

TALLINN UNIVERSITY
SCHOOL OF HUMANITIES
DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL AND CULTURAL ANTHROPOLOGY

Karin Koronen

THE EMBODIED EXPERIENCE OF REPRESENTATIVE
PERCEPTION IN THE SYSTEMIC CONSTELLATION APPROACH

Bachelor's Thesis

Supervisor: Joonas Plaan

Tallinn 2022

Acknowledgments

I am indebted to all the research participants who contributed to this project to the best of their knowledge and effort. From the bottom of my heart, thank you, Tiia, Elen, Imbre, Piret R., Kelli, Kersti, Karin, Piret L., and Kristel!

I would also like to show appreciation for my supervisor Joonas Plaan for his encouragement, inspiring presence, patience, and expertise throughout the whole process of writing this thesis. His guidance and advice were always on point, and I genuinely admire his enthusiasm for teaching.

I am also grateful to my family, friends, and coursemates for supporting me through the highs and the lows I have experienced throughout the last three years. Thank you to everyone who has been a part of this journey!

Table of contents

Acknowledgments.....	2
Table of contents.....	3
Abstract.....	5
Introduction.....	6
1. Literature Overview.....	9
1.1 The Origin and History of the Systemic Constellation Approach.....	9
1.2 Introduction of the Systemic Constellation Approach.....	11
1.3 The theoretical foundation of the Systemic Constellation Approach.....	13
1.4 The Knowing Field and the Embodied Experience of Representative Perception.....	14
1.5 Embodiment, emplacement, and emotions.....	16
1.6 Summary.....	18
2. Methodology.....	19
2.1 Semi-Structured Interviews.....	19
2.2 The Interviewees.....	20
2.3 Data Collection.....	20
2.4 Ethics.....	21
2.5 Self-reflection.....	22
3. How representative perception shapes one’s identity.....	24
3.1 To Serve the Client, Their System, and the Knowing Field.....	24
3.1.1 Fate.....	27
3.1.2 The Movement of the Soul.....	29
3.2 Bodily Experiences.....	32
3.2.1 The Habitus and The Field.....	32
3.2.2 The Body-Mind Duality.....	34
3.2.3 To experience, not to interpret.....	36
3.3 Knowledge of oneself and others.....	40
3.3.1 Realizations Through Observation.....	40
3.3.2 Realizations Through Representation.....	42

3.3.3 Vocalizing Emotions.....	45
3.4 Emotional Freedom.....	50
3.4.1 Allowing to Feel and Look.....	50
3.4.2 Detaching from Oneself.....	53
Discussion and Conclusions: Identity as a Process.....	55
Resümee.....	59
References.....	60
Appendix.....	64
Original Interview Questions.....	64
Translated Interview questions.....	66

Abstract

This research will provide a more profound insight into how the embodied experience of representative perception impacts the partitioners of the Systemic Constellation Approach (SCA). SCA is a one-time group intervention to help clients understand and change their conflictive experiences within a social system- the organized network of connections that exist between people, groups, and institutions, creating a cohesive entity, e.g. family. These interventions conduct the spatial enactment of relationship structures, particularly in psychosocial conflicts, with the help of volunteers. Reliant on the interconnectedness of humanity, SCA explores the influence that kinship relations and transgenerational experiences have on an individual's life. During the process of SCA, the representatives act out different dynamics and patterns as they embody the relatives, problems, or symptoms that the client presented to the group. Though a facilitator leads the process, representatives play an irreplaceable role in this practice. They shed light on the emotions, belief systems, and relations of those they represent, so that the client can gain insight and experience healing. However, the influence this experience has on those who represent has remained unclear. So far, only a few studies have been done on SCA and even fewer on the experience of being a representative. Thus, this research aims to offer a deeper understanding of the influence representative perception has on the partitioners of the SCA. It draws mainly from anthropological research on emotions, emplacement, and embodiment. However, it also incorporates Pierre Bourdieu's sociological theory of habitus and the field (1984) and the different ways of knowing, defined by John Heron (1992). The research incorporates evidence and data from participant observation in a six-hour constellation workshop conducted in 01.2023 and in-depth semi-structured interviews conducted from 18.10.2022-14.12.2022 with nine representatives and a facilitator to explore this topic. The study suggests that the experience of being representative shapes one's identity by offering a safe space to experience emotional freedom and the opportunity to acquire knowledge through experience. Additionally, the method teaches how to focus on one's feelings and emotions and achieve better contact with one's physical body. Being a representative is an experience that often comes with new knowledge and greater awareness, whether of self, others, relationships, or the environment. Several interviewees mentioned that it is a method that has changed their view of themselves and life.

Introduction

“A constellation is a systematic overview of a topic. I see it as a map- if I go to the forest without it, I just wander around. However, if I have an orienteering map and want to get from point A to point B as economically as possible, I look at it to determine which path takes me there. Constellation is this map. It displays how things are related and what could be the best solution to get from your current state to the desired result. Usually, the client has a circumstance that he wishes to change. For example, he could have a problematic relationship with his mother. His aim could be to reach a harmonious, understanding connection with her. In other words, these are point A and point B, the starting point and the end result. The constellation does not solve anything for anyone, it simply shows what is possibly the easiest, best way to reach the desired result.” (Kristel 14.12.2022)

During the process of SCA, the spatial configuration of the representatives portrays a living map of the client's system, which mostly consists of but is not limited to their family members. The representatives shed light on the inner world of those they represent. This thesis aims to offer a deeper understanding of how the experience of being a representative in the context of the Systemic Constellation Approach is perceived and how does it influence the participants. To reach this aim, the author established one main research question and two additional sub-questions:

1. How does the experience of representative perception influence the practitioners of the Systemic Constellation Approach?
 - 1.1 What motivates participation in constellation workshops?
 - 1.2 How do representatives attribute meaning to their experience in the knowing field?

Though Bert Hellinger established the method around 50 years ago, very few studies have been done to investigate the SCA. Research that has been conducted thus far has either provided a general overview of the method (e.g., Cohen, 2006; Stiefel et al., 2002) or looked at it through the lens of distinguishable concepts such as shamanism (e.g., Mayer & Viviers, 2016; Thalhamer, 2003) or ritual healing (e.g., Sax et al., 2010). However, very few studies have been done on the phenomenology of the method to study the participants' experiences. Additionally, the author did not find any studies conducted in Estonia or any studies that encompass the embodied experience of being a representative. Thus, the SCA requires more scientific regard. Establishing a foundation of scientific inquiry and a more extensive foundation of knowledge in this field is essential to

understand what the experience is like, how the method works and why some people prefer it to mainstream psychology. Because of its growing popularity and as a practice regarding mental health, it is crucial to form a deeper understanding of SCA and representative perception to ensure the method serves its purpose and does not harm its participants. The key anthropological perspectives, namely holism, relativism, comparison, and fieldwork, are sufficient in studying the phenomenology of an experience as complex and multidimensional as representative perception.

In Estonia, the method of the Systemic Constellation Approach was first introduced in 2007, and it has gained a wide appeal in the mental health landscape within the last few years. As of 2023, there are more than three schools where the practice is taught. According to the interviewees, the courses that started within the last year (2022) have over a hundred participants each. Thus, within the next few years, there will likely be an influx of new facilitators and workshops to attend. A Facebook group called “Konstellatsioonid,” which serves the purpose of mediating information about upcoming courses and workshops and is the only one of its kind in Estonia, has accumulated over 1700 members within a year, with 115 posts about upcoming workshops within the period of 10.02-10.03.2023. From this data, one might assume that there are roughly around 100 workshops held all over the country within the time frame of a month.

No studies have been conducted to investigate the sudden growth of interest in the method of Systemic Constellations. However, it is reflected in the growth in workshops held, the number of facilitators in training, and the increase in articles that have been published on the topic. For example, by searching for the keyword “konstellatsioon” (translation: constellations) from the Delfi news portal, a total of 112 articles were found, from which only 21 were dated before 2019. However, as of 26th March 2023, 12 articles had been published within the last three months. Not all of these articles relate to the topic; however, the ratio still gives an idea of the changes that have occurred.

This thesis has been organized in the following way. First, the paper will give an overview of the literature, introducing the method, its theoretical foundation, and its origin. Additionally, it will cover the concepts of the knowing field and the embodied experience of representative perception and tie them to embodiment, emplacement, and emotions. Then, after introducing the methodology, an analysis of the material from the interviews will be provided under the chapter “How representative perception shapes one’s identity.” This part has five subchapters: “To Serve the Client, Their System, and the Knowing Field,” “Bodily Experiences,” “Knowledge of Oneself and

Others,” and finally, “Emotional Freedom.” All of which encompass different aspects of the experience of being a representative.

To accomplish the goal of this research, the author has incorporated evidence and data from participant observation in constellation workshops and in-depth semi-structured interviews. The first was conducted in 01.2023 in a 6-hour workshop covering four independent storylines of 4 different clients, one of whom is the researcher. The latter was done with eight representatives and one facilitator within the time frame 18.10.2022-14.12.2022. As a result, it was found that the experience of being a representative shapes one’s identity by providing the safety to experience emotional freedom, offering the opportunity to acquire knowledge through experiences, and setting one’s focus on their body and the experiences acquired through it. The experience of being a representative often results in greater awareness, be it about the mind, body, environment, or relations with and to others.

1. Literature Overview

This section outlines the main theoretical contributions and conceptual categories relevant to the study's research aim, summarising and evaluating current knowledge on the Systemic Constellation Approach. First, it covers the origin, history, and phenomenological framework through which Bert Hellinger constructed his approach. The respective time frame is from the 1970s till today. After providing a solid background and bringing an understanding of the method, the ground is set for the subsequent comprehensive account that describes the embodied experience of representative perception as well as some significant theories that are known as *knowing field theories*. Lastly, this chapter will encompass how anthropologists have studied embodiment and emotions, as the sensations felt by representatives are a central source of information in the Systemic Constellation Approach.

1.1 The Origin and History of the Systemic Constellation Approach

Bert Hellinger (1925-2019) is a German psychotherapist and a former Catholic priest who has studied philosophy, theology, and pedagogy. As a young man, he joined the German army. After years of enrolment and imprisonment, he escaped and arrived in Germany in the 1950s. After his return, Hellinger became a Catholic priest. He was dispatched to Africa to work as a missionary in KwaZulu-Natal, where he lived for 16 years. During this time, Hellinger became fluent in the Zulu language, engaged with the influence of their group dynamics, and participated in their rituals. He appreciated their way of life. After returning to Germany, he became a psychoanalyst and completed training in primal therapy, transactional analysis, the Family Sculpture method, hypnotherapy, Gestalt therapy, and Neuro-Linguistic Programming. By the age of sixty, Hellinger had completed a 15-year cycle of education and had a private practice in southern Germany. (Cohen, 2006) Hellingers' background is relevant to the understanding of SCA, as it is reflected in his method through Catholic values, the ancestral beliefs of the Zulus, and his educational background.

Hellinger established the fundamentals of SCA in the 1970s, and together with his wife, Sophie Hellinger, they dedicated their lives to developing this method. As a result, five phases are distinguished. The first phase lasted from the 1980s to 2002 and is called "The Classic Family Constellation." Here, the main focus was on vocalizing the clients' feelings, expectations, and fears,

interpreting the field, and leading the process toward a predetermined goal. (Cohen, 2006; Hellinger Schule (a)). Hellinger explains it as follows:

"After the representatives had been positioned by the client, they were asked how they were feeling. Afterward, they were rearranged until everyone felt good in the end. Often other representatives were also included in the constellation. For example, if all the representatives were looking in the same direction, it meant they were looking at someone who had been excluded or forgotten in the family. When someone was set up for this unknown person, the others would breathe a sigh of relief. In this way, a hidden disorder came to light." (Hellinger Schule (a))

The second phase was from 2002 until 2006, called "The Movements of the Soul." During this phase, Hellinger prioritized movements (ibid). He explained it as follows:

"...the movements of the representatives went deeper when I rarely asked them how they felt. Everyone who watched these constellations was deeply touched and moved. This became even more intense the less we asked. It was important that the representatives knew little about the client and abandoned themselves to the inner movement that seized them from inside and outside." (ibid).

The subsequent 3 phases are also a substantial part of Hellinger's work; however, they are less popular amongst practitioners. The third phase came about from 2006 until 2016, known as "The Spiritual Family Constellation." Here the facilitator connects to the spiritual sphere as they intuitively choose representatives. This phase relies on the idea that as the representatives follow their internal movement impulses, the field changes, and healing begins (ibid). The fourth and fifth phases that started in 2017/2018 are called "the Original Hellinger® *Familienstellen* of today." In the fourth phase, the representatives and the facilitator are mediums guided by a greater power. There is no verbal or physical communication; the two sit still and surrender themselves to higher forces (ibid). The fifth phase marks the death of Bert Hellinger. These three phases are also partly eminent in the work of other constellation practitioners. However, it is essential to note that they are usually explicitly related to Hellinger and his practices. Most constellation work today is based on the principles of "The Classic Family Constellation" and "The Movements of the Soul."

Throughout his lifetime, Hellinger has trained many therapists worldwide. Though many of his students have stayed true to his school of thought and methods, others have blended SCA with ritual healing, shamanism, animism, transpersonal psychology, and more. The facilitators can adapt, modify, and integrate the method within their modality without restrictions. Nevertheless, the legacy of Bert Hellinger continues under the guidance of Sophie Hellinger and thousands of SCA practitioners worldwide. For the practitioners in Estonia, the distinction between each phase is not as clear-cut as in this chapter, as many combine different elements from Hellinger's method. Thus, in this paper, the term "SCA" refers to the method in general, encompassing different aspects from each phase; meanwhile, the term "constellation" refers to the workshop itself.

1.2 Introduction of the Systemic Constellation Approach

The Systemic Constellation Approach is a form of psychotherapy. Since its origin, the method has sparked interest in academic circles amongst psychologists, sociologists, and anthropologists; however, the amount of research is still relatively small. According to Cohen (2006), SCA aims to gain insight into a client's family history and dynamics to identify and release trans-generational dysfunctional patterns embedded within the kinship system. Additionally, it is a form of somatic psychology, as the personal and collective unconscious hold the knowledge of trans-generational beliefs (Lisenaya & Liseniy, 2019). The method relies on the instantaneous processing of nonverbal experience (Stiefel et al., 2002).

