

**Dionysian Dialogues and the Crave for efficiency
- On Integrated Diversities in Organizational Learning.**

In the fields of Organizational Learning and Knowledge Management there is an apparent schism between managing the living, dynamic and volatile aspects of knowledge and management control. This paper explores empirical material from a four year long action research project in a Professional Service Firm. We interpret the material by means of the notion of Communities of Practice. The inherent ambiguity in professional service work leads us to a suggestive reinterpretation of the notion of legitimate peripheral participation, enabling us to explore how innovative, creative knowledge sharing practices and a strict emphasis in business efficiency may work as mutually constitutive and enabling forces.

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1. Introduction

In Blackwell's recent Handbook of Organizational Learning and Knowledge Management (Easterby-Smith and Lyles (Eds.), 2003) the editors highlight a schism between two different traditions in the field of Organizational Learning: On the one hand the neo rationalists that promote "maximizing the efficient use of knowledge in organizations" (ibid p:10), often describing humans as obstacles for such efficiency. On the other: A situated approach that describes Organizational Learning as social processes, as constructs in human interaction. In other words; what the social constructionists describe as organizational learning per se, the neo rationalists frequently view as an obstacle of organizational learning. The traditions are grounded in different epistemological orientations; one of possession and one of practice (Cook and Brown, 1999) and suffer from a severe lack of communication with each other (op.cit). Leaning on Drucker (2001) we can say that the traditions stem from incommensurable ontologies: while the neo rationalists' approach resides in the logics of business, the social constructionists (attempt to) adhere to the logics of knowledge (knowing). This incommensurability is however no excuse for the lack of integration we find in the literature. There is no doubt that knowledge and learning practices live and flourish within businesses. Increasing amounts of economic growth stems from the transactions of "weightless values" (Lev and Zarowin, 1990), more and more people perform symbolic analytical work, and businesses provide services instead of products. Knowledge and learning is the buzz of the business world. In this paper we expose how these theoretical incommensurabilities live side by side in practice, and how they can be interpreted as enhancing each other.

In the field of Organizational Learning Brown and Duguid's (1991) article "Organizational Learning and Communities of Practice" has become a canon (Easterby-Smith and Lyles, 2003). The article uses the conception of Communities of Practice (Lave and Wenger, 1991) as an explanatory device emphasising the need to explore non-canonical practices in order to understand the intertwining of work, learning and innovation, or, in other terms; *productive knowledge sharing practices*. The concept of Communities of Practice has had an almost contagious effect, and is adopted (and adapted) by practitioners as well as academics world wide. The term was first coined by Lave and Wenger (1991), who explored processes of situated learning as legitimate peripheral participation. This implies that the learning process is a process of negotiation of meaning. Moving from the periphery towards the core of a community involves adapting to the social interacting taking place while at the same time partaking in the continuous constitution of it. In this paper we investigate first; the processes of inclusion and exclusion of participants in a Community of Practice. Second; the seemingly abundant practice of playful creativity, Dionysian Dialogues, enacted by the community. And third; a crave for efficiency as displayed through the willingly use of a management control system.

The empirical material presented in this paper stems from a four year long Action Research project (Grenwood and Levin, 1998) in StoryMaker, a Scandinavian Public Relations Consultancy. The paper emphasizes the exploration of the empirical material; providing thick descriptions of characteristic features of the work practise presented and exposing the work practice as one of integrated diversities: Simultaneously living the (business) rationale of organizing and the logics of abundance that characterises knowledge (creation). The work practice investigated

here is coined Professional Service Work (Carlsen, Klev and Von Krogh, 2004). This is work which is first and foremost recognised by ambiguity; the output lacks clear cut criteria for quality, the resources (or participants) are idiosyncratic, and the practice opaque, consisting of and providing a constant negotiation of meaning. Utilising the notion of Communities of Practice (Wenger, 1998) enable us to explore the ambiguous character of professional service work. We reinterpret the notion of legitimate peripheral participation, suggest that the logics of business present in the work practice provide framing for a community of practice; enabling identification of peripheral participants as well as experts, thus seeding the knowledge sharing practices. While characteristic features of the practice investigated may seem contradictory, *our interpretation suggests that the integration of these diversities enables the practices of knowledge sharing and creating to be productive* (in an economic, or organizational, perspective).

2. Researching Professional Service Work

StoryMaker is one of approximately 30 firms participating in KUNNE (www.kunne.no), an ongoing portfolio of Action Research projects in Norwegian Professional Service Firms (Løvendal, 1997). The research portfolio is dedicated to the investigation of Knowledge Management and Organizational Change in professional service work. StoryMaker have been part of KUNNE since 1999 till today, with continuous empirical investigations and conceptual collaborations. Arne Carlsen, SINTEF and Bjørn Haugstad, SINTEF has participated since 1999, while the author entered the organization in 2001.

