prior work that has underlined the significance of the learning organization (Caldwell, 2005; Sackmann et al., 2009).

5.1.2 Evidence for Appreciative Intelligence®

In relation to the appreciative approach, my study contributes to the growing body of literature embracing the positive view on organizational change (Mills et al., 2013; Cameron & McNaughtan, 2014). Furthermore, the significance of the cooperative appreciative interaction is highlighted in my study similarly to existing evidence (Barge & Oliver, 2003; Dewar & Sharp, 2013). As Gergen and Thatchenkery (2004) underline discourse and reflective action in addition to the ongoing nature of change, I provide similar results with my discussion on the combination of the appreciative approach and organizational becoming.

Based on the existing collectiveness in the organization, positive collectiveness emerges in the discussions on the change process. Previously, the discussion on collective spirit revealed the current collectiveness in the organization. Therefore, I support Barge and Oliver (2003) who underline that the appreciative approach nurtures the organizational spirit, which affects the advancement of the change and organizational learning. I also contribute to the novel understanding about the appreciative approach as a regenerative attitude toward organizational life, change and learning (Watkins & Mohr, 2011). As a result of the collective dialog, the multidimensional intelligence is evidently enabled (Barge & Oliver, 2003; Gergen & Thatchenkery, 2004).

In relation to the joy of work in the organization, the discussion on the joyful experiences resembles Appreciative Intelligence® as an individual capacity that is highlighted in the collective discussion. This finding contributes to the existing knowledge of Appreciative Intelligence® (Thatchenkery & Metzker, 2006; Thatchenkery, 2013; Parkkinen et al., 2014; Parkkinen et al., 2015). Thatchenkery and Metzker (2006) defined Appreciative Intelligence® as a capability to distinguish the intrinsic opportunity for achievement in the current situation. Similarly, Thatchenkery (2013) highlighted that Appreciative Intelligence® is an essential feature to reappraise and acknowledge the favorable conditions. In this study, the organizational members depict the personal characteristics related to Appreciative Intelligence® (Thatchenkery & Metzker, 2006; Thatchenkery, 2013) as they appreciate their experiences with the ongoing change that sometimes proceeds slowly.

In addition to the joy of change, collective energy is a construct of the joy of work and involves the enthusiasm about the change and its opportunities. On the basis of the empirical evidence, the collective excitement of being involved in the change is evident. This finding is additional evidence for the existence of Appreciative Intelligence® in the organization at the collective level. While the appreciative process concentrates on discovering the positive aspects of the organization, Appreciative Intelligence® enables the recognition of existing favorable opportunities for development (Thatchenkery & Metzker, 2006). In order to successfully implement the necessary processes of change, the positive outlook, the importance of reorganization and the act of visioning the future despite challenges are crucial (Thatchenkery, 2013). Based on the existence of collective Appreciative Intelligence®, the collective energy and the related enthusiasm can be considered critical in the change process of the organization.

With regard to collective appreciation, the empirical results provide various insights into this construct of positive collectiveness through the joy of work. By focusing on the favorable and fruitful opportunities, Appreciative Intelligence[®] enables awareness of the latent talent (Thatchenkery & Metzker, 2006). This aspect is evident in the case organization as adverse feelings and negative issues are discussed in relation to organizational change but at the same time, challenges are appreciated and embraced. Critique and challenging issues are not ignored but appreciated in a constructive way (Barge & Oliver, 2003; Hornstrup & Johansen, 2009). In this way, the collective attention is directed to discussing the favorable characteristics and opportunities of the organization. Therefore, the collective level of Appreciative Intelligence[®] is leveraged by the positive collectiveness (Thatchenkery, 2013). At the same time, empirical evidence for the comprehensive appreciation (Barge & Oliver, 2003; Hornstrup & Johansen, 2009; Fitzgerald et al., 2010) is constructed.

In terms of collective appreciation, an appreciative attitude is deemed to be essential. As the majority of the participants are involved in the organizational change, it can be considered crucial that they exhibit the appreciative attitude and are interested in developing the organization in the positive direction. As Thatchenkery (2013) illustrates, Appreciative Intelligence[®] tends to diffuse rapidly if central figures adopt active and initiative demeanor. This diffusion of appreciation enables the constructive development of the organizational practices. In the organizational change process, it is a valuable asset for further development. Prior research underlines the favorable effect of the appreciative diffusion on cooperative learning and change process (Barge & Oliver, 2003; Watkins & Mohr, 2011; Dewar & Sharp, 2013).