To reveal and transform the hidden patterns of the system, the client first provides the therapist with limited factual data, e.g., who belongs or has belonged to the system, what have been the most notable events, or if the parents had children from a previous relationship (ibid). The conversation is usually held in front of the group, which consists of approximately 10-30 people; however, for more sensitive topics, e.g., incest or sexual abuse, the client may also talk to the therapist privately beforehand. The attendees of the workshop are not chosen by the client nor the facilitator, as there is no selection process prior to the workshop. The participants might find workshops from specific internet groups and web pages or get information from someone they know. They then get in contact with the facilitator to sign up. Many facilitators have formed a following, as some representatives attend their workshops regularly. However, there might also be attendees who have either never been to a workshop facilitated by this specific person or that have never been to a workshop at all. The participation fee for representatives is usually somewhere between 10-20€.

The conversation held in front of the group is an essential part of the process as it marks the start of the workshop.

In order to set up the system, a fixed sequence of activities is followed. Firstly, after a short discussion, the facilitator asks the client to phrase their concern with one sentence. The aim is to set a clear intention for the workshop. Next, the facilitator guides the client as they set up a model of the system using volunteer representatives. These people are not related nor familiar with the client, and the group setting is confidential and supportive. Usually, the client is free to pick the representatives from the group by following their intuition. However, the facilitator may give guidelines on which agents need representation. Typically, the participants stand in for members of the client's family and themselves, but they could also represent different system components with abstract qualities, such as objects, symptoms, or events (Hellinger, 2001; Harris, 2020). Once the representatives are in place, they are observed and asked to tune in with the resonance (Livotov, 2007). Now, as the system is visible, healing can begin.

The spatial and relational configuration reflects the client's current experience with their kin (Stiefel et al., 2002; Harris, 2020). By tuning into the unconscious, collective will of the family system, the representatives take on the essential qualities of those they are standing in for (Cohen, 2006). The dynamics are revealed as they vocalize their experiences, including bodily sensations, feelings, impulses, and emotions (ibid). As a result, they become a living map of the system (Livotov, 2007; Harris, 2020, p. 37). By questioning each representative, the facilitator searches for possible solutions to resolve tension and restore balance to the system. More representatives could be added throughout the process. At times, everyone is permitted to move around if needed. As a result, the constellation remains accurate throughout the changes happening within the client and their system.

In SCA, the past is acknowledged to make it available as a resource for personal healing or empowerment in the present (Viganto, 2008). Nearing the end of the session, the client often takes the position their representative formerly held, as the therapist asks the representatives to exchange healing sentences. They are believed to speak the essential truth and carry transformative power. Healing can also be achieved through the movement of representatives in the field and thereby simultaneously within the 'soul of the client' (Constellations Group, 2013) or through a therapeutic ritual (Stiefel et al., 2002). It is important to note that the system can only be slightly modified as it has its resistance to change, which the therapist and client must respect (Viganto, 2008). Eventually, as the client has successfully gained insight, practiced confrontation, and addressed past trauma,

they will release the representatives from their roles, and the session will end. The therapist then encourages the client to abstain from reflecting on the experience and instead ease into it (Stiefel et al., 2002).

1.3 The theoretical foundation of the Systemic Constellation Approach

The Systemic Constellation Approach is founded on several theoretical concepts that Bert Hellinger has defined as “The Basic Orders of Life.” These orders are “The Same Right,” “Hierarchy,” and “Balance.” He has formulated these notions based on his experiences as a facilitator and a teacher. The first basic order, “The same right,” states that all who belong to our family have an equal right to belong. Thus, exclusion, e.g., due to murder, shame, or abortion, results in disorder. The most common consequence of exclusion is that another family member takes over the feelings and symptoms of the excluded one, eventually following their fate. (Hellinger Schule (b)) The second basic principle of life is “the Order of Hierarchy,” which demands that everyone in the family take their rightful place and honor those who came before them (Hellinger Schule (c)). It follows the chronological and generational hierarchy within the family system. According to Hellinger (1998), violating this rule has severe consequences, from physical illness to mental struggles. The final basic order of life is the principle of balance. Here the mutual exchange of energy, or reciprocity, serves as the interaction in our relationships. Hellinger (1998; 2001) believes that our conscience will not allow us peace until we have reached a balance and settled the debt. The order of giving and taking is disturbed when one either gives more than the other can return or does not give enough (Hellinger Schule (d)). The rule of balance also applies negatively, e.g., if someone harms us, we should restore balance by hurting them too (ibid). In a parent-child relationship the demand for balance between giving and taking does not apply. Finally, there is also the concept of conscience. Hellinger (2001, 1998) assumes that extended family groups have a group conscience governed by fairness and transgenerational solidarity, which binds family members to the group through moral obligations. We follow them to feel like we may belong. Movements of conscience are feelings of guilt or innocence. (Hellinger Schule (e))

The Basic orders of life guide the work of SCA facilitators as they help clients to reach peace and harmony in their life and relationships. When everyone has been given their right to belong, they are in their rightful place chronologically; the relationships have achieved a balance between giving and taking amongst all system members; and we follow the rules of group conscience; we feel love, ease, and happiness in whatever we do. In order to see the shortcomings and problems that may

occur in following these principles, the facilitators work with *representative perception* through the phenomenon of *the knowing field*.

1.4 The Knowing Field and the Embodied Experience of Representative Perception

This chapter aims to give an overview of research to study the central phenomenon of the Systemic Constellation Approach called the *knowing field*. Additionally, it will explain how to use representative perception to obtain information from it. The term knowing field was coined by Albrecht Mahr, who explained it as a spiritual-energetic healing force that settles problems through us better than we find resolutions ourselves (Mahr, 1999; as cited in Takacsy, 2016). His theory explains the energetic field that forms during the constellation workshop, illuminating the relations between the system members. According to Harris (2020), the knowing field “...*blends individual affect with relational dynamics and is rich in unconscious material across generations from representatives for both the living and dead.*” Mahr would have probably agreed, as he believed that human bodies were knowledgeable about consciously inaccessible truth and could reveal this veracity (Mahr, 1999; as cited in Takacsy, 2016). This belief correlates with transpersonal psychology, which suggests that “*The entire body is acting as a receiver, resonator, and amplifier for information that originates outside of space and time as we generally perceive them in modern Western cultures.*” (Harris, 2020, p. 38). In short, the knowing field is a sphere of conscious energy used in SCA, whence information can be obtained through embodiment. It is a physical representation of the client’s subconscious.

Albrecht Mahr’s ideas set the ground for other significant theories of the knowing field. For example, Preiss (2012) has proposed that quantum physics and mirror neurons are involved as they promote empathy, understanding, and trust, helping us see the whole picture even if we are only familiar with a part. Another example is Rupert Sheldrake’s (2009) morphic field theory, which asserts that a non-energetic field organizes the form and behaviour of developing organisms or morphic units, from atoms to social groups, by passing on information from previous comparable forms. Sheldrake (2020) asserts that “...*patterns of activity in the present resonate with similar patterns of activity in the past, through a connection across time.*” Additionally, theories such as The Gestalt Field, The Akashic Field, The Phylogenetic Inheritance, Foulkes’s concept of the matrix, and more have offered different descriptions for the phenomenon of the knowing field (Stiefel et al., 2002; Takacsy, 2016; Harris, 2020). However, due to the unquantifiable nature of the field, all have failed to explain it definitively, at least in the eyes of natural sciences. Driven by the

desire to explain this phenomenon, researchers discovered a different way to go about it, called *representative perception*.

Representative perception is an experience involving attunement and resonance, through which the information from the knowing field can be obtained (Takacsy, 2016). It relies on the belief that the knowledge of a system can be acquired through becoming a part of it (Varga von Kibéd, 2000, as cited in Mayer & Vivers, 2016). This knowledge is then embodied and expressed as sensory information in physical perceptions and reactions, such as visions, feelings, or emotions, signifying the accordance with the surrounding energetic field (Hellinger, 2001). John Harris (2020, p. 37) has described this phenomenon as *surrogate perception*, a tool that allows the representatives “...to access accurate information about the people they are standing in for.” According to Cohen (2006), this experience is subjective and somewhat intertwined with personal projection, but the results are accurate as individual interpretations do not undermine it.

The experience of being a representative has numerous components, such as listening to the client's story, being chosen and then set up, perceiving bodily sensations, and relating to others in the field. The representatives can also move around or be moved spatially by the facilitator, articulate healing sentences, or participate in healing rituals (Harris, 2020). It is important to note that SCA is not psycho-drama, and thus representatives should not role-play or influence the workshop toward their desired conclusion. The role of a representative is to gather data from their body and to share it when asked. In many aspects, being a representative closely resembles what in different contexts anthropologists have described as divination through trance and possession (Vignato, 2008). Bert Hellinger (1998) himself sees this method and the representatives as a tool, and he refuses to speculate on the reasons behind its effectiveness. He admits that even though he can not explain it, there is no doubt in his mind that it works (*ibid*). As this paper aims to study the representatives' experiences, the author agrees with Hellinger's statement. Thus it will not go more in-depth with explaining the reasoning behind this phenomenon, as these interpretations might result in restrictions and an arbitrary analysis of the ethnographic fieldwork. Instead, the approach will be phenomenological. The experience of the knowing field and representative perception are discussed in more detail later in the context of ethnographical material and the authors' findings.

1.5 Embodiment, emplacement, and emotions

Being a representative relates to embodiment, an important paradigm in anthropology that states that experiences are materialized, vitalized, and situated in the world through the body, as bodily practices mediate between the individual and society (Gieser, 2008; Harris, 2016). According to Heidegger (1993), our being is never alone but always with others, located in our world and relationships. The knowing field brings this web of connections and underlying relational patterns to light. Merleau-Ponty (1964) elaborated on this idea, stating that the unity of the world is present in our experience, as we perceive the world and orient ourselves within it in the context of other significant objects, or other words, through consciousness, which is essentially being towards a thing through the body. As a result, the body becomes the locus of pre-objective interaction with the continually unfolding field of relationships (ibid). In the knowing field, this information becomes accessible as embodied knowledge, integrated by the representatives' being- their minds, bodies, and environment. Hence, embodiment in the knowing field is the act of obtaining information.

In addition, the experience of being a representative could also be seen and analyzed from the framework of emplacement. Howes (2005, p. 7) has explained that “*While the paradigm of “embodiment” implies an integration of mind and body, the emergent paradigm of emplacement suggests the sensuous interrelationship of the body–mind–environment*” (as cited in Pink 2009). It addresses the experience by accounting for the relationships between humans and the material and sensorial environment (ibid). Thus, in SCA, emplacement also considers the representatives' spatial configuration, movement, and the environmental and systemic context revealed through the knowing field. Each aspect is crucial to understanding the method and the experience of being a representative. Nevertheless, the author finds that the concepts of embodiment and emplacement both bring value to studying the phenomenon of SCA, as they can be used in different contexts regarding the current locus of focus.

In SCA, the information obtained through embodiment and emplacement usually manifests as sense perception, feelings, movement, and emotions. Michelle Rosaldo (1984) has defined emotions as embodied thoughts, as they can only be understood by considering the whole being in a person's world. John Heron (1992) called it experiential knowledge, which comes from embodied experience. Heidegger (1993) also believed that emotions arise from the context of our involvement. Thus, they are a cultural guideline for navigating social relationships. On the other hand, our involvement depends on how we perceive our subjective reality, which is shaped by our actions. The latter is dictated by our feelings which are dependent on our thoughts. Our thoughts,

again, are shaped by the reality we have created for ourselves. Alternatively, as Rosaldo (1984, p 137) put it, “... *just as thought does not exist in isolation from affective life, so affect is culturally ordered and exist apart from thought.*” Thus each component derives from another, and together they encompass our whole being. The stories of people unfold during the process of SCA because the representatives gain insight into the emotional life and, therefore, other aspects of the being of those they represent.

SCA practitioners treat emotions as something that other variables, such as social structure, relational patterns, the following of the Basic Orders of Life, and the group conscience, can explain. However, they also believe that emotions can explain the functions and dysfunctions of systemic institutions, such as family systems, organizations, countries, and more, while also being an inseparable part of them. Thus, in the context of SCA, it is essential to study emotions directly as affects, but one should also consider them as ideas or evaluative judgments. Lutz and White (1986, p. 407) have elaborated on this idea, stating that “...*emotional judgments are seen to require social validation or negotiation for their realization, thereby linking emotion with power and social structure.*” In SCA, the social structure is one's family, and social validation can be obtained by following the system's rules. Considering emotions as socially validated judgment, the facilitators focus mainly on translating emotional concepts and the social processes surrounding their use to reach the desired outcome for the client and the system.

In addition to embodiment, emplacement, and emotions, the Symbolic Constellation Approach strongly relates to ritual healing and symbolism. However, these anthropological theories and approaches will not be covered in this thesis, as they correspond less to the experiences of being a representative and more to the experience of other agents in the SCA. Peacock (1884, p. 37) has defined symbols as “...*forms or actions whose primary and immediate function, in the context in question, is to express a configuration of consciousness.*” To interpret is thus to explain the relationship between these forms of actions and the consciousness they supposedly express (ibid). Therefore, symbolism instead relates to the facilitator's work, as he/she is concerned with meaning-making to bring light to the stories that unfold. In this context, representatives are merely there at the client's service, as they are urged not to interpret but to just communicate their experiences to the group. Likewise, ritual healing, a form of traditional or alternative medicine rooted in spiritual or religious practices, is at the center of the experience for the client, not of the representatives or the facilitator. Although all parties might experience some healing, the extent of this experience is usually (with some exceptions) the strongest for the one whose system has been

set up. Hence, the connections between ritual healing and clients, as well as symbols and facilitators, may provide the base for further studies on SCA (more on that in Chapter “Discussion and Conclusions: Identity as a Process”).

1.6 Summary

Bert Hellinger believed that one must study lived experience to understand human existence. So he did. Throughout his years working as a missionary and later as a therapist, Hellinger formed the foundation of his work: the Basic Orders of Life. These orders rely solely on his experience and acquired knowledge and describe how life energy moves through a system. As a result and following the beliefs in question, the phenomenological method of Systemic Constellations was born. In SCA, the past is acknowledged to make it available as a resource in the present. This is done through the phenomena of the knowing field, also known as the spatial configuration of the client's unconscious, from which information is acquired through representative perception. Representatives are volunteers who are not related to or familiar with the client but attend the workshop to serve the client, their system, and knowing field. As the main focus of this research is set on the experience of the representatives, the upcoming chapters will go more in-depth with analyzing the information acquired through interviews and participant observation.

2. Methodology

This research explored how different people understand, perceive, and attribute meaning to their lived experience as a representative in the knowing field of the Systemic Constellation Approach. To study the embodied perception and understanding of this conscious experience, the researcher implemented a flexible qualitative approach combining semi-structured interviews and participant observation. This specific combination of data collection methods is adaptable and responsive. Thus, it provides the researcher with a necessary framework to study the complex subjective experiences of being a representative in the knowing field from the lens of phenomenology.