Approximately 60 qualitative interviews ranging from one to two hours in time is performed with a total of 20 persons. Several of the interviewees have been interviewed by more than one researcher, and/or more than once by one researcher. Most of the interviews are audio taped, some are video taped. Approximately 20 of the interviews are transcribed in their entirety, the rest are summarized on the bases of notes shortly after the interviews, and with audio/video files as backup. One 5 hour long workshop with 12 participants was facilitated by the researchers, where organizational uniqueness and work practices were discussed. In addition 8 formal meetings with presentation of material and discussion of content with the team of senior consultants were executed. Two short periods (2-3 weeks) of participant observation was performed by Arne Carlsen and Bjørn Haugstad, while the author had a more extensive period of 3 months, including participation in a consultancy project, in which full access to work meetings and customer meetings were allowed. The field notes from this period includes: additional (spontaneous shorter) interviews, transcripts of meetings (many of them videotaped), notes from lunches, spontaneous meetings, observations from “floating” in their office landscape, and discussion with the informants. The material from interviews, the work shop, and the field notes are categorised, discussed in research groups and with informants, and re-categories, in order to explore talk of practice, patterns of practice and discrepancies between these. In addition a wide range of archival records were collected, including media exposure, full access to internal web pages and servers with information, annual reports, project reports, project pitches, method specifications, and training material.

The informants are used as reflection and discussion partners throughout the studies. In StoryMaker the informants have a high reflective attitude towards the construction of (social) reality through Storymaking, a clear parallel to the construction of (social)

reality through social science, thus enabling good discussions of the material at several levels of interpretation. We have used the participants' willingness to be such partners as important validity criteria in our research. While controversial (see for example Barley, 1996), we follow Collins (2001), holding that a key indicator of good organizational research is to make observations that are interesting and relevant enough to make our partners engage and act. In a more pragmatic perspective it is also relevant to note that our partners would not have participated, and continue to participate, with the kind of resources they have (money and work-hours) if they did not believe they got something in return for it. When the research community unified calls out for more longitudinal organizational research (Pettigrew, Woodman and Cameron, 2001) it is important to understand that the kind of access that one needs to perform longitudinal qualitative studies in Professional Service Firms is only attainable if the organization perceives the research as valuable. After all, every research hour used to interview employees may simultaneously be interpreted as one hour of lost income for the organization (Håkonsen, 2005)

The researchers have worked both individually and as a team in StoryMaker. Even when working individually in the field though, the researchers have continued to work in collaboration, opening access to each others empirical material, discussing interpretations and reinterpretations, an iterative practice of search for coherence and tempting anomalies. As we will expose, the practice at StoryMaker does in many respects provide an "extreme case" of professional service work. The data presented here are chosen because they expose patterns of practice which are especially vivid in StoryMaker. We suggest the vividness stems from the extreme ambiguity in their work practice, but that it nevertheless provides valuable interpretative suggestions for professional service work of less extreme character. While the interpretations put forward here are based on extensive empirical material from StoryMaker, the interpretations have not been satisfactorily tested and discussed with employees and managers at StoryMaker, and the paper should be considered explorative. The people at StoryMaker's willingness to engage in debate and use time and effort to understand and explore the topic do however indicate that they find the initial assumptions of adequate relevance and importance.

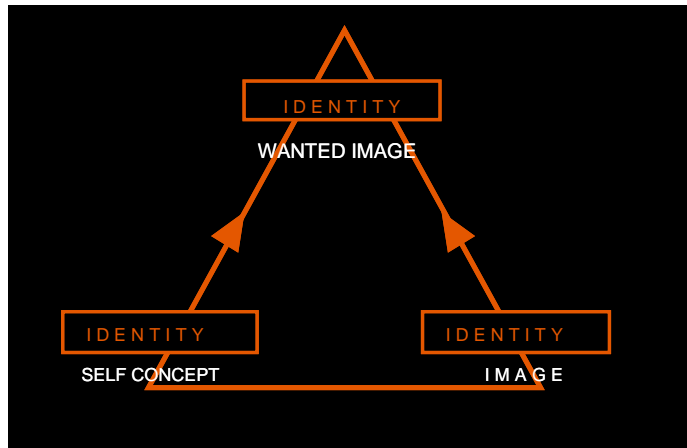
3. Professional Service Work and negotiation of meaning at StoryMaker

StoryMaker's job is to identify, create and advice on how to achieve a "wanted identity" for their customers. In the words of one of their senior consultants:

"Our job is to enable an impression of a wanted identity for the customer, but a wanted identity doesn't emerge from nothing. The model we work from, i3 [three identities], is used in all sales pitches, is very easy and communicative. Our job is to merge the three I's. Think of yourself at home. You probably think you are quite a good husband, providing help at home, driving your children to football sessions, cleaning the occasional dishes and sometimes even bringing home flowers [...] quite a man. This is your identity of yourself. But this is not necessarily your espoused identity. Say your wife, how does she perceive of you? She probably thinks you are quite a man too [...] But she might include that you are working way too much, she tells her girlfriends that you bring flowers when you've been off for work five nights in a row as if that could buy you out of guilt [...] and that the day you would unprovoked take the dishes would be the day she was hospitalized. Our job is to find out first; the discrepancies between these identities, and then, which new identity that can evolve from these [...] And how this identity can be lived and presented in a manner that attracts the right kind of attention. Of course, when doing positioning and storymaking ... you know, sensemaking and storymaking often creates consequences for the customer ... In other words

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we often create better people (laughter): it is a dilemma of course that our customers do not always listen...” Senior Consultant, strategy



The above explanation is a standard explanation following the presentation of the i3 model. The explanation is frequently used, not only by the quoted consultant. With the left hand model, this narrated explanation works as a living boundary object (Bowker and Star, 1999) in sales pitches with customers, training of new employees and throughout customer

projects as a means of identifying “what one is doing, where one is going”. While their practice of course is much more complex than the explanation may indicate, it works as a structuring communicative tool both internally and externally.

The more official descriptions of their work emphasise the integration of first; sensemaking, or strategic analysis: including analysis of their customers’ marked position and strategic advice concerning choice and building of identity¹. Second; public relations, enabling (the chosen kind of) visibility in the public eye, and third; Storytelling; Design of the visual and tactile expressions that build the wanted identity. StoryMaker highlights the integration of these three areas of expertise as their unique know-how, and labels it Storymaking.

As mentioned, the practice at StoryMaker is coined as professional service work, and it holds all the characteristics of ambiguity we find in such work. First; *Idiosyncrasies of resources* (Carlsen, Klev and von Krogh, 2004). The competence base of StoryMaker’s employees is one of diversity, stretching from finance, law, political science and strategic management, via journalism and practical politic, to anthropology and the visual arts, and the work of these disciplines is highly integrated. Second; *the Opaqueness of work Practices* (ibid.) The work, and especially the creative breakthroughs, are performed anywhere at any time. In StoryMaker non-routinized and symbolic analytic project work dominates the work day. The ways of “doing StoryMaking” is a process often discussed, and most often described in almost mythical terms, as personal traits, and magical “black boxed” moments. Third; *The lack of clear cut quality criteria of output* (ibid.); there are no obvious “right” or “wrong” solutions to the work at StoryMaker. – A large sample of professional service work has less ambiguous deliveries/results; as a lawyer you may win or loose a case, as an economic investor you make or loose money, as an IT consultant your programme runs or not, while at StoryMaker you create more or less public attention for a certain case, more or less with respect to that which could have been, a forever unknown size.

¹ The possibilities of intentional “building of identity” is controversial. For a thorough discussion, see Carlsen, Bjørkeng and Haugstad, Forthcomming.

The work practice at StoryMaker can be interpreted as inherently innovative and learning intensive: It lacks standardised routines; every project has to create a new story, the work is highly dependent on constant input from outside resources. The meaning, and the impact, of the output is also continuously negotiated as media entries, political responses, and not to forget the customers ability to live the story is fed back to the StoryMaker. In StoryMaker, as in most Professional Service Firms, not only the work practice, but also the output, or result of work, is a constant negotiation of meaning (ibid); In StoryMaker's case not only with their customers, but also with the general public.

4. A Community of Storymakers.

The notion of Communities of Practice lends itself to an exploration of the learning and innovation taking place in the collective of consultants at StoryMaker. First, the Community of Storymakers has some features that obviously enable a characterization of them as a Community of Practice; as we have exposed, their work is first and foremost recognised through a constant negotiation of meaning in practice: According to Wenger this negotiation is lived by mutual engagement, joint enterprise and shared repertoire, all of which we can find traces of in StoryMaker. The joint enterprise is easily found, it is an explicit wish and practice of "creating headlines" of partaking in the "distribution of power" in the Norwegian Public life. The shared repertoire is most easily found in the use of the i3 model (see above), the management control system, and in a "rebel attitude" that we (amongst others) find in the stories at INSIDE² (the last two will be presented in the following). The mutual engagement as a practical endeavour is scarcer. In project accomplishment and service providing the storymakers work as sub groups of the larger Community of Practice, these subgroups constituted as transitory liaisons where people enter and exit the project dependent on phase, focus and personnel availability. The Storymaker practice is however highly rhetoric, and we find discussion of the writing of the communities own identity in Monday Morning meetings, meetings in the senior group, the diverse disciplinary bases etc., and these internal meetings can be interpreted as a common ground for the practice of Storymaking.