Concerning another significant finding of collective appreciation, leveraging change resistance as a contributor to change is considered essential. The appreciation of resistance is evident, and it is emphasized as a positive challenge in the case organization. Change resistance is considered an active dynamic that substantiates the ongoing change, which contributes to the organizational becoming view. In the existing literature, opposition to change is not viewed as a negative factor (Tsoukas & Chia, 2002; Ford et al., 2008; Thomas et al., 2011). My findings support the redefinition of change resistance and advance its role in promoting change (Ford et al., 2008; Thomas et al., 2011). I argue that the appreciative approach transforms opposition into enthusiasm for the change (Parkkinen et al., 2014). I consider Appreciative Intelligence[®] essential in sustaining the favorable effects of the comprehensive appreciation (Thatchenkery

& Metzker, 2006). The comprehensive view of appreciation thus receives further empirical support (Barge & Oliver, 2003; Fitzgerald et al., 2010; Watkins & Mohr, 2011).

In addition to the joy of work including collective energy and collective appreciation, the discussion on the future prospects is a significant element of positive collectiveness. In this regard, the importance of safeguarding the future for the Church is highlighted, and the collective vision of the future is shared. Despite the objectives of the future development are clearly determined in the organization, uncertainty is expressed by discussing the potential for the future challenges and threats. However, the collective vision of the future is evident, and various opportunities are underlined and imagined to illustrate how the potential threats can be overcome.

I relate the collective vision of the future to the organizational level of Appreciative Intelligence® as the discussion on the future mainly covered the prospects for the organization. As Thatchenkery (2013) underlined, Appreciative Intelligence® is an essential feature to reappraise the favorable conditions and be future-oriented. Therefore, it is reasonable to assume that the organizational level of Appreciative Intelligence® emerges and is shaped when engaging in discussions on the future prospects. As the challenges and difficulties are also appreciated (Gergen & Thatchenkery, 2004), the organizational members are involved in envisioning the future together. In this way, confidence is clearly inspired in them (Barge & Oliver, 2003). The appreciative approach evidently enables the participants to project their plans of achieving the future aspirations (Watkins & Mohr, 2011).

5.1.3 Leveraging Appreciative Intelligence® for Continuous Change

Based on my empirical results, clear connections with the existing literature and prior research emerge. These links highlight the significant relationship between the organizational becoming perspective on and the appreciative approach to change. The results of my empirical analysis explicitly enable the diffusion of appreciation in the organization across different dimensions of activity. In this study, I identify the multidimensionality of Appreciative Intelligence® in terms of individual, collective and organizational levels. In Figure 2, I illustrate an updated framework based on the synthesis of the theoretical discussion and the empirical results.