2.1 Semi-Structured Interviews

The researcher decided in favor of semi-structured interviews (Appendix 1) because they are open-ended and thus allow one to see patterns and compare the answers between respondents. Additionally, for this type of interview, "*The interviewer maintains discretion to follow leads, but the interview guide is a set of clear instructions,*" which makes it great for situations where one will only get one chance to interview someone (Bernard, 2006, p. 212). Secondly, as the topic is exploratory, an approach partly guided by the participants' responses helps develop a substantial knowledge foundation for future research. With the option of asking to clarify, elaborate, or rephrase their answers, the interviews introduce more detail and depth to uncover the participants' understanding of their experiences (ibid). Most interviewees did not ask to get acquainted with the interview questions before the interview was conducted, so the interviewer had the chance to also see their reactions and emerging emotions, as the thought process carries data and value in itself. The only one that did receive the questions beforehand was Kristel.

There are also some risks regarding semi-structured interviews that the author considered. The most significant is the potential for interviewer bias, as the interviewees might be led to give specific answers which could be interpreted differently than intended. To avoid this, the researcher did her best to rely on short, direct, and objective questions. Consequently, the results may not be as reliable as they would be for other methods, such as surveys or focus groups. On the other hand, semi-structured interviews allow the interviewer to delve into the interviewee's answers, leading to a depth that surveys do not convey. Additionally, the interviews are more challenging to replicate because the interviewer plays an essential role in the direction they take. Despite these risks, the researcher favored semi-structured interviews because they efficiently explored the participants'

understanding and perception of the topic and offered qualitative, open-ended data appropriate for the research project. The interviewer did her best to keep a neutral, open state of mind throughout the discussions.

2.2 The Interviewees

The semi-structured interviews were conducted with a relatively small group of nine interviewees as a qualitative research method from 18.10.2022-14.12.2022. The researcher found the subjects in a Facebook group called “Konstellatsioonid” (translation: Constellations), where people share information about workshops and events related to the Systemic Constellation Approach in Estonia. When looking for the interviewees in October 2022, this group had about 1400 members and a hundred posts per month. After posting a short introduction of the research and an invitation to participate, the researcher received over thirty applications, from which arrangements were made with the first twelve. Eventually, interviews were conducted with nine people. The only criterion for the applicants was to have at least one experience as a representative in a group setting of SCA. All of the informants were middle-aged, eight women and one man. Five of them were currently studying the method in at least one of the three Constellation schools located in Estonia, one of them has worked as a facilitator for over ten years, and the rest were simply interested in the method, as most of them put it. The interviewees were Tiia, Elen, Imbre, Piret R., Kelli, Kersti, Karin, Piret L. and Kristel. This research will not go in-depth with the interviewees' characterization as the participants' background information does not play a major role in directing the course of the workshop. The personal history of representatives can have some influence on the outcome of the constellation; however, it is believed by the interviewees that the selection of participants is guided by fate and "*Those who have to come will come.*" (Tiia 18.10.2022). Thus, it does not matter who they are, as no screening process or examination is done prior to the workshop. Theoretically, anyone could sign up to participate.

2.3 Data Collection

The first step in understanding people's lived experiences was achieved by detailed case-by-case analysis of semi-structured interviews. This was done by listening, taking notes, re-listening, and partly transcribing the recordings of the discussions, worth roughly 18 hours. Subsequently, the researcher identified and connected the themes and patterns found throughout the first phase, outlined in the chapter “How Representative Perception Shapes One's Identity.” The author did this

with all nine cases within a month. Later on, the analysis was carried to a deeper level as the interpretations of the material were added. The final result of this work can be seen in this study.

Additionally, participant observation was conducted in a 6-hour workshop covering four independent storylines of 4 different clients, one of whom is the researcher. This was done to understand better the nuances and peculiarities of being a representative. None of the informants were present in these sessions, as they took place aloof. Furthermore, as the issues and stories covered were of strong personal nature, the findings of this observation will only be discussed anonymously, leaving out details that could lead to the identification of people involved in these workshops. To honor the request for confidentiality, the author can and will only address what she experienced in the workshops through herself, meaning she can and will only talk about her experience as a representative and her story as a client.

To analyze the data collected through participation and interviews, the author will apply qualitative content analysis as it is compatible with the phenomenological positioning of the research, in which she aims to focus on the participants' understandings and interpretations of their embodied experience. Notes were taken post-event, as there was no time to record the process throughout the day. For that reason, the reflection of this experience is partly based on memory and, thus, not wholly accurate or reliable. Despite this, the data collected through participant observation will still be included in this research, as meaning-making, mainly done during and after being a representative, is an essential part of the experience.

2.4 Ethics

In conducting research related to SCA, which is essentially a mental health practice, ethical considerations should be taken into account, given the sensitive nature of the research topic. As mentioned in the previous chapter, the research was mostly conducted through semi-structured interviews, including predetermined and spontaneous questions. The responses given by the participants were then recorded, partly transcribed, and analyzed. The ethical concerns regarding semi-structured interviews are defending participants' privacy and autonomy, ensuring informed consent, and the interviewers' awareness of their biases. Participants' autonomy and privacy were respected, as their participation was voluntary, and they were free to withdraw at any point during data collection. The interviewer tried to prevent potential harm, such as stigma, discrimination, or negative repercussions, by doing her best to take a neutral, open-minded position.

Before the start of the interview, all informants were asked about their preference for anonymity. Furthermore, they were provided with an explanation of the research goals and informed about the data collection process and how the information will be used. They were free to ask the researcher about anything that had remained unclear up to this point. Additionally, it is important to mention that the interviews were conducted in Estonian for the comfort of the participants. Thus, the quotes seen in this thesis have been influenced by the act of translation. The interview questions have been presented in both languages in chapter “Appendix 1.”

Participant observation is a research method that “...involves immersing yourself in a culture and learning to remove yourself every day from that immersion so you can intellectualize what you have seen and heard, put it into perspective, and write about it convincingly.” (Bernard, 2006, p 344). As mentioned beforehand, because of the sensitive nature of the topic and the way the research was conducted, the author will only address what she experienced on the field through her own constellation to maintain the confidentiality and anonymity of the participants. The aim of participant observation was not data inquiry but rather an inquiry of experience to embody the knowledge acquired through semi-structured interviews and literature. Thus, participant observation does not play a remarkable role in this research. However, the author found it important to mention this to ensure transparency.

2.5 Self-reflection

For the sake of reliability, transparency, and self-reflection, it is necessary to mention that I have a personal connection to the research topic. In 2017 I undertook an introductory course on systemic constellations, which was shortly followed by attending my first workshop as a client. In the period of 2017 up until the publication of this study in 2023, I participated in about ten workshops and one 3-day retreat. For the majority, I have either been an observant or a representative; however, I did have another personal constellation done at the beginning of 2023. My interest in the field began in my teens, as I was struggling with my mental health. After being diagnosed with depression, I tried many practices, both conventional and alternative therapy, eventually leading me to SCA. Though I have not regularly participated in constellation workshops for the last few years, it is important to note that my history, personal experiences, and interest in the topic could influence the outcome of this research. The first ethical concern is having preconceived notions or opinions about the topic based on my experiences and beliefs, which can affect the research results. To reduce my influence

on the outcome, the thesis is largely built upon quotes given by the informants to highlight their voices and experiences. The second ethical concern could be the struggle to be objective, potentially leading to skewing the results to fit my personal narrative. However, my personal experiences might also turn out to be beneficial, as they allow me to ask more profound questions, make it easier to empathize with the interviewees and motivate me to work passionately, leading to a more thorough investigation.

3. How representative perception shapes one's identity

Identity could be defined as the relation each thing bears only to itself. Therefore, it must encompass all that makes one oneself and not another. These properties, however, are not simple to identify. Is it physical or spatiotemporal continuity? Or is it the sum total of our experiences? Both? Neither? Something completely different? It is a concept that is hard to pinpoint and more so to define. Regardless, for the sake of this thesis, let us relate to it as an answer to the question of "Who am I?" which could include but not be limited to memories, experiences, relationships, values, bodily and/or mental substance, and more. As a product of this research, it was found that through representative perception, or more precisely, the embodied experience of being a representative in the knowing field of the Systemic Constellation Approach, one tackles many questions posed upon us by this search for self. The way this experience can challenge, shape and modify one's view of the world and of themselves will be discussed in greater detail in the next chapters.

3.1 To Serve the Client, Their System, and the Knowing Field

"As a representative, I serve the client. They can use my body for their benefit to solve their problem." (Kelli, 08.11.2022)

Multiple interview answers suggested that entering the field as a representative requires one to surrender their body at the hands of the client, the facilitator, and/or the knowing field. They referred to it by saying they do so to serve (translation: *teenistuses olema*). As one is chosen to represent and placed on the field, the feelings that arise could be unexpected in their nature and intensity. One could never predict how they would feel before actually being there in the role and experiencing it firsthand. Some representatives find it thrilling or empowering, while others take a more conscious stance. Elen, who belonged to the second group, voiced her concerns as follows:

"I value my privacy. And if I have to feel the feelings of another person, it still seems to me that, in a way, someone has entered my world. And especially if this feeling is negative. It is kind of scary for me. I would say I am afraid of losing control. Not in the sense that I can not control myself there on the field, but these feelings come from nothing. I do not control them. They come from somewhere, well, I cannot even say from the outside, but they come from somewhere else, so that is what I mean by the loss of control. I randomly feel the other

person's feelings and do not know what might come next. Before that, I know how to deal with it, but there I just feel." (Elen, 22.10.2022)

By entering the field, one does not know what part they will play in the healing process and how the one they represent relates to the story. It matters because if one has a significant role in the story, they have to vocalize more of their emotions, and as the configuration changes, they might also feel more. If one's role in the story ends up being irrelevant, then one might stop feeling in the first place and could be removed from the field before the constellation ends. However, it is believed that each representative carries the energy or stands in for the soul they were designated; thus, one could have an intense experience despite the specific part they have.

"You might have just a minor role, but you also go through everything, being the representative of the soul with his own experiences and history, but it may not resonate at all with the topic at hand." (Kelli, 08.11.2022)

When asked what the reason for surrendering one's body at the hands of another person was and why they participated as representatives in the constellation workshops, the answers did not differ significantly among the interviewees. Many say that they do it for the greater good, which refers to the idea that the collective benefit of a group or society should take precedence over individual interests. It is often used in philanthropy, encouraging people to think beyond their needs and desires and consider how their actions can positively impact the community. In this case, people believe that by healing one individual at a time, they ultimately heal humankind and, as a result, make a better future.

Such acts of philanthropy can also be related to identity, as it can be viewed as expressing one's values and beliefs through actions and connecting with others who share similar ideas. In the case of participating in constellation workshops, one gives back to the community by offering one's time and body to serve the system. The informants also said they do it to understand themselves, others, and relationships better. Multiple interviewees, for example, Kristel and Kelli, referred to the method as a fast track to acquiring different forms of knowledge, be it experiential, presentational, or propositional. Physical experiences encountered on the field make the information more relatable, easier to remember, and to integrate into one's system. The informants also often mentioned that the method has profoundly impacted how they see the world and that by living through the experiences of others, they have also found relief from their struggles.

However, Piret L., who has been actively attending workshops for over ten years, also stressed that participants should be more aware of the influences that representation could have on them, good or bad. She said some people get addicted to the experience and go from one workshop to another without ensuring that the facilitator is competent or the room is held well. She described one of her own experiences, which made her realize the hidden dangers of participation:

"At the very beginning, I got into a role where the child was taken from the mother after giving birth, and she was put in a closed ward because she fell into psychosis and was labeled crazy. I did not know how strongly these emotions could be expressed when entering a role back then, and I went there. No facilitator came to help me out. I was so deep in this role that I raged on the floor like a child had been taken from me. I would have wanted this child on my chest. But the child's father did not want to know anything about it, as if he had arranged it. It was such a traumatic experience for me. Otherwise, you come out of the role and shake yourself a bit, and that is it. And I do not remember that anymore. I deeply got into it and came out of that role with great difficulty. And then I remember the facilitator telling me, "Brain cells do not regenerate, so why did you go so deep in the first place?" And then I realized that, wait, wait, I also have to protect myself. It is one thing to work for someone and in someone's service, but it is another to know where to defend myself. He could have told me not to go that deep. But we are all there in the service of the field. The facilitator leads the field, and it is his job to hold space and keep it safe." (Piret 2, 17.11.2022)

As the emotional scope of the role is not predetermined, it is important to be physically and mentally ready to embody everything that might come up, as intense, different, or strange as it might be. Participation as a form of entertainment and without the consideration of the influence of the method is looked down upon, as the matters handled in a workshop are often related to trauma or deep, personal struggles. Though many interviewees said that what happens on the field can be somewhat "theatrical," they stressed that at the end of the day, it is still a form of treatment to relieve emotional distress and hardships. Thus, when signing up for a workshop, one should consider if they are ready to be receptive, open, and considerate. To trust the process, in whichever way it unfolds, many interviewees expressed their belief in fate.

3.1.1 Fate

Fate is the idea that outside forces predetermine and shape certain events. However, their outcomes may be alterable. This understanding contrasts the concept of free will, which posits that individuals can control their destinies. Faith in predetermination was often expressed regarding times of difficulty- whether in life or on the knowing field. In many instances, it offers comfort and solace to believe that the experiences one is going through are part of a larger plan, ultimately leading to a satisfactory outcome. For example, if a representative were to get an emotionally draining, demanding role, they might say, *“I guess this is how it was meant to be,”* or *“What happens, happens.”* Additionally, believing in fate helps to process the complexity and unpredictability of the world. For the informants, believing in fate was interconnected and complementary to trust. It implied confidence in a power greater than themselves, which leads the experience of being a representative to unfold meaningfully and beneficially for the individual, whether the power was of the system or something different. When representatives trust fate, they surrender control to this unknown power and accept whatever comes their way- be it a role, emotion, feeling, or hardship they experience on the knowing field. Ultimately, it is faith in themselves, as it takes courage and self-acceptance to exhibit such trust.

Believing in fate is a powerful tool in Systemic Constellations. It helps to create a sense of understanding and acceptance regarding one's life circumstances, the approach, and the healing process. When the representatives believe in fate, they no longer see themselves as victims of their occurrences or, in this case, their system. Instead, they try to look at everything completely, including all the positive and negative influences. It helps to attribute a sense of purpose to existence and the struggles that accompany it. For constellation practitioners familiar with the theoretical side of the method, this higher power was often defined as the group conscience. It helps one understand that their misfortunes might result from the system's needs, and thus the situation can be reconciled by asking for permission from all the parties involved. However, fate was also used to refer to the context of one's belief system.