Seeing the seemingly missing role of mutual engagement one could suggest interpreting StoryMaker as a constellation of communities (Wenger, 1998) instead of a Community of Practice. We do however hold that the Community of Storymakers is more tightly knit than such a constellation, and aim at exposing how the deviations from a standard Community of Practice is due to the special character of professional service work: There is three main reasons for this interpretation: First; *we see that the practice is simultaneously inclusive and exclusive*. When investigating Communities of Practice, the role of (legitimate) peripheral participation is highlighted as a learning position. In StoryMaker we do not find consultants claiming to have a novice status, nor performing work that is evaluated as having such a status. Neither are experts, those who "know-how", an easily distinguishable core. Second; *we find playful Dionysian dialogues*. In StoryMaker we have found an abundance of stories in

² The three instances of shared repertoire are scaled with respect to "formalization". The management control system is obviously formal, the (use of the) i3 model had formal and informal aspects, and the rebel attitude is informal. While the shared repertoire in Communities of Practice is often proposed in terms of informal repertoire, this is seldom a valid distinction in professional service work, as there exists few formalised standards of the practice.

practice, that is; stories that are seemingly created for the sake of the voice itself and that has no immediate relation to the performance of work. Third; *there is a crave for efficiency*. In StoryMaker there is a rigid management control system, formal procedures that regulates their work, followed without noteworthy hesitation, and which in many cases can be said to work as a qualitative criteria of work performed, and solutions chosen. In the following we will explore these three features and use them to discuss the situated learning practices in the Community of Storymakers presented here, and in professional service work as such.

4.1 The Community of Storymakers: Inclusive and exclusive

In StoryMaker there exists a well of shared descriptions of *what* the job performed is about. We saw the i3 model, and the explanation of it presented above; it is about creating identities. They have several one-liners that are presented on official company information, and adapted and repeated in interviews as the interviewees' own, like: "We move power and influence", "we create headlines", and "the vortex of news, we like to be behind it". What we hardly find though is any kind of (formal or informal) explanations or descriptions of *how* they perform the work. When straying from the "headliners", the communicative ease with which they are very familiar, we find a cacophony of voices of describing anything but the process of work. The descriptions are almost mythical in terms, stated as character trait as much as a competency and it is described as a unique, exclusive capability that only some possess. Interestingly enough, all consultants interviewed place themselves in this unique, exclusive position, independent of their formal status, and education. The below table provides examples from interviews; description of the process of storymaking, storymaking expertise, and the role of the interviewee:

Respondent,	Description of StoryMaking	Description of StoryMakers	Description of self
<i>Speciality Consultant, Media</i>	Storymaking is... the twist needed for someone to take the bate, - it is to know which colours to paint with to make journalists eat it.	It is the subjective aspect... the know-how... You've just got to have it	I know the temperature and the ways of thinking in newspapers, I know what's needed of a good story, and can contribute in making it.
<i>Senior consultant, Strategy/ Visual</i>	Storymaking is about finding words, concepts, about formulating positions, see the broader picture...	A good story maker has to be able to talk to people. ... must have broad insight in society... Good Storymakers have that in common that they are social animals. They are giving... Those with one dimensional view on the world can never become good storymakers.	I'm a storymaker
<i>Speciality Consultant, Media</i>	Its hard to say anything about Storymaking. ...It's those creative vortexes	Storymakings is not what makes us unique. It is all the crazy people here!	I'm a storymaker
<i>Senior Consultant, Strategy</i>	It is hard to describe what storymaking is, ... it can have a magical character – suddenly it is there, the twist, and you don't know how you got there.		It is fun working on the creative – I too can make stories!

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<i>Senior Consultant, Strategy</i>	It's ... when the head and gut suddenly works together ... when everything clicks.	Either you have it or you don't. It is not something you can learn.	My person is tighter knit to stories than to analysis.
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While the interviewees all include themselves in the Community of Storymakers, they do not include all employees at StoryMaker in this group. The community is both very exclusive; only few people with magical character traits can do it, and very inclusive; everyone subscribes themselves into the group. Comparing this to Wenger's (1998) list of indicators on a Community of Practice, we find that there is no "substantial overlap in participants' descriptions of who belongs", nor a mutual agreement on how to "assess the appropriateness of actions and products" (Wenger, 1998, p 125). If we chose to interpret the Community of Storymakers as a Community of Practice, we would seemingly face the odd situation of no legitimate peripheral participants, while at the same time a high degree of learning intensity and innovation.