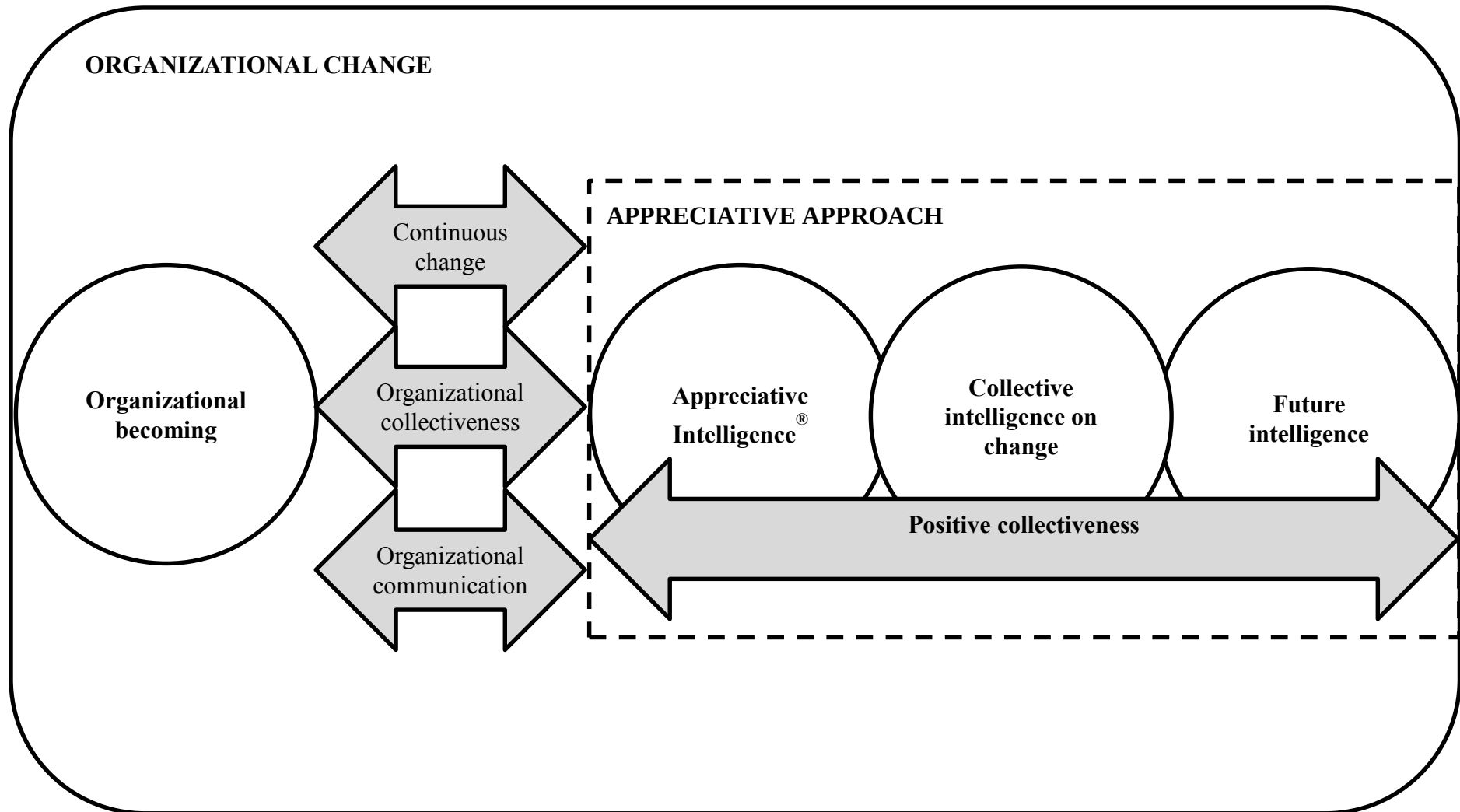


Figure 2. A synthesis of the theoretical and empirical knowledge.

In connection with the theoretical discussion, I demonstrate that Appreciative Intelligence® originates from the individual appreciation. When moving to the collective dimension of Appreciative Intelligence®, collective intelligence on change is reached through positive collectiveness. This process is enabled by the collective energy and collective appreciation among the organizational members. As the empirical results of my study present, the process does not terminate in the collective intelligence but instead, it is followed by the future intelligence including the future vision. Positive collectiveness serves as an overarching moderator between the individual Appreciative Intelligence®, the collective intelligence on change and the future intelligence. The state of reaching the future intelligence ultimately depicts the organizational level of Appreciative Intelligence®.

To elaborate on the key contribution of this study, I explicate the multidimensional view of Appreciative Intelligence®. Based on my empirical results, the individual Appreciative Intelligence® initiates the series in relation to the different dimensions of intelligence. Specifically, the comprehensive appreciative approach induces the individual Appreciative Intelligence® which, in turn, enables the collective intelligence on change. At the same time, the future intelligence emerges as the organizational members in the collective discussion are stimulated by the collective spirit and engaged in the collective interplay and collective appreciation.

Instead of seeing these events as separate phenomena, I encourage an emergent view of the Appreciative Intelligence® process. Although I depict a particular order of occurrence, these different levels of intelligence occur simultaneously and are ultimately intertwined processes. The crucial aspect, therefore, is to empower the participants to innovatively explore the favorable aspects and the desired outcomes by interacting with and learning from one another (Dewar & Sharp, 2013). This highlights that the vital organizational characteristics are confirmed by the appreciative discussion (Barge & Oliver, 2003).

In Figure 2, the two-way arrow of positive collectiveness is extended to include three dimensions of Appreciative Intelligence®. Specifically, positive collectiveness is the overarching construct that serves as a moderator throughout the processes of producing the multidimensional Appreciative Intelligence® in the organization. Therefore, the dynamics of the appreciative collectiveness are significant when considering the process of organizational change (Barge & Oliver, 2003; Verma & Pathak, 2011; Mills et al., 2013; Parkkinen et al.,

2014; Parkkinen et al., 2015). If this collectiveness is recognized and harnessed in an appreciative way, a successful future can be cultivated in the changing organization.