Despite giving some responsibility to the hands of the greater power, most constellation practitioners believe they still have choice and accountability in how they design their lives. If it were not so, then the agency and personal responsibility that the method requires would make it pointless to attend these workshops. People are expected to take the necessary steps to heal, as no one else can do it for them. Thus the balance between destiny and free will remains to be determined. Many interviewees saw fate in minor things, such as being chosen, the group's

composition, and the unfolding stories. For example, the significance of fate could be seen in the way the informants talked about their experiences by using sentences such as “*There are no coincidences,*” “*Everything turns out the way it is supposed to,*” or “*Everything happens for a reason.*” In the grand scheme of life, however, they put more emphasis on their agency, whether changing the old beliefs of their kinship system or healing themselves and asking for permission for a different future than their ancestors had. However, this too could be boiled down to fate if one sees their agency and power to do differently as their fate.

For representatives, believing in fate is seen as a positive outlook because it encourages them to look for parallels between their experience on the knowing field and their own life. Most believe that if they are chosen to represent someone, they or their system must have something in common with their story or character. Kristel described it as follows:

"This happens very often when a person recognizes that, wow, I have the same story. He retains this adequacy, perhaps he can distinguish between his feelings and those of this story, but he sees strong parallels. It is often said, especially for beginners representing for the first time, that there are no coincidences. It is as if these stories have an unconscious resonance and people with similar family systems are chosen to represent." (Kristel, 14.12.2022)

As Kristel mentioned, one way of explaining the phenomenon of the similitude between representatives and those they are standing in for is the subconscious. Even though scientifically rooted, it is a view that has remained as mystical as the belief in a higher force that governs all life. It is hard to say how people form these connections with their roles. As mentioned in the theoretical outline, different explanations have related this practice to empathy, mirror neurons, and more. However, one way to answer how this happens is through how it is experienced, which this thesis aims to explore. Regarding the influence of higher forces in the context of choosing representatives, Imbre said:

"Something about this story has to touch him [the representative] too. Somehow by chance, this happens? Again, someone is pulling the threads, which is why you want [to choose] him and why the story resonates with him." (Imbre, 27.10.2022)

Many constellation practitioners use fate and higher forces to describe experiences and phenomena that are hard to explain by analytical reasoning. Of course, one could say that people are good at detecting correspondence as they wish to affirm the beliefs they already hold. However, the similitudes can be pretty detailed. According to the interviewees, they also tend to happen at the right time, usually referring to the readiness to acknowledge the corresponding patterns in one's life. Regarding one's identity, believing in fate can help the representatives be more open about the possible changes and lessons they might undergo through participating in a workshop, as they seek to attribute personal meaning to the experience. It is coherent to receptivity, which in turn supports growth and healing. Additionally, this process is also supported by the process of The Movement of the Soul.

3.1.2 The Movement of the Soul

The Movement of the Soul is an internal process experienced in SCA when someone profoundly connects with their ancestors and understands their family's impact on their identity. It is an inner journey that brings balance and healing to the individual and, ultimately, the system. The term was initially coined to represent the third phase of Hellinger's work, dating from 2002 until 2006 when he slowly moved away from the question-based approach.

"The constellation was not directed towards a goal that was predetermined by the client and into whose service the constellation facilitator placed themselves. Everything was left to the movements as they perceived the representative - beyond the ideas of problem and solution and beyond psychotherapy in the usual sense. All of a sudden, what was really going on in the families in secret came to light when they experienced themselves being moved by another force. The representatives felt themselves to be a medium, possessed and moved by another power."(Hellinger (a))

However, in practice, the "Movement of the soul" refers to the phenomenon Hellinger describes rather than the phase itself. It is believed that the configuration on the field reflects the client's subconscious image of their family. In this configuration, the placement of people is of utmost importance, as it carries information about the system; thus, so do the movements on the knowing field. It is believed that the changes in emplacement simultaneously occur in the knowing field and the client's subconscious. This belief is seen as one of the foundations of healing in SCA. Of course, awareness of hidden dynamics, acceptance, and understanding are also a part of the healing process

in which it is expected of the client to be an active agent. However, the soul is believed to move even if the client does not fully grasp or accept the situation.

When Piret L. was asked about the start of the constellation process, she said that people often forget why they wanted to have the constellation in the first place. When asked why she explained that it happens because the soul begins to work. She described it as follows:

"The question moves the soul. The more energy there is in the question, the faster the soul can act. That is, the constellation field is where balance is achieved. I do not know if it is the left and right hemispheres of the brain, or mother and father, or... The field always looks for the best possible solution." (Piret L., 17.11.2022)

The author asked whether the duality is being balanced, to which Piret L. replied:

"No, it balances the moment of tension and relaxation. The question directs us where to look for tension and how to reach the fastest solution. It is the movement of the soul. If I still have an insane pain or question in my soul, it moves that place from point A to point B. And the faster the solution comes." (Piret L., 17.11.2022)

Thus, according to her explanation, the soul's movement happens when tension is released. Through unleashing mental or emotional strain, one experiences healing. So, in this sense, the movement of the soul or, in other words, changes on the soul level, equal healing. Karin (17.11.2022) said, *"Soul level means that the change happens inside you, in your heart."* From this perspective, the constellations do not change the situation or the system but rather the person's consciousness. However, as the client's perspective changes, it echoes in her system and relations, transforming them too.

It is hard to find the exact meaning of "The Movement of The Soul" as the term is used in many ways. For Hellinger, it occurs amongst the representatives as higher forces guide their actions on the field. His definition aims to explain the motions of the representatives. Meanwhile, the description of the interviewees relates it to the healing process. In some literature, it is also seen as the practice where the soul guides the facilitator (Nelles, 2007). In doing so, the facilitator also guides the representatives, as he differentiates who is following or acting from the movement impulse and who

is not (ibid). Nelles (2007, p 14) also said, "*It is not a movement against conscience, but just beyond it – transcending it.*"

When the soul guides the facilitator, Nelles (2007, p 3) describes that during this process, "*I open up my soul wide enough to be touched by the soul of the contemplated one. Then a message reaches me from there.*" The facilitator creates "*...an opening toward the soul level*" from this insight (ibid). Here Hellinger's definition comes into play as the representatives surrender themselves to the higher forces, which they can do as they now operate on the soul level. As a result, the healing process within the client begins, as the interviewees described it. Thus, as it seems, all parties described a different part of the same process, ultimately leading to growth and healing- Nelles from the facilitator's perspective, Hellinger from the representatives, and the interviewees from the clients.

3.2 Bodily Experiences

Anthropologists have long recognized the importance of the body as both a site and a medium for different psychosocial practices and meanings (Csordas, 1994). Additionally, it is believed to be an integral part of an individual's lived experience. Embodiment captures this relationship between body and meaning, highlighting how cultural and social connotations are incorporated into lived experiences. In SCA, all this knowledge is put into practice as the representatives navigate between multiple dimensions of bodily experience, including the affective, the perceptual, and the expressive. They relate to the feelings and emotions from bodily sensations and perceive the world through their bodies and senses. As a result, they give a voice to the one they represent to serve the system, the field, or the client. For most, it is their body that is used as an expressive outlet, as they might attribute everything else to the one they are standing in for, but not the physical whole. Thus, one might assume that this experience also influences their identity. Csordas (1994) argues that bodily experience is critical to one's sense of self and identity. The following chapters aim to contextualize bodily experiences and embodiment in the knowing field to see how this argument applies to SCA.

3.2.1 The Habitus and The Field

The approach of Systemic Constellations has remarkable similarities with Pierre Bourdieu's sociological theory, in which he integrated structure and agency. His concepts of the *habitus* and the *field*, central to his structural-constructivist approach, encompass many parallels with representative perception and the knowing field. For Bourdieu (1984), habitus refers to a system of structured and structuring dispositions, the physical embodiment of cultural capital. Habitus, first shaped by the social environment, begins to organize its perceptions and ideas about this environment and direct its actions. As a result, people form traits and behaviors, such as their system of acquired schemes, sensitivity, and predispositions. Thus, we act a certain way because of our lived experience and not solely by the force of external social structures. Therefore, habitus is created by 1) dispositions shaped by current and past events and structures and 2) how they were perceived. In this sense, habitus is produced and reproduced constantly and unconsciously. (Bourdieu 1984)

Bourdieu often emphasizes that habitus is a bodily disposition, meaning it functions relatively independently of consciousness. He believes that the objective structures of society are incorporated into the individual, forming mental structures, which he refers to as habitus. They are similar to the environment by which they were shaped. Because of this likeness, habitus perceives these

objective environmental structures as natural and implicit. For the most part, habitus forms in childhood, and thus it is based on the individual's social background. The disparities in this environment form the foundation of different possibilities for the habitus to reorganize itself later as it develops its capability to acquire symbolic capital from new social situations. (Bourdieu 1984; 1977)

As habitus relies on the environment, people in similar conditions must have similar habitus. Thus, we can speak of the habitus of a system, which according to Bordieu, encompasses “...a *subjective but not individual system of internalized structures, schemes of perception, conception, and action common to all members of the same group or class.*” (Bordieu, 1977, p. 86). This complements Hellinger's (2001) theory, which states that systems carry their conscience, requiring all members to be connected and memorialized in a particular way. Kristel also elaborated on this idea by saying that “*What happens is what is best for the system as a whole at that moment. The system is always bigger than the individual, and the system seeks balance for itself, not for that individual.*” (Kristel, 14.12.2022) Thus, in addition to its parts, the system itself is also an agent.

Habitus is always connected to the field, which for Bordieu, resembles a social space. It is a network of objective relations and a configurational zone between positions- an environment comprising sub-spaces or areas with peculiar characteristics and authorities (Bordieu, 1977). For example, for the habitus of a kinship system, this field could be the political, economic, social, or cultural sphere it is emplaced in. However, in systemic constellations, this field could also be equated to the family system, one of the most important external factors shaping the individual's habitus. Thus, each representative has its own “sub-spaces,” relations, and positions, which could become visible through the spatial configuration of representatives in the knowing field.

Representatives aim to acquire information about the person and the habitus they represent so that the facilitator can help the client. This information is felt through the body, as it mediates all reflection and action upon the world, making it central to the approach of Systemic Constellations. Through the body, representatives explore different dimensions of the identities of those they stand for as they become aware of the relationship between their habitus and the field. Thus, in constellations, the body functions as both a transmitter and receiver of information, which temporarily positions the representative in the system of the individual they represent. Bordieu's theory helps us better understand the experience of being a representative as it enables us to explain the different relations between the individual, the system, and the act of representing.

3.2.2 The Body-Mind Duality

SCA simultaneously reproduces and contradicts the mind-body duality, according to which the two are distinct substances, each with a different essential nature. On the one hand, the constellation approach treats the physical, psychosocial, and social domains of our being as interconnected and somewhat monistic. As Imbre (27.10.2022) described: *"Body and mind are always connected. We cannot separate the body from other things."* Bodily perceptions are treated as something that derive from other variables, such as our environment, soul, and mind, which these perceptions affect. This correlates with Bourdieu's concept of Habitus. Singling something out can not encompass the whole extent of the client's problem. However, on the other hand, the constellation reinforces the duality by setting bodily experiences above others, such as analytical, logical, or rational thinking. Interestingly enough, Bourdieu felt similar, as he stressed that habitus is a physical disposition functioning relatively independently from consciousness. For Imbre (27.10.2022), the reason is that *"The body is smarter than our subconscious, then our conscious too."* Other representatives, like Kersti, see the mind as a distraction:

"You can tell when a person is present with thought, not with perception, when he comes up with hypotheses. I also have once thought that theoretically, I should... But look, I listen to myself, to this perception. I am not going with what's here [pointing to her head], but I tell myself to turn it off. I tell myself that I am not an observer now. As an observer, you can have all these hypotheses. When I go out on the field, I am fully there. I wish to experience, and I turn myself off." (Kersti, 10.11.2022)

Some representatives believe the body is more objective and unambiguous than the mind in acquiring information. For most interviewees, the body was considered to accurately and precisely reflect the experience of the represented one. Thus, if one suddenly felt a weight on their shoulders, they could be sure that this sensation carries information about the one they represent, rather than themselves. Conversely, thoughts, or analysis and logic, are often believed to originate from the representative. Therefore, the body is seen as more reliable in obtaining information. It also illustrates the self-and-other dichotomy eminent in the representatives' identity as they try to distinguish between what belongs to them and what belongs to the person they represent. Kelli described that because the bodily perceptions she experiences do not originate from herself, but elsewhere, she believes them to be more trustworthy:

“For me, the greatest honor is when the body speaks. There are no thoughts. When the body starts to move by itself or wants to go somewhere or if the hand simply rises by itself- I do not make that up. When I describe some of my feelings, I think I am making up fairy tales, and I start to doubt that maybe I... maybe I am making something up for another person and harming them. Whose feelings are these? Whose part am I describing? I feel that I can trust my body completely. I can not make anything up because certain forces control my body.”
(Kelli, 08.11.2022)

She elaborated on this thought, saying that we form hypotheses based on our lived experiences with our analytical minds. These experiences may not resonate or overlap with the client and their story. Hence, by listening to the body and describing its state, one can minimize the threat of influencing or jeopardizing the constellation.

"You have to see and feel so much. I think it is an insane responsibility. The biggest difficulty, in my opinion, is achieving a neutral position so that you do not immediately start drawing some kind of conclusions in your head, saying, oh yeah, hey, I have the same experience. People's lives are simply too different. It may seem at first that it is a similar story, but in fact, there is such a twist that... there are no identical stories in the world.”
(Kelli, 08.11.2022)

However, the distinction between the habitus of the representative and the one being represented is more complicated because sensations and perceptions differ. These distinctions are usually attributed to the representative, though the belief of fate also applies here. Thus, if the representative has some peculiarity, it could be considered a necessary part of their representation. Sensation occurs when sensory receptors detect sensory stimuli. However, people could be either hyper-sensitive or hypo-sensitive to different sensory inputs. Additionally, perception involves the organization, interpretation, and conscious experience of those sensations. People can choose to focus their attention on various aspects of the message. Their subconscious decision is often based on what they have experienced, what is familiar, or what they consider important.

“The representatives are very different. All bodies are different and work differently. Perceptions are different. Some see pictures, others hear voices, some sense, and some have a sensation in their body. Often people already know what is the meaning of one feeling or another... more or less. It comes through experience.” (Kersti, 10.11.2022)

Therefore, in the act of being chosen and being placed on the field, the representatives aim to leave their personal consciousness aside by tuning into their body and, as a consequence, connecting to the habitus of the one they are standing in for. They set their focus on their body so that their subjective way of seeing the world would not interfere with the process, as the body is believed to be a mediator in acquiring objective insight into the client's system.