The role of the peripheral participant provides a legitimate learning situation in Communities of Practice. In addition it has an important function in order to avoid stagnation, since negotiation of meaning provide the core of the community with new input. In the case of professional service work there is an important aspect of the practice not satisfactorily accounted for in theories (and empirical examples) of Communities of Practice. This is the tight interaction with "outsiders", the customers. Finding a public identity and a way of exposing it for a customer involves tight interaction between consultants and customers, so the customers are heavily involved in the work practice. His (it is most often a male) contribution could easily be interpreted as that of a legitimate peripheral participant: He is informally and formally legitimately peripheral, while he will never work his way into a core group, he provides a constant reification of the consultants as experts. Such an interpretation also enables an explanation of the exclusive role the Storymakers give themselves, as negotiation of meaning and identity is relationally embedded and the relations created in collaborative work between consultants and customers are unique. Thus the hybrid practice of inclusion and exclusion is also found in projects; as the customers are always (and necessarily so), included as peripheral participants, but always excluded from the potential role of an expert Storymaker.

4.2 The Community of Storymakers in Dionysian Dialogues

As previously noted storytelling as a mode of (informal) sharing of experiences has been duly explored in organizational theory, with Brown and Duguids (1991) synthesis of Orr's (1986) findings from Xerox and Lave and Wenger's (1991) concept of Communities of Practice as the most cited (Easterby-Smith and Lyles, 2003). Narrative theory has grown to be an inspiration for academics (Boje, 1995; Gabriel, 1995 and Czarniawska, 1997) as well as practitioners (Kunde, 2000; Steen Jensen, 2003 and Carlsen, Klev and von Krog, 2004) in the field of Organizational Theory. The majority of these do however explore how narratives *of* work enables work processes through stories of past experiences. The stories at Storymaker are however not stories of this kind. They give are not told in the process of working, nor do they tell of such processes. The stories we are to investigate here are stories *in* practice; stories that are seemingly created for the sake of the voice itself and which have no immediate relation to the performance of work. We call these stories Dionysian Dialogues, because they reflect an abundance of creativity, a playful exposure of

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practice, surprisingly disconnected from the process of work, or work performance. We use “Dionysian” to emphasize that the learning, or knowledge sharing found here contrasts the Apollonian conceptions of knowledge and learning that implies “finding the (a) truth” and narrows in on Dionysian knowledge, transcending, creating, celebrating and surviving in the situated “reality”. We will explore the Dionysian dialogues as we first noted them – oases of creative exploration disconnected from specific work tasks – and suggest interpretations of their role in a perspective of knowledge sharing and organizational learning.

The first glimpses of the Dionysian Dialogues were caught while assessing a news page at the intranet, INSIDE. From the perspective of particular project performances the contribution (and reading) of these news seem to have no “productive” function. It is not performed as part of the project practice. Despite this, consultants that can’t find the time to partake in training and courses or describe best practice examples (activities typically considered knowledge management efforts) make room for writing these “news”. INSIDE has a variety of postings presented as queer comments on public events, thoughtful wonders, and forceful statements of personal opinions. The content of the postings have little or no claims to truth, if any claims to validity or relevance it would be that the more surprising, the more one the side of “accepted truths”, the better. There is also a lack of formalized roles with respect to postings, there is no editorial function, anyone can partake and contribute to INSIDE as equal dialogical partners.

In the below text box you find excerpts of postings on INSIDE. We have found the same creative experimentation and playfulness in Monday Morning Meetings, a weekly session amongst other including consultants portraying the uniqueness of StoryMaker and in their “rites de passage”, big parties with clients present where their own old work patterns is mortified in an Opus Dei like fashion. The postings from INSIDE that are presented here are chosen because they represent a good average of the “news” and of characteristic features of the Dionysian Dialogues found. They challenge established truths, play with words and meanings, and often make the reader laugh and (re)think prejudices. The contributions do not resemble what one would typically expect to find in a knowledge management system, nor do they immediately qualify as part of a knowledge sharing or knowledge enabling *work* practice, since the content, or topic, of the contributions are not necessarily, at least not when posted, related to any specific projects. As we will get back to, we nevertheless interpret it as an important part of their knowledge sharing practice.

SEMB*, FOOTBAL AND EROTICA

People from Island love fotball. The artist Biork too. Once she was asked what she saw when watching a football match. The answer she gave tells us she’s never seen the Norwegian national team in action.