With regard to obtaining the desired future vision, organizational communication is an inevitable area of development in the emergent organization. This development is likely to induce future intelligence and thus, contribute to the favorable results given that the individual and collective dimensions of Appreciative Intelligence® are already prevalent in the organization. This aspect is recognized in this empirical research and further supported by the existing theoretical discussions that highlight the centrality of organizational communication within organizational change. Therefore, the major recommendation for the changing organization includes a careful examination of communicative opportunities in the future.

As a result, this study addresses a gap in the existing literature by examining the link between organizational becoming and the appreciative approach. Specifically, Appreciative Intelligence® contributes to the theorizing of organizational becoming by connecting with the continuously changing organizations (Tsoukas & Chia, 2002; Carlsen, 2006; Sackmann et al., 2009; Thomas et al., 2011). In my thesis research study, it is evident that multiple levels of intelligence exist in the organization. Therefore, I construct the multidimensional view of Appreciative Intelligence® including the individual, collective and organizational dimensions. This view responds to the ideas of Thatchenkery and Metzker (2006) who already proposed a tridimensional conception of Appreciative Intelligence® including individual, organizational and societal levels.

In this regard, I focus on the context of the organization where individuals exhibit Appreciative Intelligence®. The collective dimension of Appreciative Intelligence® is evident as the collaboration and collective interplay have a positive status in the organization while the organizational members are motivated to pursue mutual goals and to achieve shared results. Therefore, the organizational dimension of Appreciative Intelligence® remains slightly underdeveloped. This dimension clearly requires advancements in the future, which is also recognized by the organizational members. The future intelligence is the hidden talent that remains to be discovered in the organization (Thatchenkery & Metzker, 2006). If the organization continues to cultivate the existing dimensions of their Appreciative Intelligence®, they can reveal the hidden talent in terms of the future intelligence.

Concerning my methodological contribution, I introduced focus group research as a means to produce collective intelligence on the organizational change. This research method underlines the interaction in collective discussions (Morgan, 1996; Puchta & Potter, 2002; Stewart et al., 2007; Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2008). It also enables the collective judgment and the shared understanding about the phenomenon (Morgan, 1996; Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2008). Therefore, organizational becoming in terms of constructing collective meaning through interaction and discussion among organizational members (Thomas et al., 2011) is fulfilled. Similarly, the participants are appreciatively encouraged to recreate collective intelligence on the organizational change (Behara et al., 2008).

5.2 Key Contributions of the Study

The purpose of this study was to examine continuous organizational change. I examined the ongoing change process of the Orthodox Church of Finland, which was forced to initiate the organizational change based on the evolution of the external operating environment. The Church faced the increasing demands for efficiency and effectiveness in the organizational operations and initiated the change to remain vital in the future. Therefore, the fast synchronization of events and the related challenges in the extrinsic environment affected the execution of their organizational change (Helms Mills et al., 2009). At the same time, the incessantly changing nature of the world was evident in this case (Chia, 2002; Tsoukas & Chia, 2002; Van de Ven & Poole, 2005; Watkins & Mohr, 2011).

With regard to the organizational becoming theorizing, I contribute to the cohesion of organizational becoming and organizational change (Tsoukas & Chia, 2002; Carlsen, 2006; Sackmann et al., 2009; Jian, 2011; Thomas et al., 2011; Parkkinen et al., 2014; Parkkinen et al., 2015). I illustrated the empirical results for the continuous change in the context of the Orthodox Church of Finland. Therefore, my perception of organizations as constantly evolving entities with the ongoing development was supported (Tsoukas & Chia, 2002; Carlsen, 2006; Sackmann et al., 2009; Thomas et al., 2011). The multifaceted change process of the Church including multiple goals and objectives contributed to my comprehensive understanding about organizational change (Sackmann et al., 2009; Parkkinen et al., 2014; Parkkinen et al., 2015).

Enquiring into the positive collectiveness of the organization in the empirical analysis, I leveraged the appreciative approach for the organizational change. Therefore, my comprehensive application of the appreciative approach was realized in the empirical study of my thesis research. In this way, I contribute to the body of literature which highlights the benefits of comprehensive appreciation (Barge & Oliver, 2003; Fitzgerald et al., 2010; Watkins & Mohr, 2011). Based on my empirical results, there is a strong opportunity for the positive collectiveness to be harnessed to the pursuit of a better organizational future as a result of an organizational change (Barge & Oliver, 2003).