3.2.3 To experience, not to interpret

An essential skill for the representative is distinguishing between their experience and their interpretation of the experience. Experience, in this context, is whatever is happening at the moment. For example, it could be hearing a sound, seeing visuals, having a bodily sensation, an emotion, or an interaction. Interpretation, however, is how the mind reacts to that experience. It often happens without deliberation as we create narratives and judgments based on memories, past associations, and how we view ourselves and others. However, during the process of interpretation, our experiences are distorted as we subconsciously look for evidence to support our beliefs. The thoughts we generate become our direct experience instead of what is truly happening. This is also true for perceiving sensations, as elaborated at the end of this chapter. Moreover, these stories are inherent to their authors. Thus, in the knowing field, they reflect the habitus of the representative rather than whom they are representing. As a result, when composed with interpretation, the representative's vocalized experience could be false and negatively influence the workshop. Kristel explained the difference between experience and interpretation:

"If, for example, I have a stomach ache as a representative, it is a bodily sensation. Now I have two options. I can express it as a representative, saying, "I have severe lower abdominal pain." However, I can also add, "I do not know why, but I have this growing feeling that it is related to some kind of birth experience." This is an interpretation. Now, the question is how adequate this representative is. Does this information originate from the role, or does he interpret it himself, using his analytical mind, where he makes perhaps the first most direct parallel that comes to his mind? In school, we learned not to interpret. In other words, this confirmation should come from the client. For example, if the client's representative constantly describes pain in the lower abdomen, the facilitator could ask the client what the pain is associated with. Moreover, the client may say, "Yes, I remember there was a period in my life when I had excruciating lower abdominal pain. Eventually, it turned

out that I had severe ovarian inflammation. I eventually lost the child, or the doctor terminated the pregnancy. It was a very dramatic period for me that lasted some 6-7 months." Now the client's comment goes together with the representative's pain in the lower abdomen without interpretation because the client gives it a real experiential background."

(Kristel, 14.12.2022)

To prevent the inclination to interpret, one must take the position of an observer, with their attention adamantly on the experience. The skill to do so will result in what the interviewees called *pure representation*. Initially, it is when one's own matters do not intervene with the process of the constellation. To acquire this skill, one must understand the influence and differences in their sensory and mental equipment and interpretive habits. Many interviewees believed this knowledge could only come through experience. However, some linked it to emotional intelligence. Kristel described the idea of a pure representative as follows:

"A representative should be adequate as a person, that is... maybe in the same way as a facilitator. We use the term "empty center"; a facilitator should work through a neutral, empty center, where he is a dispassionate observer and mediator. Similarly, the representative should be neutral and dispassionate, i.e., he simply brings important information. Still, he does not put anything excessive there, neither of himself nor does he derive anything, but he expresses only the information that is present at the moment. He does not make assumptions, and he does not make inferences, and he speaks for himself."

(Kristel, 14.12.2022)

Even though it is a skill the representatives should possess and practice, the responsibility of the workshop lies on the shoulders of the facilitator. Most representatives are not entirely pure. Mainly because people often get the roles of those whose stories are similar. As a result, some meaning-making and judgment will most likely occur, which the facilitator must notice and either address or keep in mind. However, occasionally, people lose their ability to differentiate which experiences are theirs and which belong to those they represent. SCA partitioners believe this can happen because of excessive interpretation, great similitude, or fate. As a result, the representative might experience a deep sense of healing regarding their trauma. However, this is usually looked down upon, as the focus of the constellation should be on the client. Kersti has been in this position, which she described by saying:

“The facilitator must see where your matters intervene with the process. I have had a few moments like that. I think it was a story related to addiction where I felt awful, as everything was turned inside out. Then [the facilitator's name] told me, “It is about you; let us take it out.” In other words, the facilitator must realize that you are no longer pure when you go into your processes. Now I feel that when I go out on the field, it comes through experience.” (Kersti, 10.11.2022)

To “take out” what belongs to the representative, the facilitator usually takes an inanimate object, such as a pillow. They then give it to the representative and tell them to load all their personal feelings, matters, or energy inside of that pillow. Sometimes they do it themselves. After a brief minute, the facilitator takes back the pillow with a sharp movement to separate the representative from their personal context. As a result, their representation becomes pure again. Kristel (14.12.2022) said she would tell the representative, *“I tell him, look, I will put it on the place where you sat. I will put it there so you will get your context back when you return later.”* If this does not work, the representative could be exchanged for another. She gave another example to explain role confusion:

“It is perhaps important that I am as pure as possible. I should not bring my self-consciousness into this role because my memories and experiences, which are similar, can be triggered. For example, maybe a representative is randomly selected for a role, and the client has been raped. She chooses the representative without knowing that the representative may also have a history of rape. And when the story unfolds out there, so to speak, the representative's personal experience of rape may come to the fore so strongly that she is unable to continue the representation.” (Kristel, 14.12.2022)

Most people's day-to-day experiences are habitually interpreted with little to no consideration for the necessity of it. According to the laws of Gestalt, which offer an explanation of how we interpret and process complex stimuli around us, for this, we rely on similarity, continuation, closure, proximity, and connectedness (Ash, 1995). This subjectivity does not only apply to the broad context of experiences but also to each sensation we feel. In his book “Phenomenology of Perception,” Merleau-Ponty (1945) pointed out that each sensation is a unit of experience, as elementary perception is always charged with meaning. He elaborated on this thought by saying there is no such thing as pure sensation or impression, characterized by an undifferentiated, instantaneous, dotlike impact, in human experience. From this, one can conclude that pure

representation should not be defined in absolute terms, comprising many small experiences. The notion of sensation distorts any analysis of perception. However, the practitioners of SCA do not seem to be too concerned with this. Instead, the influence of interpretation is judged based on the impact of the representatives' perceived relationships and previous experiences of others.

For the systemic constellation approach, these sensations and perceptions manifest individually due to the interaction between the individual and their collective context. If one takes a representative role, their experiences are independent but not isolated from the others. For example, representative X feels the sensation of cold on the left side of their body. They are the only ones aware of this sensation and able to feel it, and they can communicate it to others only through body language or vocalization. However, the reason for this sense of cold can be that representative Y just entered the field, which provoked a bodily reaction for X. Representative Y might experience something completely different, as their beliefs, past experiences, and current emotional state regarding the event or position in the system could be distinct. Again independent but not isolated. An excellent example of this follows:

“I have had a representative on the field who says “I do not know why, but I keep hearing the word Maria, Maria, Maria.” And then suddenly, the client says, “My God! That is my great-grandmother!” Sound perception, auditory sense.” (Kristel, 14.12.2022)

Here, the representative underwent sound perception. However, no other representative on the field had the same auditory experience. The others might have felt an emotion arise when she expressed it out loud, but not initially, at least not in the same way. Thus, the individual nuances of perception are even more distinct in the knowing field than in day-to-day life, partly because of the particular focus on one's body but also due to consciously experiencing the specific habitus of the represented one, not just simply reacting to the environment. Additionally, the representative described what she heard, but she did not add a relation-based interpretation to it. As Kristel said: *“She did not say that you probably have someone called Maria but that he hears that name. This is pure representation” (14.12.2022).*

To conclude, the bodies of representatives are of paramount importance in the field of Systemic Constellations. Through the pursuit of accurate, pure representation, the participants accumulate knowledge as their bodies transmit and receive information. However, knowledge is acquired and integrated in many different ways.

3.3 Knowledge of oneself and others

Constellations do not lead us to know things in the orthodox way of being rationally convinced. Instead, they encompass a different kind of knowledge. According to John Heron (1992), there are four distinguishable, though interconnected, ways of knowing. First, we have experiential knowledge, which comes from embodied experience. It is felt through physical sensations, symptoms, and emotions and relates to bodily experience. Secondly, presentational knowing concerns our creative and imaginative attempts to represent our experience through different art forms. It connects to intuition and imagination. Thirdly, we have propositional knowing, which relies on our logical-rational brain, the mind, to comprehend, define, theorize, and draw conclusions from our experience. Finally, there is also practical knowing, our ability to take competent and effective action. Its realm is that of 'doing.' Constellations encompass all these realms; however, the focus is on experiential knowledge.

3.3.1 Realizations Through Observation

SCA has much in common with creative storytelling, which relates mainly to presentational and propositional knowing. Sharing narratives is a tool for processing information, which can help us understand the stories through which we consciously and unconsciously shape our identity. It offers us a point of reflection. As a result, we can witness and evaluate our cognitive, emotional, and behavioural processes, leading to greater self-awareness. Consequently, it can liberate us from narratives that constrain or bind us with harmful and dysfunctional patterns. Seeing others' stories unfold on the Knowing Field allows us to relate, evaluate, and 're-story' our lives to improve their quality.

"It works like therapy. People go to represent because if you see someone else's story, it can affect you too. Maybe you, too, have had a similar experience, and now seeing this story will help you to heal as well." (Karin, 17.11.2022)

Stories can take on many forms amongst those gathered at the SCA workshop as they integrate what they see and hear with their backgrounds, knowledge, and experience. Through seeing the stories of others, meaning-making can develop beyond the original narrative and is re-constructed in the observants' bodies, minds, and reactions. In this context, standing in as a representative is unnecessary, as one sees a different picture by merely being the spectator. Many interviewees said

that, as an on-looker, one could see the broader picture, unlike representing, where one embodies a specific person limited by their perception. Piret L. described it as follows:

"The look of a bystander is something else entirely. We see a complete overview of the system, a family, a relationship, or a collective. We get an outsider's view, and it is often sobering. It gives us a new perspective, a starting point." (Piret L., 17.11.2022)

As the Observants recognize familiar patterns in the stories of others, they might also acquire a sense of belonging. We learn about the universality of human nature and the uniqueness of the individual. Moreover, we can draw comfort from realizing that many have faced similar battles before us. Thus we are not alone in our struggles. Hearing others' stories and seeing connections helps us recognize that humans are more alike than different.

"In the end, we as people are all quite similar, and our stories are similar, especially if we are of Estonian background. Our cultural background is the same, and so are our experiences across generations. There is a lot of such recognition, and thus perhaps you can find... well, how to say... peace for yourself through these workshops." (Kristel, 14.12.2022)

Kelli told a story about healing her relationship with her father through being a representative, which related to absence and alcoholism. It will be covered in detail in chapter 3.2, relating to healing through representation. However, as the process was developing towards its conclusion, she said, "All 50 people who were present were crying. It is because so many of us have such a similar story" (Kelli, 08.11.2022). The basis for this shared experience is likely transgenerational trauma, the transmission of a historical event's oppressive or traumatic effects. For this constellation, the people present did not have to represent to experience healing or emotional release. When the author asked Kristel about the most common generational traumas in the Estonian constellation scene, she said:

"Definitely World War II and deportation. The deportation comes out in 40-50% of constellations. Every other story has its roots in the World Wars. Mostly the Second World War and deportations because generational traumas are more active for somewhere between 3-4 generations, and then they begin to dissipate, to dissolve, so to speak. Maybe that is why the German school of thought works with 3-4 generations, mostly the second and third, but sometimes with the fourth, as traumas do not affect us much after that. But since we

Estonians, in general, have had a difficult time here for the last few hundred years, where we have mostly been oppressed, this may affect the self-awareness of our nation as a whole. It is reflected in small families and their cells. The topic of self-esteem is quite difficult for all of us, that is, rather low, and we are currently very strongly on the path of proving ourselves for the last 2-3 generations. We prove that we are worth anything as a nation and prove it primarily to Europe."

3.3.2 Realizations Through Representation

The knowledge acquired through representation differs from the knowledge you gain as an observant. Intentional and focused emplacement is mostly of physical matter. However, observing relates more to presentational and propositional knowledge. Both parties can experience strong emotions and feelings throughout the workshop. Alternatively, those of the observer are usually associated with themselves, while those of the representative are believed to be of the one they are standing in for. This differentiation brings many dissimilarities.

"Usually, many people who have been on the field say that it is also a profound experience for them, which either grows them as a person or matures them into higher awareness. By entering into other people's lives for a while and then leaving again, you can create many parallels with your own life and human existence in general. I can say from my experience that it has changed me a lot. Awareness comes quicker than anywhere else. If I just read some memoirs, it does not come to me as quickly as if I represent someone in a story, and suddenly the whole story of that generation or that family unfolds." (Kristel, 14.12.2022)

Experiential knowledge brings relatability to another level, as empathy and self-reflection accompany the embodied experience. As written by Xunzi (2014): *"Tell me, and I forget, Teach me, and I remember, Involve me, and I will learn."* Representative perception offers a way to acquire knowledge, develop skills, and clarify values. One can learn what it is like to be in a situation they have never been in and might never experience in their day-to-day life, such as the feeling of representing the opposite sex or something peculiar to them. Further, these feelings can be unusual or unexpected by their nature. Two examples of this could be:

"We had a man who said he had to represent someone somewhere who could not retain their breast milk. He felt his breasts swell, and the milk began to leak. Look, I am a woman

myself. I know what it is like, but it can be a very eye-opening feeling to experience for a man." (Piret R., 08.11.2022)

"I got into the role of Kadri's grandfather. I remember so well what it means to represent a man, the experience of a man's world, his position, his responsibility, when he has a family, and when he has life experience. I got a huge aha moment from it. How could such a big man fit into my fragile body?" (Piret L., 17.11.2022)

Additionally, one can develop different skills, such as emotional intelligence and empathy. According to Halpern (2001, p 85), empathy is a type of reasoning in which "...a person emotionally resonates with the experience of another while simultaneously attempting to view a situation from their standpoint imaginatively." However, in SCA, it is believed that through representative perception, the representative can experience the feeling of the one they are standing in for. It is not considered imaginative or cognitive but intuitive and true to life. Both empathy and representation can be felt physically, but one is believed to be an assumption, while the other is seen as an accurate representation of reality. However, despite their differences, as a result of tuning into other people's emotional lives, one can nevertheless learn to be better at it, even in situations where representative perception is not used. The methods representatives use to determine the origin of the feeling are elaborated in the chapter "Detaching from oneself."