The last couple of years the national team has provided nothing but a pain in the neck to its supporters. Long rounds and ling balls, usually without anyone to catch them, give neck pains, no pleasure. Ant the eleven players doesn’t look too happy either. More sad than anyone is their coach. His name is Semb. Nils Johan Semb. [...] By the way; when Bjork watches football she sees 22 sperms chasing an egg to penetrate. That’s a long shot from the Norwegian National Football Team.
- *Senior Adviser, Strategy*

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WE WHO LOVED CAFÉ LATTE

- *What about sushi?*

- *Are you kidding? Sushi is three years ago, At least. Maybe more.*

My partner was in London this summer, ate lunch with his very much identity conscious friend Douglas on a diner in Kings Road. And obviously messed up entirely in front of the glass counter. Douglas had all the right reasons for his frenzy. What we eat and drink, not to forget what we don't eat and drink, is one of the most signifying expressions of our identity. The reason why you score on social prestige and image through food, clothing habits and the like is that identity building is a rough task. And Douglas takes his seriously. You're not stepping into the same river twice, and a portion of sushi in 2005 is definitively not the mark of identity it was a decade ago [...] But what do they eat at the trendy spots in Kings Road when Thai, Indian, Greek and who knows what is gone? According to Douglas it's all about meat pie and mashed potatoes. Back to the roots. Meat pie is the new sushi. The really not trendy haven't even left their habits before the elite has passed through the whole wheel of trends and are back at the meat pie. – for a moment at least.

- *Speciality adviser, Visual*

COFFE, LIQUOR AND NANO POLITICS

The longest measure I know is a lightyear. That is the distance light penetrates in vacuum during a year. It is quite precisely 9461 billions kilometres. This equals the distance between reality and the content of Norwegian politicians' in an average election year.

One thousandth millimetre is called a micrometre, a μm . One thousandth micrometre is a nanometre. The fragments of politics exposed in the short communication breeze of the election campaigns can without hesitation be labelled nano politics.

When politicians and journalists are executing their power with nano communication, it may have two results. Meaningless fragments or delicate drops of essence. [...] [...] a cup of Arabian coffee, made by an endless process where half a litre coffee is reduced endlessly, in smaller and smaller kettles until two small cups of gunpowder, a concentrate of delight. The opposite is often found in liquor. Cognac is made of sour, low alcohol wine. Whiskey comes from a stinking rotten porridge, Tequila starts from a muddy, yeasting residue of cactuses, and aquavit is nothing but mashed potatoes. Norwegian politics is at its best a process of concentration, sometimes a good liquor factory were elegant aromas are distilled from a rotten starting point, but most times it is neither; the evil in a rotten start is concentrated to new heights....

As always, a society is recognised by its distillations and distillation processes.

- *Senior Adviser, Media*

There are several reasons why we identify the use of INSIDE as an important part of the learning and knowledge creating practice at StoryMaker. First; the contributors are able to expose and explore themselves as competent in the practise of Storymaking: Contributions on INSIDE are based on Sensemaking (What's happening in the world), storymaking (Is there a plot here? A new take on the given?), and Storytelling (The writing of the story). Second, they expose topics they are interested in, and have knowledge about, which can provide useful information for other consultants. Third; A noteworthy implication of INSIDE is the traces of stories, the use of creative twists and topics, that we can find in particular projects. This implies that even though writing these postings may be interpreted as inefficient use of time on an individual level, it does seem to provide a repertoire of ideas and surprising takes on the world that is useful and productive in project accomplishment. And last; we commented upon the lack of stories of practice, and ability to conceptualize the process of work, but we see a rather obvious line of meta-message in most contributions. The majority of the "news" reveals methodological points with respect to identity formation (the below table exposes these in the presented excerpts):

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Title	Literal topic	Methodological Point
Semb, Football and Erotica	That the Trainer of the Norwegian football team should go, as the playing style of the team is not apt to entertain	You need consistency between practice, preached performance and purpose to build a credible and desirable identity.
We Who Love Café Latte	Ridicule of the (post) modern life hunting of identity through external symbols.	Insists on identity writing as acts of becoming (Carlsen, 2004), and thus a practice that needs continuous attention if an identity is to “stay the same” in the public eye.
Coffee, Liquor and Nano Politics	Norwegian Political blocks serve voters soup made on spikes, should rethink (and relive) their ideological bases if they want broader appeal and attention from voters	You cannot use rotten building blocks when creating a communication platform, you have to refine a message from a fine but broad spectre of content.