In this study, the appreciative approach involved organizational members in the change process and contributed to the collective understanding about positive organizational characteristics (Barge & Oliver, 2003; Gergen & Thatchenkery, 2004; Behara et al., 2008; Dewar & Sharp, 2013; Parkkinen et al., 2014; Parkkinen et al., 2015). Therefore, the organizational strengths and the positive outcomes of appreciation shape the basis for continuous change which unfolds in the cooperation of organizational members (Barge & Oliver, 2003; Gergen & Thatchenkery, 2004). Based on the sustainable nature of organizational positivity (Fredrickson, 2001; Barge & Oliver, 2003; Fredrickson & Losada, 2005), I believe that the organization benefits from the results of this research process in their future development.

This study addresses a gap in the existing literature by examining the link between organizational becoming and the appreciative approach. The foundations of the appreciative approach are on social constructivism (Cooperrider et al., 1995; Barge & Oliver, 2003; Gergen & Thatchenkery, 2004; Watkins & Mohr, 2011) and the social constructivist conception of the ongoing change (Cooperrider et al., 1995; Gergen & Thatchenkery, 2004) in relation to the organizational becoming theorizing contribute to the similarity between these approaches. Therefore, I introduce the multidimensional Appreciative Intelligence® to the continuously changing organization (Tsoukas & Chia, 2002; Carlsen, 2006; Sackmann et al., 2009; Thomas et al., 2011).

Specifically, my research question was to discover how Appreciative Intelligence® shapes the process of organizational change. To provide a reply to this question, I illustrate the multidimensional view of Appreciative Intelligence® that emerges from my empirical results. This view is based on the tridimensional concept of Appreciative Intelligence® including individual, organizational and societal levels presented by Thatchenkery and Metzker (2006). I

differentiate between the individual, collective and organizational dimensions of Appreciative Intelligence® which can be related to the key results of this study. These different dimensions have been addressed in the existing literature (Thatchenkery & Metzker, 2006; Thatchenkery, 2013). My study contributes to this literature by specifying the role of the multidimensional Appreciative Intelligence® in the continuous process of organizational change.

Appreciative Intelligence® arises from an individual capability to acknowledge the advantageous conditions while being leveraged for organizational change by the collective interplay in organizations (Thatchenkery, 2013; Parkkinen et al., 2015). I support this view with my multidimensional view of Appreciative Intelligence®. As the participants engaged in the collective forums for discussion on change, collective energy and collective appreciation emerged in these discussions. Therefore, my conclusion is that the participants must have possessed Appreciative Intelligence® at the individual level. This conclusion is supported by their engagement in reviewing the organizational practices, identifying the current favorable conditions and envisioning the future prospects (Thatchenkery & Metzker, 2006; Thatchenkery, 2013).

With regard to the collective dimension of Appreciative Intelligence®, my study responds to the view of Thatchenkery (2013) in terms of leveraging Appreciative Intelligence® for organizational change. In this study, existing organizational collectiveness and emerging positive collectiveness leveraged the collective Appreciative Intelligence®. This process was accomplished as the participants revealed their collective Appreciative Intelligence® by engaging in collective interplay and sharing individual insights to produce collective understanding. In terms of the positive collectiveness, the collective energy that was cultivated in the collective discussions among the organizational members inspired me to include the collective level to my definition of Appreciative Intelligence®. In addition, the existing culture of collaboration and the overall collective spirit revealed by the empirical results illustrate that the collective Appreciative Intelligence® was not a transient phenomenon. Instead, the Orthodox Church of Finland possesses a valuable resource for future development in terms of the collective potential that is underlying in the organization.

The organizational dimension of Appreciative Intelligence® is encouraged by Thatchenkery and Metzker (2006) who illustrate how Appreciative Intelligence® can be understood and examined at different levels of activity. In particular, they encouraged the investigation of this construct

across various levels of interest and, therefore, I decided to embrace the third dimension of Appreciative Intelligence® in terms of the organizational level. In relation to my empirical results, the organizational dimension of Appreciative Intelligence® was clearly revealed on the basis of the individual and collective dimensions of Appreciative Intelligence®. The participants engaged in envisioning the future prospects of the organization by innovatively embracing both the challenges and the opportunities. They appreciatively looked to the future with positive minds, which I deem to be essential for future development in the organization. Therefore, I follow the emphasis on future vision in the comprehensive appreciative approach (Barge & Oliver, 2003; Gergen & Thatchenkery, 2004; Watkins & Mohr, 2011). I highlight the future intelligence as the organizational dimension of Appreciative Intelligence®.