Kelli had a story, an excellent example of how one can experience healing as a representative. The extent of healing and emotional release in this story happened because, as a representative, Kelli saw some powerful parallels with her life. This does not usually happen as intensely as it did for her. However, it is still an interesting case to see. She described her experience as follows:

"I felt abandoned by my father. He died last year, but all my life, I have wanted to connect with him. I saw very little of him as a child because he did not like responsibilities. I have been seeking his attention, but I am still waiting to receive it. This is something that a child needs, so it has left its mark in the subconscious, and I felt as if I was always missing something. You then look for what you did not get from your father in your loved ones. I have been dealing with this topic for years, and there has been some improvement, but I have not reached the bottom of it.

I thought at first that I would like to have a constellation on the feeling that I am not enough. But I also felt that it was not enough of a topic to go with. Most of us have had this experience from childhood that we have not always received love from our parents in the way we needed it. I did not get the constellation as a client on the first or the second day of the retreat. On the third day, we also did a meditation, which led me to better understand my father's past and his experiences; the loss of his brother in the war and the loss of his daughter during childbirth had a substantial impact on him as a young man.

The next day a woman got a chance to have her constellation as a client and chose me as her representative. I am grateful for this because somehow... well, if I represent, my body starts to work really well as I am at the client's service. I think, in retrospect, that as a client, if it had been my constellation, I would not have had such profound experiences. Because, well, as a client, you are watching, but on the field, the changes happen on the level of the soul. The client was conflicted with my feelings and her own because she recognized the story unfolding on the field, but her feelings were not as deep. She was confused as to why she did not feel as strongly. As a client, it is hard to let go of everything. You do different therapies, but you do not get that deep. I am very grateful for this experience. Even though I was a representative, it was actually my story. The story of an absent father who drinks is every other person's story because we are influenced by the background of the era and country we were born in.

The father figure looked down. The facilitator [name removed for privacy] put someone there because he must have been looking at something. At first, there was one person, but the facilitator felt the need to add another. And then, at that moment, I saw the connection to my own story. I realized that one of the representatives on the ground was the brother, and the other was the man's daughter. Usually, there is either a secret, a trauma, or a dead person when a representative is looking down. Then it clicked. It was my father's story.

The representative did not look at me, his daughter. The facilitator told me to say, "Father, look at me. I am alive. Look at me!" Otherwise, I am not very vocal, but I just let it all out. I started to say it more and more intensely. For a moment, he looked and saw me, this father's representative, and then we started moving toward each other. And then I just cried. It was so deep. I have never felt an emotion this intense. Then the facilitator came and tapped me on the shoulder. She whispered, "I know it is your story, but let the client experience the

feeling as well." It was such a big deal to me that she recognized it was my story, as she knew nothing about me." (Kelli 08.11.2022)

Here one can see that the stories of the clients and the representatives can be of great similitude. However, in this case, the experience was more intense for the representative, as she related the extent of her emotional involvement to being “in” the story rather than outside of it. She acquired experiential knowledge, which comes from embodied experience. On the field, her personal relations intertwined with the client's system. One might wonder whether it could have been her system that was represented altogether, but she explained that the other relations on the field, for example, with the mother, were not typical of her system. Nevertheless, she got to experience remarkable discoveries and an emotional release, which led her to heal and find closure. Moreover, she got to go through the whole experience, from not being recognized by her father to eventually being held and seen. Being there physically and mentally, in every moment. The client, however, only entered the field at a later stage; hence, until this point, she had mostly followed the workshop by comprehending, defining, theorizing, and drawing conclusions from what she saw. For her, bodily experiences were likely secondary at first. Of course, seeing the story unfold can also provoke emotional involvement, which might lead to healing. However, in this case, the representative had the chance to experience it all, while the client expressed that she did not feel as deeply as her representative.

3.3.3 Vocalizing Emotions

Emotional vocabulary and the capacity to identify with the emotions of others directly influence the experience of being a representative. According to Ellen (1977), people have different lexical labels to affix to physical sensations provided by culture. These labels could affect how the representatives vocalize their experience, how others perceive and react to them, how the story unfolds, and eventually, what the result will look like for everyone in the workshop, including the client. The societal and cultural influence on vocalizing our bodily sensations can be seen in this example:

"The representative may find it difficult to describe the emotions he is experiencing. For example, if he is not used to using emotional vocabulary at all. Especially men. We do not specify emotional nuances in our cultural context. If, for example, a man is a representative and you ask, "How do you feel?" he might say, "Bad." That is it. If you ask what it means for you to feel bad, he can say, "Well, I do not know. It is hard for me to stand here." What it

means, more precisely, he cannot say because he has no vocabulary. It is not active for him as a representative, as a person. He can get stuck there." (Kristel, 14.12.2022)

However, the lack of emotional vocabulary can also be seen as a positive characteristic, mainly because it keeps the representative from delving into unnecessary details when describing their experience. When the representative relies on limited emotional vocabulary, it is easier for the facilitator to notice any interpretation or hypotheses they might add to their explanation. Thus, when being asked, they get straight to the essence of their current representative state. Referring to Herons' (1992) four ways of knowing, one could say that as a representative, you are expected to express your experiential rather than propositional knowledge.

Not only does the emotional vocabulary influence the process and outcome of a workshop, but vice versa. Meaning that the experience of representative perception can also improve the ability to experience, describe, and name different physical sensations and perceptions. As a result, the representative can achieve a better contact with their physical and conceptual self. Considering emotions as affects, ideas, and evaluative judgments, as Lutz and White proposed (1986), we can conclude that from learning more about these mental and physical expressions through embodiment, one will also learn about themselves, shaping their identity and self-concept.

The influence of the representatives' emotional spectrum on the workshop mostly depends on their role in the story. In some instances, there could be over ten people on the field, especially if the trauma or patterns go back for many generations. However, this does not necessarily mean that everyone is equally important from the point of view of the problem. To illustrate the importance of roles, the author will provide a short example from a constellation from the spring of 2022. It is written with consent, yet anonymously.

The client in question had problems with feeling loved. Despite having good relations with their spouse and parents, they always felt that love could not reach them. During the constellation, it turned out that the client's great-grandfather had been traumatized by being forced to participate in war. He had to kill people he knew, young men barely in their twenties. The horrors of warfare wounded him deeply. After it was over, he began to drink to numb his pain. As a result, he was emotionally unavailable and could not provide his children the love they ought. Consequently, his son, who did not know much about his father's emotional state, felt this as an absence of love. It

scarred him emotionally; he started drinking, following in his father's footsteps. The same pattern continued with the men in all the following generations until today.

In this workshop, the generations affected after the great-grandfather were the result, not the cause. First, the pain and suffering of the great-grandfather needed recognition for the flow of love to be re-established. Second, the men he had killed had to be given a place in the system for it to follow the first basic order, "The same right." Even though the representatives of the father and grandfather were necessary to shed light on the pattern and to heal it, their representatives were not asked about their experiences as much as the representatives of the client and their great-grandfather. Additionally, the mother's representative was only questioned in the beginning when determining the root of the problem and became completely irrelevant later on. She did stay in the role during most of the constellation yet was released from the part when it was clear that she did not have much to contribute to solving the issue.

"Often, even those who are not as crucial in the story also want to express themselves because the experience of being a representative is intense. For example, when someone said something, he immediately started sweating. He might want to tell the group, but maybe he has just a minor role. He also goes through everything, being the representative of the soul as whom he was put there, and he has his own experiences and his history, but it may not resonate at all with the topic that is out there. " (Kelli, 08.11.2022)

Many interviewees also believe, *"There is no such thing as choosing the wrong substitutes. Exactly those who must come will come"* (Karin, 17.11.2022). The idea is that there are no coincidences for those who are chosen to represent someone (discussed in depth in chapter "4.1.1 Fate"). Suppose the person selected to be a representative has specific characteristics, such as a finite emotional vocabulary. In that case, that limitation itself carries information about the field and the person being represented. In this case, the person who is being represented might have a similar emotional spectrum. Piret L. called this a principle of similarity. She said:

"When you start looking for someone, you look energetically. After the representative has been set on the field, you can see some physical principles of similarity. Second, there is definitely an emotional similarity. We can sit on the chair and say this is not my story, but when a person chooses you, some parts of us must resonate." (Piret L., 17.11.2022)

Imbre would probably agree with her, as he said, that:

"Whenever I participate as a client, I always look around, look at people. I know that I have to choose someone and I know what my topic is about... And there is something interesting that happens. I am looking for that kind of energy, whether in his appearance, manner of speaking, or even the way he moves, that his stance would remind me of the person I want him to represent. It is energetic similarity." (Imbre, 27.10.2022)

Imbres' reference to "something interesting happening" was a common theme when asked about the reasons for choosing representatives. Some defined it as a gut feeling or a click, while others preferred the term intuition. The process of it happening was described by Elen, who stated:

"I think people choose by gut feeling. When you go and pass by these people [participants], I think you should develop a kind of... obviously, you should have eye contact. You cannot choose someone who does not look at you or give you any attention. Then they do not really want to come there [on the field]. But you experience this click that the person seems to fit." (Elen, 22.10.2022)

However, sometimes the choice is limited by options, which Tiia described as follows:

"Look, it also depends on how big your choice is because sometimes there are only a few people, and then you do not have a very great opportunity to choose. Sometimes, the facilitator simply puts down a pillow to represent something if there are not enough people." (Tiia, 18.10.2022)

Kristel also gave an example of how the choice of representatives can carry valuable information.

"Partly, what I have noticed, people also choose based on external resemblance, but sometimes it is the other way around. For example, a man says he wants to work with his father, and although there are also men among the participants, he chooses women to represent him and his father. If you ask him why you chose women and not men, he says, "I do not know, it felt like this." (Kristel, 14.12.2022)

When asked does this choice carry meaning, she replied:

"A little, yes, because if someone very strongly chooses only women for all male roles, there is probably some issue with accepting men, and on the contrary, if men choose only men for female roles, then there is also an issue. But it will remain hypothetical initially, and you can check whether it is true during the constellation. Of course, there is one small peculiarity here: usually, the proportion of male-female participants is one to ten; that is, there are always fewer men in such self-development groups. This means that automatically we have a male drought, and we cannot always cast men in male roles. But it is recommended that it should be done if it is possible to choose men for male roles." (Kristel, 14.12.2022)

As seen from these examples, constellations encompass different knowledge as practitioners form personal, emotional connections to the subject matter, be it through observation, representation, or through vocalizing emotions. The involvement accompanying SCA workshops encourages engagement, offers meaning, and provides insight and perspectives that people might not have been able to access otherwise. Hearing, seeing, or undergoing the experiences of others can help people to understand complex concepts and ideas about the human psyche, emotional and relational life that might otherwise have been difficult to grasp. Participants can acquire experiential knowledge from embodied experience as a representative, undergoing physical sensations, symptoms, and emotions related to bodily experience. They get presentational knowledge as they learn to trust their intuition regarding what to express and how to do so, improving their ability to manage different physical sensations and perceptions. Propositional knowledge comes into play as they use their logical-rational brain from the perspective of an observer, enabling them to comprehend and analyze the complex interconnectedness of human behavior, thought, and social nature. Finally, there is also practical knowledge, as the hardships of others become valuable experiences through which they learn how to take competent and effective action to better their own lives. These experiences are embedded as knowledge, shaping how SCA participants relate to themselves and the world around them.

3.4 Emotional Freedom

For many representatives, one of the major reasons for participating in a constellation workshop is emotional freedom. But what does it mean to be emotionally free, and who or what imposed those limitations, to begin with? As discussed in the theoretical outline, emotions are "*Complex patterns of physiological reactions, subjective feelings, expressive behaviours, and cognitions that are associated with social interactions and cultural meanings*" (Lutz & White, 1986, p. 404). This definition highlights the phenomenon's intricacy and encompasses the environment's role in shaping emotional experience and expression. According to the cultural approach, emotions are constructed and normatively regulated through different practices and social norms (ibid). While norms specify which emotions are suitable for particular situations or individuals, practices offer a framework for emotional expression and regulation. Here one can see how the environment could pose limitations on one's emotional freedom, shaping the way how individuals understand themselves and others, as well as their relationships with others. This chapter will illustrate how SCA can help one to move past those constraints and, as a result, discover new parts of their identity.

3.4.1 Allowing to Feel and Look

For the interviewees, one reason to participate in a constellation workshop is the freedom to feel the entirety of the emotional spectrum without experiencing social judgment. They do not feel the need to obey the societal norms which categorize emotions and feelings as "positive" or "negative," often encouraging them to suppress the latter, which leads to selective emotional numbing. For some people, this emotion is sadness; for others, it could be anger, shame, grief, or all. Another reason for distancing oneself from experiencing the full spectrum could be the subconscious or conscious decision to avoid the pain of traumatic experiences. All emotions can and are expected to be expressed in the knowing field. Of course, some guidelines remain to follow, such as not hurting anyone mentally or physically. Regardless, the space is held by the facilitator and the rest of the group for whatever emotions or feelings come to light as the representative serves the field. Kristel described it as follows:

"I believe the whole palette of feelings exists inside people. The fact that we have not experienced it, that we have it much narrower or less intense, does not mean we cannot experience the whole palette. My life experience, childhood experience, trauma, or the environment I grew up in have not enabled me to allow myself the whole palette. Through the constellation, some people are a little addicted to this method because they can allow

themselves to experience many emotional colors they do not experience in their lives.”
(Kristel, 14.12.2022)

Holding space refers to the practice of being physically, mentally, and emotionally present for someone. Being empathic to another person’s situation or circumstance and making time for that individual to do whatever is needed. It also requires the space holder to communicate in a supportive and non-judgmental way. In SCA, the facilitator holds space for the client, as they usually go through the most extensive emotional process. However, the room is also held for the representatives who go out on the knowing field to express the information of those they represent, often in the form of feelings and emotions. When Piret L. was asked what it means to hold space, she replied:

“That if you enter the room where the workshop is going to take place, there will be a positive atmosphere so that change can happen. The facilitator is open, and people are open. And whether privacy is kept. Does the facilitator take a moment to say that everything in this room is private? We do not talk about names. We do not talk about situations. I also observe whether the facilitator finishes their work and allows the person to be.” (Piret L., 17.11.2022)

Evidently, in a constellation workshop, confidentiality is also essential for the space to be held, both for the client and the representatives. Firstly, it carries the utmost importance for the clients, as they share very intimate, personal stories and struggles as one would typically do in a therapeutic context. Secondly, it is also important for the representatives because knowing everything said and done will stay in the workshop helps them ease into the representation, as societal judgment is taken from the equation. As Tiia said:

“You have to be very open to feel all these feelings, allow all these feelings. You should not block them, saying, oh my God, I do not feel this, as if it is a shame or something.” (Tiia, 18.10.2022)

Karin added to this thought by saying:

“Perhaps bystanders may have a strange impression, but when you are there in the process, you do not think about, oh, I am going to cry or... These feelings just come, and you know this room is so well held that you can do it there.” (Karin, 17.11.2022)

The freedom to feel the entirety of the emotional spectrum in a constellation workshop is accompanied by the liberty to see how others experience them. In their day-to-day lives, people are more occupied with carrying out different behaviours, such as working out, eating, solving a problem at work, or interacting with others, than they are with feelings. These acts, actions, and practices take up most of people's days. Even though they are sometimes accompanied by emotions and sensations, such as cold or dizziness, frustration, or gratefulness, these affects often occupy the passenger seat. They are seen as secondary or complementary to the activity or circumstance at hand, which is often what they derive from. As a result, they frequently end up getting little to no attention. Emotional states are usually recognized, but if they impede the activity, the way to cope is to push them aside. As a result, people might not notice too many emotional expressions in their daily lives because the focus is set on the activity.