So why have we interpreted the use of INSIDE as a practice of abundance, a dialogical playfulness in the spirit of Dionysus? Couldn't we just as easily have interpreted INSIDE as a successful knowledge management tool? – There are a number of possible interpretations, we could say that the INSIDE is used because it enables the contributors to gain the social status of an expert, because it is a way to enhance and discuss best practices, or because the organization has knowledge activists (us, the researchers) that enhancing trust and knowledge sharing capabilities (von Krogh, Ichijo and Nonaka, 2000). Well, first; while the possibility to gain a status of an expert is obviously there, this possibility is not necessary to explain the use, as a vast amount of knowledge management systems has this potential without ever being used, and these consultants already define themselves as exclusive experts in the tasks they perform. Second; those contributing content to INSIDE does not view this as “Knowledge management”, “knowledge sharing” or otherwise part of a learning/teaching task, they claim they do it for fun, because they had an idea, or to put it in the words of the author of “We who loves Café Late”; “*Why not?*”. The consultants themselves do not view the news on INSIDE as contributions in methodological discussion before this interpretation was introduced by the researchers (But it is retrospectively evaluated as tacitly so.) And third, INSIDE was in frequent use before the Knowledge Activists, or the action researchers involved, were introduced to the company, and our presence has had no impact on the frequency nor the content of the posting. The Dionysian aspects of the stories at INSIDE however are quite obvious; there are no claims to truth in them, there is no formalization of roles of the contributors or readers, there is no anticipation of learning content, and the exposure of identity of the contributors may be interpreted as an invitation to dialogue and a statement of participation.

4.3 The Community of Storymakers and their Crave for Efficiency

The practice investigated in this paper is evidently business oriented: The immediate interpretation of their organizational life that our informants present to us is heavily influenced by the rhetoric of American Business Schools, and quite easily put in a (neo) rationalistic booth. Our informants are public relation consultants and their rhetorical skills are very strong. Presenting coherent, appealing representations of (certain parts of) the world can easily be labelled their “core competence”. This logics of business however prevail not only as words, but is found in formal and informal regulations of practice: People make their “production” visible by a hour to hour

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invoice sheet, they perform by hard (tangible and intangible) measures constantly judged by their fellow workers and customers, and the reward system is highly individualized. A crave for efficiency and a heavy competitive drive characterize their practice.

StoryMaker's income is by and large dependent on hours worked in the project. The customers and the Key Account Manager agree upon a delivery and a prefixed (maximum) price. This prefixed price is directly translatable to "man-hours", or the prize of people working, as direct costs such as travels, meeting expenditures and material (for example use of copyrighted material for visual/audio profile etc) are additional costs for the customer. In order to create an income it is pertinent that the estimated maximum hours (maximum price) is not exceeded.

The economic specifics of all projects are available to all employees; everyone can easily check the status on any projects and of any employee. A strict regime is put in place to make these economic specifics up to date, were employees that don't file invoices of hours worked on projects on a daily basis are officially "blacklisting" on the internal web. The man-hour status is attempted made an "objective measurement" in terms of efficiency, and the managing director and the leading senior consultant claim to distribute "available resources" (that is consultants that has not a full work schedule) every morning at the micro level of hours available. As such the economic regime in StoryMaker may be labelled "tayloristic" as the employees, or their hours working, seemingly are evaluated as interchangeable parts in a system of production. We emphasise seemingly, since the practice at StoryMaker is not as rigidly structured as their system nor their talk of their system indicates. First because the nature of the work makes it hard to estimate how long time a task will take, so more than an actual system of evaluating who needs more work, we see that it is a system that enable visualization of a potential workload, and thus makes asking for assistance easier. Second because the different consultants simply are not interchangeable. The tasks that can be reassigned under time pressure are typically "production" tasks (writing a PM, systemizing a project pitch), not tasks of extreme expertise or customer relations.

The aura of business busyness is also reflected in the responses to purported knowledge Management efforts, that is; initiatives on collecting Best Practice examples, keeping an updated CV database, and attempts to systemize material from past cases in order to give other Storymakers easy access. The consultants' continuous rhetoric highlight these efforts as important and noteworthy, "*something I wished I had time for*", and "*we should definitively be more systematic in our ways of managing knowledge*" but their practice lives light years from this rhetoric. The tools are not used. This is not a feature "of extremes" in StoryMaker if we compare it to other companies in the KUNNE research portfolio, nor is it specific to professional service work. The attempts of structuring the work of the employees in terms of economic measures, the management control system, are however not only accepted as a necessity, but can also be interpreted as a negotiated part of the identity of the consultants. The aura of efficiency is extreme, also compared to other Professional Service Firms we have conducted research in: Time is money. In the main meeting room the ticking of watches showing the time in London, New York, Oslo and Tokyo accompanies the work. Most consultants have an extra set of clothes for "instant meetings" in the office; they are available for the customers at next to all times. At the same time the consultants more often than not come late for internal work meetings,

likewise they leave early. This is accepted as a given, a good sign of a full work schedule.