In summary, this study promotes social constructivism as an approach to understanding organizational change (Cooperrider et al., 1995; Gergen & Thatchenkery, 2004; Watkins & Mohr, 2011). At the same time, I highlight Appreciative Intelligence® in sustaining the favorable effects of the comprehensive appreciation and advance the understanding about the dynamic Appreciative Intelligence® (Thatchenkery & Metzker, 2006). In response to my research question, Appreciative Intelligence® shapes the organizational change process by facilitating the diffusion of comprehensive appreciation within the process of organizational change. I provide ideas of leveraging Appreciative Intelligence® for future success in the changing organization that is developing towards the expert organization. Specifically, my results indicate that the dynamic organization benefits from the individual, collective and organizational dimensions of Appreciative Intelligence®. In addition to the individual Appreciative Intelligence®, I constructed the collective intelligence on the change and the future intelligence on the forthcoming prospects for the organizational development.

5.3 Recommendations for the Case Organization

With regard to the case organization undergoing the continuous change process, the multidimensional view of Appreciative Intelligence® provides support for the successful execution of the ongoing change. Regarding the ultimate target to develop the expert organization, Appreciative Intelligence®, in general, can be seen as an essential prerequisite. The leadership culture, decision-making, and operational effectiveness were the desired areas of development to ensure the vitality of the organization in the future. Therefore, I illustrate

how the multidimensional view of Appreciative Intelligence® responds to these needs of the case organization.

Leadership culture was seen as a major objective of developing the expert organization. In this regard, the individual Appreciative Intelligence® plays a crucial role in enabling the active leadership to balance between the administrative and religious demands in the Church organization. As Thatchenkery (2013) highlighted, leaders who possess Appreciative Intelligence® recognize the development opportunities and engage in envisioning the future despite challenges. In this way, the diffusion of appreciation is enabled in the whole organization as the central figures adopt the appreciative attitude in terms of Appreciative Intelligence®. Similarly, Lehtimäki et al. (2013) indicated the successful adoption of Appreciative Intelligence® in the development of the leadership culture.

Based on the synthesis of the empirical and theoretical knowledge, transformational leadership is related to the leadership style that is desired in the organization. In this way, the management presence and the active managerial intervention can be ensured to cultivate the organizational success. Specifically, the existing appreciation of change resistance can be maintained by employing the transformational leadership style in the organization. Following Oreg and Berson (2011), transformational leadership can reduce the likelihood of opposition and moderate the existence of opposition in a changing organization. In addition, it has been demonstrated that the appreciation transforms opposition into enthusiasm and curiosity for the change (Parkkinen et al., 2014). Therefore, the individual Appreciative Intelligence® is essential to enable the adoption of transformational leadership.

The development of decision-making in the organization is closely connected to the collective level of Appreciative Intelligence® which is shaped by the collective intelligence. Based on the empirical results of this study, an enormous potential lies in the organizational collectiveness as the comprehensive appreciation is explicitly adopted by the organizational members. If this collective appreciation is harnessed in a positive way, the favorable organizational future can be achieved (Barge & Oliver, 2003). As open discussion and the overall technique of decision-making were considered the desired objectives, the organizational collectiveness is a contributor to this development. Specifically, this study has demonstrated the power of collective intelligence that is generated in collective forums for discussion. Therefore, I recommend that the organization embrace the collective forums in their decision-making

development to enable the attainment of the desired objectives. Creating the collective forums for discussion allows constructive discussions at the same time with producing a multi-level understanding about the relevant matters (Morgan, 1996; Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2008).

The objective of operational effectiveness can be achieved by the organizational Appreciative Intelligence®. As structural and administrative aims were shared in addition to organizational discussion, the collective intelligence can be leveraged to shape future intelligence in the organization. Specifically, there is already an extensive number of ideas and views of the future in the organization. If these are allowed to emerge, the future intelligence on the organizational development will benefit the overall target of cultivating the vital expert organization. For example, the opportunities for the Church in the society illustrate an innovative discovery in terms of ensuring the future success of the Church. With further development in terms of organizational communication, the future intelligence can be utilized to build a secure future for the organization.