"People go there with serious concerns. And, in general, you do not really see true emotions anywhere nowadays. During a constellation workshop, it is all genuine and honest, coming from people's hearts. Otherwise, you can read about some things somewhere, and that is all, but the fact that you see everything from the side is different." (Elen, 22.10.2022)

Further, in addition to suppressing emotions based on categorization, the expression of feelings is also regulated based on their intensity. Expectations from others influence the behaviour of people. One might avoid a potent or explosive feeling simply because it is socially unacceptable. When a person experiences strong emotional reactions, others might feel uneasy, especially if the person going through it is not in a close relationship with the other. This sense of discomfort could result from many things. For example, some people do not know how to act, while others do not want to be bothered. On the other hand, if the person going through a strong emotional reaction is someone the other person is close with, they might get very involved, be it emotionally or mentally. In both cases, there is usually a sense of responsibility to help the struggling person. However, in a constellation workshop, this responsibility is eliminated.

“You can also see a person crying somewhere else, but if you see it by chance, it makes you cringe. You feel awkward and do not know what to do if you have to react somehow or not. It

is rather unpleasant. But when you look at it there [in a workshop], it is a little... a little different. This is how it is meant to be, and it feels right. It does not give you the faintest feeling that you have stuck your nose into someone else's life." (Elen, 22.10.2022)

3.4.2 Detaching from Oneself

As the last chapter elucidated, the emotional freedom experienced in a constellation workshop partially results from the facilitator's work, as they hold space for the representatives and the client. However, another determinant in experiencing emotional freedom is the representatives' differentiation regarding the origin of the emotions they encounter on the field. The feelings are attributed to the ones they represent. Many see their body as a vessel or a medium used to bring forth information. Kristel explained this experience as follows:

"It is safe to allow yourself to feel, especially when your experience has denied feelings. There I can allow the whole palette. It is safe to feel because the feelings are not mine but belong to the one I represent. I do not feel my feelings; I feel their feelings. I can allow myself to unleash this emotional side of myself, and it is quite a pleasure (translation: kaif), a great feeling." (Kristel, 14.12.2022)

In the field, the representatives detach from themselves to gain access to the whole emotional spectrum, even the parts they would typically deny. This process of detaching is usually done as the client gives the representatives the role. The process itself has multiple steps. First, the facilitator decides who will be placed on the field. Then the client will find a person from the participants suitable to represent this individual from their system. They walk to them and ask whether they would be okay with being a representative. If the answer is positive, the client and the chosen participant will hold hands and look into each other's eyes as the client says, "You are now the representative of X," with X standing for the name or role, e.g., grandfather, of the person being represented. It is believed that through eye contact, the client transfers the energy of the one being represented onto the chosen participant, who becomes the representative.

Though most people maintain a sense of self, the extent of it differs. Some people, like Imbre, feel as they would in any other situation. He described the experience as follows:

"I feel like myself on the field. I do not feel anything foreign. Everything I say, everything I do, comes from me. I am not making this up. This is the feeling of what I want to say at the moment or the thought. It does not come from somewhere else. That is my point... For me, it is like I do not think at all. I am just very open. I look at this person, and then I get a feeling of what I think about him in this situation. But it comes from me, just as I am talking to you right now, the same way. I just look, I talk. I do not feel like a bystander." (Imbre, 27.10.2022)

However, for others, it could feel like they lose all sense of personal identity. Kersti (10.11.2022) described it as *"I am that representative. In other words, his energy is what I perceive and experience and see. Maybe the body is mine, but everything else that comes from it is his."* Piret R. would probably agree, as she said, *"You are the representative. You have to put yourself aside completely"* (08.11.2022). However, Kristel contradicts this opinion by saying that one does not usually go into a trance during the process of representation.

"Kristel exists. It is not like I will completely disappear as Kristel. I do not lose my sense of identity. It will not happen. I will not go into a trance. I have had a few cases of representation where I almost go into a trance in a sense, but there is still a place for me. The control is in my hands, as Kristel, as the representative. I can snap out of that role at any moment. I am aware of myself. It is not quite a hypnotic state where I lose consciousness, and I do not know what I am doing out there" (Kristel, 14.12.2022)

The process of detaching from oneself, to the extent determined by the participant, is an intentional act, often done with the aim of achieving pure representation. However, as a result of distancing themselves from their personal background, with their attention adamantly on the experience, participants surrender the self-control that accompanies them in their day-to-day life. They do not have to regulate their choices and responses to different situations nor consider what is acceptable. Instead, they are expected to be fully present, to feel each and every bodily experience, every sensation. And so they do, at the service of the field, to heal and be healed.

Discussion and Conclusions: Identity as a Process

The aim of this research was to offer a deeper understanding of how the experience of being a representative in the context of the Systemic Constellation Approach is perceived and how it influences the participants. To reach this aim, the objectives of this study were to determine why do people participate in constellation workshops as representatives and how do they attribute meaning to their embodied experience. This chapter outlines the researcher's findings by offering an overview of the empirical knowledge surrounding the experience of representation held by nine interviewees with a personal relation to the subject matter. The phenomenological approach implemented to study the topic at hand helped to understand what it means to undergo representative perception and how the research participants make sense or awareness of their subjective embodied experience.

The outcomes of this study are ultimately based on the researcher's subjective filter through which distinct patterns emerged in correspondence to her knowledge, whilst others were overlooked and may form the foundation of future research. As all truth is mediated and all knowledge is positioned, this thesis does not make a claim for truth but rather showcases the result of an interaction between the interviewer and the interviewees, interpreted by the researcher. Reading, experiencing, and relating to this thesis, it is important to keep in mind that through conducting an interview, the reality is provoked, as the questions and topics that arise might not have if it were not for the interview. Though the interview was semi-structured and allowed exploring, further elaboration, and clarification, the data collection method still partly determined the end results as the researcher undeniably gave a notional structure to the research.

Furthermore, the people chosen for the interviews also had a remarkable influence on the end result, as over half of the interviewees were studying the method in a professional setting in the pursuit of becoming a facilitator. Thus, it was seen that their interpretation of the Systemic Constellation Approach had a degree of likeness, as their answers had more implications of the theoretical framework established by Hellinger than of those who had not studied the method. However, as many people who actively participate in the workshops in Estonia today are indeed constellation students, the selection of participants is nevertheless accurate as it corresponds to the reality of the distribution of participants in these settings.

The main body of the thesis is divided into four chapters. The first chapter, “4.1 To Serve the Client, their System, and the Knowing Field,” explored the question of “Why?”. Many interviewees explained that they do it for the collective benefit of the group or society, which could be seen as an expression of one's values. Additionally, some mentioned that they find the bodily experience thrilling or empowering, while others saw it as a way to learn about themselves and others. The subchapter “4.1.1 Fate” explored this question even further as it investigated how the belief of predetermination is coherent with receptivity, which supports the representatives' growth and healing. The second subchapter, “4.1.2 The Movement of the Soul,” examined how the process of healing has been explained and conceptualized amongst the practitioners of SCA through the movement of the soul, which essentially refers to the depth of the changes happening within the participants, be it conscious or subconscious.

The second chapter, “Bodily Experiences,” contextualizes physical experience and embodiment in the knowing field, to better understand how representative perception is experienced. Firstly, the research offered a framework to better understand the different relations between the individual, the system, and the act of representing by relating SCA to Pierre Bourdieu's theory of the habitus and the field. Secondly, it explains how SCA reproduces and contradicts the mind-body duality, as the representatives simultaneously stress the interconnectedness of existence while setting bodily experiences above others, such as analytical, logical, or rational thinking. Thirdly, the chapter encompasses how representatives aim to distance themselves from their minds to achieve pure representation, referring to the objective position in which one's own matters do not interfere with the constellation process.

The third chapter, “Knowledge of oneself and others,” goes more in-depth with meaning-making, as it explores how representatives acquire knowledge through forming personal and emotional connections to the subject matter and focusing on their bodies. They do so through observation, representation, and vocalizing their emotions. Realizations through observation usually happen as participants recognize similarities between the story of the client and the situation they are in without being chosen to represent anyone. This is believed to occur on the basis of collective trauma, as most people in a constellation workshop share their cultural background and history. Additionally, the position of an observer allows one to monitor the situation from the sidelines, which enables one to get a better overview of it. As a representative, one could be so focused on their own role, the relations, and emotions that accompany it, that they do not notice what is happening between other agents in the field. On the other hand, experiential knowledge acquired

through representation brings relatability to another level, as it is supported by embodied experience. Finally, this chapter highlighted the importance and role of emotional intelligence, as vocalizing emotions is integral to the role of a representative. Here, it was discussed how the emotional spectrum of the person chosen for a role could influence the workshop and vice versa. It is believed that there are no coincidences in choosing representatives. The belief of fate supports whichever choice is made.

Lastly, the fourth chapter, “Emotional Freedom,” illustrates how SCA can help people experience the freedom to feel the entirety of the emotional spectrum, accompanied by the liberty to see how others experience it. This sense of liberation and autonomy is supported by the space being held, referring to a safe, guided, non-judgmental environment and the process of detaching from oneself through representation. As the representatives attribute the origin of the emotions they encounter on the field to the one they are standing in for, they feel a sense of separation from themselves. Being free from all the limitations and restrictions they have imposed on themselves and deliberately setting their focus on the body, they experience a variety of emotions they might not have allowed or noticed in their daily life.

Identity is an ongoing process that forms in relation to and with others and ourselves. It continues for as long as one is acknowledged and from the moment one’s existence is recognized. According to the interviews that were held as a part of this thesis, the Systemic Constellation Approach first gives the representatives a sense of purpose as they serve the client, the system, and the field. Secondly, it presents a safe environment in which one can cultivate and expand their bodily awareness through physical, emotional experiences. Thirdly, it supports the development of naturalistic, inter-, and intrapersonal intelligence, as people learn from experiencing the habitus of another. Lastly, on the knowing field, representatives expand their bodily awareness by undergoing various intense and surreal emotional experiences. This complex venture can surely challenge, shape and modify one’s view of the world and of themselves.

Two fascinating motifs unfolded during the development of this study, in addition to embodiment, emotions, knowledge, and identity. One of them could relate the Symbolic Constellation Approach to ritual healing. All parties of the workshop, whether active agents on the field or not, can experience relief for their physical, mental, or emotional problems. This was most eminently seen for the clients, as their role included activities such as using healing sentences, asking for forgiveness from the ancestors, taking their rightful place in the system, and more. The other theme

unveiled during this study relates to symbolism, as the practice strongly relies upon the facilitators' interpretation of the representatives' emplacement. Every sensation or movement carries an underlying meaning, which the facilitator must decipher to guide the client toward the desired outcome.

In addition to the ideas mentioned above, due to the volume and focus of this thesis, the client's experience and the facilitator's role were not covered in this research and thus remain to be discussed in future studies. Furthermore, more comprehensive ethnographic fieldwork emphasizing participant observation could offer a deeper perspective on SCA. The method presents vast unstudied territory in the academic field and has not been investigated extensively. For example, one could look into how the personal background of Bert Hellinger manifests in the theoretical foundation of SCA. Furthermore, an interdisciplinary approach could also offer a deeper understanding of the practice. As the popularity of this complex phenomenon is growing rapidly in the therapeutic field of Estonia, more scientific regard could be of interest and benefit to the community of constellation practitioners, therapists, anthropologists, and more.

Resüme

Käesolev bakalaureusetöö kannab nime „Kehastatud Esindamiskogemus Konstellaatsiooniväljal” ning selle eesmärgiks oli uurida, milline on süsteemse konstellaatsiooni meetodi raames kogetu mõju esindajale. Töö ajendeid oli kaks: esmalt konstellaatsioonimeetodi populaarsuse kiire kasv viimase paari aasta jooksul, mis peegeldub näiteks meetodi meediakajastuses; ning teiseks puudusid temaatilised uuringud nii Eesti teadus- kui ka teraapiamaastikul. Selleks, et bakalaureusetöö eesmärki saavutada püstitati üks peamine uurimisküsimus ning kas toetavat lisaküsimust:

1. Kuidas mõjutab esindamiskogemus konstellaatsioonis osalejaid?

1.1 Miks osaletakse konstellaatsiooni töötubades?

1.2 Kuidas omistatakse tähendust enda (taju)kogemustele konstellaatsiooniväljal?

Lisaks uuriti meetodit ning selle teoreetilist vundamenti ja ajalugu avavat kirjandust; tutvuti varasemate konstellaatsioonivälja ning esindamiskogemuse kohta tehtud uuringutega; ning anti ülevaade teaduskirjandusest emotsioonide, kehastuse (tõlge: embodiment) ja paigutuse (tõlge: emplacement) kohta. Samuti viis autor läbi osalusvaatluse ning üheksa intervjuud, neist kaheksa esindajate ning ühe konstellaatoriga. Välitöö ja arutelude käigus kogutud materjale analüüsitakse peatükis „How representative perception shapes one’s identity” ehk „Kuidas representatsioonikogemus kujundab isiku identiteeti”, kus käsitletakse esindamiskogemust läbi erinevate tahkude. Nendeks on: süsteemi, kliendi ning välja teenimine; kehalised kogemused; teadmised endast ja teistest; ning emotsionaalne vabadus. Viimakse võetakse tulemused kokku peatükis „Discussion and conclusions: Identity as a process” ehk „Arutelu ja järeldused: Identiteet kui protsess.”

Kokkuvõttes võib uurimuse põhjal järeldada, et konstellaatsiooniväljal esindajaks olemise kogemus kujundab inimese identiteeti, pakkudes turvalist ruumi emotsionaalse vabaduse kogemiseks ning võimalust omandada teadmisi läbi kogemise. Samuti õpetab antud meetod, kuidas märgata rohekm enda tundeid ja emotsioone ning saavutada seeläbi parem kontakt enda füüsilise kehaga. Antud kogemusega kaasnevad sageli uued teadmised ning suurem teadlikkus, olgu see siis enese, teiste, suhete või keskkonna osas. Lisaks osalesid informandid töötubades filantroopsetel põhjustel. Enamus intervjuueeritavatest nõustusid, et meetod on muutnud nende vaadet nii iseendale kui elule.