While a controversial suggestion in discussions with our informants, it is possible to interpret the economic system as a quantitative criterion for evaluation of the (highly ambiguous) qualitative work they perform. As the stories of identity they co-create with their customers are first and foremost recognised by the fact that they are never finished, they are never absolute, and the welcoming of them when “launched” are always insecure, the objective, non negotiable criteria of money left, or man-hour residue, in projects may be said to provide an ending point and a frame for decision-making. The below text box provides an excerpt from a project meeting, where diverse alternatives of suitable tools for telling a customer-story was discussed. As we can see, the decision is based on available resources, and post rationalised in terms of effectful storytelling:

- There is no money to go for commercials in this project, we have to go for a public stir through public relations (senior consultant, Strategy)
- [...]
- Ok. We can make an event, invite a high profiler to talk about the knowledge economy and [the customer] can participate there as an expert, exposing how he provides a new take on employment (Speciality consultant, Strategy)
- [...]
- We can do that, he would be good enough, wouldn't he? (senior consultant, Strategy)
- It suits the story better than any bought commercials could ever do (Senior Consultant, media)

Glancing to theories of creativity (Barret, 1998,) we see an emphasis on the role of patterns in creative work, patterns over which to improvise. There is no creativity in chaos. As we have noted there are few identifiable and stable patterns in *how* they perform their work, how they make stories, what a good story is, in practice as well as in their talk of practice. We suggest that the crave for efficiency as exposed in the strict, rigid and welcomed management control system represents such a pattern; frames within which to create.

5. Outlook

We have explored whether the notion of Communities of Practice is apt to explain the learning and innovation taking place in the professional service work at StoryMaker. First; we have seen how the inherent ambiguity in professional service work blurs the borders of a Community of Practice: there is no obvious core and periphery when we view the non canonical work practices. This led us to suggest new interpretations of what legitimate peripheral participation may be. In our case, this is the role of the collaborating customer. As such the peripheral participant is not only informally so, but also formally, and he is excluded from ever becoming a part of the community. Nevertheless, he has an important role in enabling continuous negotiations in the work practice, a leading role in the innovations. Second; we have exposed the playful abundance of creativity in Dionysian Dialogues in a practice otherwise recognised by efficiency and the (apparent) whip of business logics. While these Dionysian expressions have no apparent function except the being-in-dialogue, the partaking in a community, we suggested that they also function as a form of meta-discussion of what story making is and can be. In addition we hold that they contribute to a collective

“knowledge sharing efficiency”. Last, we have discussed how the management control system can be said to enable the formation of a Community of Practice in work otherwise recognised by ambiguity. We suggest that the non-negotiability, the apparent objectivity, of the management control system provide a quantitative measure of quality, and less ambiguous borders between core and periphery in this Community of Practice.

In the article “On the Knowledge and Knowing of Cultural Activities” Borofsky (1994) suggests that the ontological status of man is that of a social animal, man is first and foremost a communicator, and knowledge sharing is something we do simply because (that is what) we can. This is how we (have learned to) communicate. We are social animals, and socializing is knowledge sharing. Borofsky’s interpretation of knowledge sharing practices as inherently social is supported by the findings in StoryMaker. The consultants are not able to, nor interested in, reasons to share knowledge. They simply do it. The consultants engage in dialogue as a social act, as an act of belonging, and a contribution to the community. We suggested that the Crave for Efficiency, the quantitative measures of quality help establishing the community, exposing who belongs to it, and who is peripheral participants. Likewise that the Dionysian Dialogues are constitutive of the community as it displays norms of the language game (Wittgenstein, 1967) this community uses.

While the Logics of Business is one of scarce resources, “objective” quantitative measures of gain or loss, and profitability created by efficient and lean production processes, the logics of Knowledge is one of social construction (Drucker, 2001), negotiation of meaning (Lave and Wenger, 1991), living in practice (Carlsen, Klev and von Krogh, 2004) and is easier compared to the logics of Love; the more given of it, the more (potential for) increasing it (Bjørkeng, 2001). These logics live side by side in StoryMaker, they are both embraced, and we interpreted them as mutually constitutive. The logics of business applied to knowledge sharing do not need to mount down to individualistic search for efficiency, to explicit focus on gain. To the contrary we see that knowledge sharing is done for the sake of socialising, for the sake of being part, for the being in dialogue, being in community. Nevertheless we see that such altruistic, creative, knowledge sharing for the sake of communication does lead to efficient knowledge production on the collective level since the socialising also provide a dialogue on and negotiation of what it means to be a part of this community, thus providing a shared repertoire of ideas and communicative norms to be used and abused in the more task oriented parts of the work practice. It is the integration of these diversities enables the practices of knowledge sharing and creating to be productive (in an economic, or organizational, perspective).

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