The prevalence of the future orientation is recognized in the literature on the appreciative approach (Barge & Oliver, 2003; Gergen & Thatchenkery, 2004; Watkins & Mohr, 2011). Therefore, I recommend a close examination of the future intelligence in the case organization. By focusing on the favorable and fruitful opportunities, Appreciative Intelligence® enables the awareness of the latent talent (Thatchenkery & Metzker, 2006). In this regard, the future intelligence is the hidden potential in the organization. This potential was slightly opened in this study but it merits further attention as part of the organizational development process.

5.4 Evaluation of the Study

The major limitations of the study are mostly related to empirical part of my thesis research. Despite the thorough planning and preparation work in advance, inadvertent challenges arose during the data collection stage of the action research process. The focus group sessions would have ideally included four to five participants per group. Unfortunately, due to the tight schedules of the prospective participants, I did not manage to compose as large groups as I had planned. Therefore, one group included two people and the other three people. Moreover, the length of both discussions had to be condensed. This naturally affected the conduct of the discussions. Although I ensured that all the relevant topics were covered, an elaborated

discussion might have developed if more time had been available. To compensate for the limitations of the focus groups, I engaged in a careful analysis of other data obtained during the research process.

This study addressed three forms of triangulation, which enhanced the key findings and contributed to the validity of this study, as presented by Eriksson and Kovalainen (2008:292). Specifically, I applied the triangulation of research methods, data and theories in my thesis research. This study embraced various research methods to increase the validity of the empirical results. In a similar way, the data was synthesized on the basis of different sources, which provided support for the central information on organizational life. The triangulation of the research methods ensured that a comprehensive data set was obtained in my thesis research. I also engaged in discussing the different theories that formed the foundations for this study and thus, facilitated the explication of the research phenomenon.

Following the advice provided by Eriksson and Kovalainen (2008), I increased the trustworthiness of my thesis research by paying attention to a variety of issues. I ensured that dependability was realized by documenting the research process in its entirety. In addition, I illustrated a correspondence between my study and the existing research that was relevant to my study to establish transferability. In terms of conformability, I made the analysis process explicit, so that others can follow my reasoning from the data to the final results. I trust that my efforts in explicating the theoretical foundations of my study, the research methodology employed in this study and the final empirical results support the credibility of my thesis research.

5.5 Prospects for Future Study

I encourage future researchers to engage in the comprehensive appreciation to acknowledge the dynamics of organizational change. When allowing the participants to share their challenging experiences and difficult issues faced at work, they are also willing to express their positive stories. Considering the inherent challenges and potential for discomfort in organizational change, it is reasonable to appreciate the difficulties and challenges faced by the participants to ensure that they feel valued in the research situation. However, the underlying idea of

appreciation should not be forgotten to remind the participants of the positive potential in the prevailing situation.

In relation to Appreciative Intelligence[®], there are multiple prospects for future study. Based on this research, I proposed a multidimensional view of Appreciative Intelligence[®]. I recommend that this view is further studied to gain a deeper understanding of Appreciative Intelligence[®] and its dynamic nature. Especially the role of Appreciative Intelligence[®] in change management, cultivating transformational leadership and leveraging change resistance are interesting directions for future research.

Based on my empirical research, I propose embracing the comprehensive view of organizational change. This ultimately enables the achievement of favorable results as all the relevant areas of the changing organization are considered instead of focusing on individual aspects. For example, in the case organization that I examined, the change was diffused to all the levels of the organization including administration, decision making, leadership and operational processes. I also encourage further research on organizational becoming. The future efforts should be specifically directed to increasing the existing knowledge of the dynamics of continuous change. In addition, I advance an argument for investigating organizational becoming with the appreciative approach. More work is needed to generate valuable insights into this interrelationship. The possibilities of appreciation in the ongoing change seem to be extensive but empirical results are needed to substantiate these claims.

I highlight that this study does not produce any final or decisive results which should be accepted as such. Instead, I encourage further research to address the intersection of organizational becoming and the appreciative approach. This is a valuable connection which merits further attention in terms of empirical research to produce meaningful results for academic and practitioners in the postmodern environment.