Süsteemseid konstellatsioone on akadeemilises valdkonnas uuritud pigem vähe, mistõttu pakub antud meetod mitmeid potentsiaalseid uurimisvõimalusi. Näiteks oli käesolevas töös seatud fookus esindajatele, kuid uurida saaks ka konstelloori rolli ning kliendi kogemust. Esimesel puhul oleks võimalik terapeudi tööd vaadelda sümbolilise antropoloogia lähtepunktist, kuna konstellooridel on oluline roll erinevate kehaliste aistingute, emotsioonide, aga ka esindajate positsioneeringu tõlgendamisel. Klientide kogemusi oleks võimalik vaadelda ja kõrvutada rituaalse tervenemisega. Ka meetod ise pakub hulgaliselt võimalusi tulevasteks uuringuteks. Näiteks oleks eventuaalne analüüsida Bert Hellingeri isikliku tausta peegeldumist antud meetodi teoreetilises raamistikus. Töö mahust tulenevalt oli võrdlemisi väike ka osalusvaatluse osakaal. Mahukam etnograafiline välitöö võimaldaks esindamiskogemuse sügavamalt mõistmist. Kasulikuks võiks osutada ka interdistsiplinaarne lähenemine.

References

- Ash, M. G. (1995). *Gestalt psychology in German culture, 1890–1967: Holism and the quest for objectivity*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Bernard, H. R. (2006). *Research Methods in Anthropology. Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches*. Lanham: Altamira Press.
- Bourdieu, P. (1977). *Outline of a Theory of Practice* (Vol. 16). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Bourdieu, P. (1984). *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgment of Taste*. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul
- Cohen, D. B. (2006). Family constellations: An innovative systemic phenomenological group process from Germany. *The Family Journal*, 14(3), 226–233.
- Constellations Group. (2013). *Family constellations: Basic principles and ideas*. http://www.theconstellationsgroup.com/articles/basic_principles.html (11.01.2023)
- Csordas, T. J. (1994). *Introduction: The body as representation and being-in-the-world*. In T. J. Csordas (Ed.), *Embodiment and experience: The existential ground of culture and self*, pp. 1-24, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Gieser, T. (2008). Embodiment, emotion, and empathy: A phenomenological approach to apprenticeship learning. *Anthropological Theory*, 8(3), pp 299–318.
- Halpern, J. (2001). *From Detached Concern to Empathy: Humanizing Medical Practice*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Harris, A. (2016). Embodiment. Oxford Bibliographies: 9780199766567–0151.
- Harris, J. (2020). Working in the knowing field. *Therapy today*.
- Heidegger, M. (1993). Building Dwelling Thinking. in D. Krell (ed.) *Heidegger: Basic Writings*, pp. 343-63, London: Routledge.
- Hellinger, B, Weber, G, & Beaumont, H. (2021). *Armastuse Varjatud Sümmeetria. Mis paneb armastuse suhtes voolama*. [(1998). *Love's hidden symmetry. What makes love work in relationships*]. Tallinn: Bunga OÜ.
- Hellinger, B. (2001). *Love's own truths*. Phoenix, AZ: Zeig, Tucker & Theisen.
- Hellinger Schule. (a) The evolution from Familienstellens until today's Original Hellinger® Familienstellen. <https://www.hellinger.com/en/familienstellen/what-is-family-constellation/the-evolution-from-familienstellen/> (11.01.2023)

- Hellinger Schule. (b). 1st Basic Order: The Same Right.
<https://www.hellinger.com/en/familienstellen/basic-orders-of-life/1st-basic-order-the-same-right/> (10.03.2023)
- Hellinger Schule. (c). 2nd Basic Order: Hierarchy.
<https://www.hellinger.com/en/familienstellen/basic-orders-of-life/2nd-basic-order-hierarchy/> (10.03.2023)
- Hellinger Schule. (d). 3rd Basic Order: Balance.
<https://www.hellinger.com/en/familienstellen/basic-orders-of-life/3rd-basic-order-balance/>
- Hellinger Schule. (e). Conscience.
<https://www.hellinger.com/en/familienstellen/basic-orders-of-life/conscience/> (10.03.2023)
- Heron, J. (1992). *Feeling and Personhood: Psychology in Another Key*. London: Sage.
- Lutz, C. A., & White, G. M. (1986). *The anthropology of emotions*. Annual review of anthropology, 15(1), pp 405–436. San Mateo: Annual Reviews
- Lisenaya, A. M., & Liseniy, E. V. (2019). Symbols and images in the modality of systemic family psychotherapy. *Psychological Counseling and Psychotherapy*, (12), pp 6-12.
- Livotov, P. (2007). Integration of method of systemic constellations into moderated educational and problem-solving workshops with TRIZ for technical and non-technical tasks. Paper presented at the TRIZ-Future Conference, Frankfurt/Main, Germany.
- Mayer, C. H., & Viviers, A. (2016). Constellation work principles, resonance phenomena, and shamanism in South Africa. *South African Journal of Psychology*, 46(1), 130-145.
- Merleau-Ponty, M. (1964). *Sense and Non-Sense*. Evanston: Northwestern University Press.
- Peacock, J. (1984). Symbolic and Psychological Anthropology: The Case of Pentecostal Faith Healing. *Ethos*, Spring, 1984, Vol. 12, No. 1 (Spring, 1984), pp. 37-53
- Pink, S. (2009). Principles for sensory ethnography: Perception, place, knowing, memory, and imagination. In *Doing Sensory Ethnography*. California: SAGE Publications Ltd
- Preiss, T. I. (2012). *Family constellations revealed*. Antwerp: Indra Torsten.
- Rosaldo, M. (1984). Toward an Anthropology of Self and Feeling. In R. Shweder and R. LeVine (eds) *Culture Theory: Essays on Mind, Self, and Emotion*, pp. 137–57. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Sax, W., Weinhold, J., & Schweitzer, J. (2010). Ritual Healing East and West: A Comparison of Ritual Healing in the Garhwal Himalayas and “Family Constellation” in Germany. *Journal of Ritual Studies*, 24(1), 61–77.
- Sheldrake R. (2020). *Ways to go beyond and why they work*. London: Coronet.

- Sheldrake, R. (2009). *A New Science of Life: The Hypothesis of Formative Causation*. (3rd Ed.). London: Icon Books.
- Stiefel, I., Harris, P. and Zollmann, A. W. F. (2002). Family Constellation — A Therapy Beyond Words. *Australian and New Zealand Journal of Family Therapy*, 23: 38-44.
- Takacs, E. C. (2016). The embodied experience of The Knowing Field: focus on individual psychotherapy. BA thesis. Dublin: Dublin Business School
- Thalhamer, A. (2003). Shamanism And Family Constellation: Differences and correspondences, illustrated by examples, from the point of view of a practitioner of both methods. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/282323243_SHAMANISM_AND_FAMILY_CONSTELLATION_Differences_and_correspondences_illustrated_by_examples_from_the_point_of_view_of_a_practitioner_of_both_methods (22.04.2023)
- Xunzi X. & Hutton E. L. (2014). *Xunzi: The complete text*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Appendix

Original Interview Questions

1. Kust kuulsid esimest korda konstellatsioonist?
2. Milline oli sinu esmamulje sellest?
3. Mida kujutab endast konstellatsioon? Kuidas näeb välja konstellatsiooni tööprotsess?
4. Miks ja millal pöördusid konstellatsiooni poole?
5. Mis ootused olid sul esimest korda selle *meetodiga* (vastaja sõnastus) kokku puutudes?
6. Kui palju oled konstellatsioonimeetodiga tänaseks kokku puutunud?
7. Kas oled käinud erinevate konstelloöride juures?
8. Mis sa arvad, kuidas konstellatsioon toimib?
9. Kas sinu arvates konstellatsioon aitab inimesi? Kuidas?
10. Mis sa arvad, millised on konstellatsioonimeetodi eelised ja puudused?
11. Kas oled lasknud ka endale konstellatsioonitöö teha?
12. Kas konstellatsioonitöö aitab sind?
 - a) Kuidas see sind aitab?
 - b) Miks sa arvad, et see sind ei aidanud?
13. Mille järgi valisid esindajaid?
14. Kui oled valmis sellest rääkima, siis palun jaga minuga endale tehtud konstellatsioonitöö lugu.
15. Kas võtsid ka ise enda töös mõne esindatava koha? Kirjelda seda kogemust.
16. Millised muutuseid täheldasid peale töö tegemist?
17. Kuidas sa jäid rahule konstellatsioonitööga? Millised emotsioonid ja tunded sind selle järel valdasid?
18. Kui suurt rolli mängib sinu arvates töö kujunemise puhul konstelloör?
19. Millised omadused peaksid sinu arvates konstelloöriil?
20. Kui palju mõjutavad sinu arvates konstelloöri isiklikud kogemused (/isiklik elu) töö kujunemist?
21. Juhul kui oled käinud erinevate konstelloöride juures, siis millised erinevused sulle enim silma hakkasid?
22. Mille põhjal valisid sina konstelloöri kelle juurde minna?
23. Kas oled ka kogenud/kuulnud lugusid olukordadest, kus konstelloör ei ole välja hoidmisega toime tulnud?

24. Mida tähendab sinu jaoks konstellatsioonitöös esindajaks olemine? Kirjelda, kes on esindaja?
25. Selgita, kuidas esindamine tavaliselt välja näeb?
26. Mille järgi esindajaid valitakse?
27. Miks sa läksid esindajaks?
28. Kui palju teadsid enne esindajana osalemist sellest meetodist?
29. Kas häälestad ennast kuidagi enne väljale minemist? Kuidas?
30. Kirjelda asendaja valimise ja väljale paigutamise protsessi.
31. Milliseid on olnud sinu kogemused esindajana? Kirjelda mõnd. (pot. lisaküsimused)
32. Milline oli sinu esimene esindamiskogemus?
33. Milles poolest on su kogemused esindajana teineteisest erinenud?
34. Kuidas end x olukorras tundsid? Millele mõtlesid?
35. Millised on kõige suuremad/jõulisemad tunded, mida sa oled kogunud? Kuidas need väljendusid?
36. Kui oled väljal kogunud ka raskusi, siis millised need on olnud?
37. Milline on sinu arvates asendaja kehaliste aistingute roll? Milline aga mõistuse oma? Kuidas sa neid võrdleksid?
38. Kas oled alati väljendanud kõiki aistinguid mida oled väjal kogunud? Miks või miks mitte?
39. Kui palju on olnud olukordi, kus sa ei saa päris täpselt aru sellest, mida sa tunned või mida väli sulle öelda tahab? Kirjelda mõnd sellist olukorda, kuidas sel puhul toimid?
40. Mis sa arvad, mis juhib konstellatsiooni väljal esindajaid? Millest sinu käitumine tulenes?
41. Kas oled esindajaks olemisest keeldunud? Kui jah, siis miks? Kui ei, siis miks sa arvad, et seda ette tuleb?
42. Kui oluline on see grupp inimesi, kes on selle konstellatsioonitöö raames kokku saanud?
43. Kirjelda asendaja rolli lõpetamist.
44. Kas sul on olnud ka juhuseid, kus oled asendaja rolli kinni jäänud? Kirjelda mõnda olukorda. Mis siis sai? Kuidas see lahenes?
45. Millised on sinu arvates esindamise...
 - a) Positiivsed küljed?
 - b) Negatiivsed küljed?
46. Kas see kogemus on mõjutanud kuidagi su maailmavaadet? Kuidas?
47. Mida sa oled läbi esindajaks olemise õppinud?
48. Mida on esindajaks olemine sulle andnud?

Translated Interview questions

1. Where did you first hear about the constellations?
2. What was your first impression?
3. What is a constellation? How does it look like?
4. Why and when did you turn to Constellation?
5. What were your expectations when you first came across this *method* (informants wording)?
6. How much experience do you have with the method to date?
7. Have you been to workshops held by different facilitators?
8. How do you think the constellation works?
9. Do you think it helps people? How?
10. What do you think are the advantages and disadvantages of the constellation method?
11. Have you also had a constellation done for yourself?
12. Did the constellation help you?
 - a. How did it help you?
 - b. Why do you think it didn't help you?
13. How did you choose the representatives?
14. If you are ready to talk about it, please share with me the story of your personal constellation.
15. Did you also take the place of a representative in your constellation? Describe this experience.
16. What changes did you notice after the workshop?
17. Were you satisfied with the constellation work? What emotions and feelings did you encounter afterward?
18. How big a role do you think the facilitator plays in the development of the workshop?
19. What qualities do you think a facilitator should have?
20. How much do you think the facilitator's personal experiences (/personal life) influence the workshop?
21. If you have visited different facilitators, what differences stood out to you the most?
22. On what basis did you choose the facilitator to go to?
23. Have you experienced/heard stories about situations where the facilitator has not been able to hold space? What kind of stories?
24. What does being a representative mean to you? Describe who is the representative.
25. Explain what representation usually looks like.

26. How are the representatives selected?
27. Why did you become a representative?
28. How much did you know about this method before participating as a representative?
29. Do you prepare yourself somehow before representation?
30. Describe the process of selecting and placing the representatives.
31. What have been your experiences as a representative? Describe some. (pot. additional questions)
32. What was your first experience as a representative like?
33. How have your experiences as a representative differed from each other?
34. How did you feel in x situation? What were you thinking?
35. What are the biggest/strongest feelings you have experienced as a representative? How did they manifest?
36. If you have also experienced difficulties in the field, what have they been?
37. What do you think is the role of bodily sensations? But what of the mind? How would you compare them?
38. Have you always expressed all the sensations that you have experienced as a representative? Why or why not?
39. How many situations have there been where you do not quite understand what you are feeling or what the field was trying to tell you? Describe a situation like this. How would you act in that case?
40. What do you think drives the behaviour of the representatives in the knowing field? What was the reason for your behavior?
41. Have you refused to be a representative?
 - a. If so, why?
 - b. If not, why do you think this happens?
42. How important is the group of people who have come together to participate in a workshop?
43. Describe the end of representation.
44. Have you had any occasions where you got stuck in the role of being a representative? Describe a situation. What happened? How was it resolved?
45. What do you think are the positive and negative aspects of representing?
46. Has this experience affected your worldview in any way? How?
47. What have you learned from being a representative?
48. What has being a representative given you?