My definition of collective forums emphasized the potential for various types of collective discussions to occur in a group situation. In my thesis research, the focus was on organizational change but the collective forums could be organized to discuss a variety of themes. Therefore, I support a comprehensive definition of focus group research. The collective forums needed to be differently organized to serve the various interests of social constructivist research within postmodernism.

5.6 Managerial Implications

The managerial implications of this study are related to the key results presented previously in this Chapter. In general, I recommend embracing the appreciative approach as it entails an enormous potential for development and positive energy in the organization. Appreciation can consist of minor actions or an organization-wide development process. Nevertheless, the power of appreciation and the positive dynamics are invaluable for any organization that is willing to harness existing potential and positive strengths.

Understanding and appreciating the continuous change is another crucial implication for practitioners. The world is under persistent pressure and therefore, it is crucial that organizational operators acknowledge the nature of change and the main elements of the continuous change. As a result, this study proposes that attention needs to be drawn to the continuous change in the organization while emphasizing organizational collectiveness and organizational communication. Ultimately, these features allow for the emergence of appreciation in the organization.

With regard to Appreciative Intelligence[®], this study advances a multidimensional view of this concept. Therefore, a crucial managerial implication is related to understanding the dynamics of Appreciative Intelligence[®] in shaping the organizational change. Nurturing the appreciative spirit in the organizational members enables the individual Appreciative Intelligence[®], which easily translates into collective and organizational dimensions of Appreciative Intelligence[®]. As the appreciation likely engages organizational members in the organization and in the change process, the individual Appreciative Intelligence[®] can yield successful results in the long term. In addition, cultivating the appreciative approach in the organization enables positive collectiveness to emerge and this ensures the diffusion of appreciation in the organization. As a result of the collective and organizational dimensions of Appreciative Intelligence[®], a favorable future is likely to be reached.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1.

(1/1)

The Outline of the individual interview

Personal experience

- How did you come in the organization?
- What are you currently doing?
- What do you like in your current work?
- What are the challenging aspects of your work?

Chang process

- How would you describe the Orthodox Church of Finland?
- What was the organization like when you started working there?
- What has happened in the past few years?
- How do you describe the change?

Future prospects

- What does the future look like?
- What do you consider to be the most significant opportunities and challenges for the Church?

The Observation Template

General remarks	Collectiveness
Verbal communication	Non-verbal communication
Central topics of discussion	Change-related themes

The Plan of Appreciative Facilitation in the Focus Group Discussions

General

Objectives: To understand the nature of the change process at the Orthodox Church of Finland through collective thoughts; to discover how the change is experienced and how the people discuss the change in relation to the practical work

The opening of the discussion (approx. 15 minutes)

Objectives: To assure the confidentiality of the discussion and the safe atmosphere; to ask permission to record the conversation; to break the ice; to establish a positive atmosphere

- The discussion is confidential; asking the participants not to share anything after the discussion
- Anonymity in the research process
- The nature of focus groups; the participants are encouraged to interact and discuss with each other; the researcher takes care of the progress and poses questions if necessary; everyone is encouraged to participate actively in the discussion and to share thoughts, opinions and ideas
- Introductions; name, position and one positive thing that has happened during the day

The first stage: Reflection on the change process (approx. 45 minutes)

Objectives: To initiate social interaction; to reflect on the change process; to discuss the influence of the change on the practical work

- What are you doing and what are you working on at the moment?
- Think about a few recent positive experiences in the change process. Describe one event in which you felt enthusiastic, appreciated, etc.
 - Post it –notes; everyone writes down the descriptive words; collectively sharing ideas; collectively combining and discussing the notes
- How does the change show at your work?

- How do you describe the change in the Orthodox Church of Finland?
- What has been memorable in the change process?
- What would you do otherwise?
- What have been the most significant achievements of the change?

The second stage: The projection of the future (approx. 30 minutes)

Objectives: To utilize social interaction and collective thinking; to describe the ongoing change through the projections of the future hopes

- What is the future like for the Orthodox Church of Finland?
- What will you tell a future researcher about the Orthodox Church in 10 years?
- What are the accomplishments of the Church by 2025?
- What would be the greatest thing that could be fulfilled in the future?
- What could you do to advance the desired things?
- What are you proud of in your organization?

The ending of the discussion (approx. 15 minutes)

Objectives: To summarize the central ideas; to conclude the discussion

- The major themes of discussion including reflection on the change and future prospects
- To provide a final chance to add something
- Asking for feedback from the participants
- Thanking for participation