Beyond individual strain
Creating collective spaces and facilitating teams in the face of burnout

Master Thesis
in the frame of the Master of Arts Program
in Peace, Development, Security and International Conflict Transformation
at the University of Innsbruck (Austria)

In order to obtain the degree Master of Arts

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Innsbruck, 24 October 2019
Acknowledgements

Thank you Marja, for letting me see the tunnel at the end of the light, for always having an hear that is willing to listen, an idea to give and a heart that is full of love. Meeting you was one of the greatest gifts that happened since I started writing this thesis.

Janka and Yanko, you are nutrition for me, leaving the door to your room(s) open, being and giving me home at times when it’s most needed and appreciated.

Nina, you’re being close while being far. Too far to go by bike? I’d wish for you to read out Nietzsche again. Or ‘the art of making friends’.

Vera, for simply letting me be who I am and for being soil, seed, root and blossom.

Wata and Doro. Both of you seem like you’re facilitating while you’re sleeping. You’ve been teachers, guides and enablers to me. Thank you for sharing so deeply what constitutes yourselves and your living world, and for allowing me to dive into these waters with you together.

Iván, your persistence has led me to question life so profoundly ever and ever again. While I felt faced with some of my deepest shadows, it is your honest passion and your light that keep me going and help me to stay true to myself.

Lui, ‘mala mano’, dragon tamer. You’re like a sister, a child and mother to me.

Buggi, you are a solid rock that I always carry around in my pocket and which keeps surprising me about its lightness and variability.

¡Helena! the tears that I shared while listening to your music, allowed me to feel how alive I am. !May the goosebumps stay and the moons dance!

Thank you Björn for ‘still having chaos inside yourself’ and for evoking chaos inside of me which can surely give light to a dancing star. Thank you for dancing together in dizzying heights and through stormy waters. Thank for listening to where the wind blows…and for being.
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<tr>
<td>ECT</td>
<td>Elicitive Conflict Transformation</td>
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<tr>
<td>GAS</td>
<td>General Adaptation Syndrome</td>
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<td>IAF</td>
<td>International Association of Facilitators</td>
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<td>ICD</td>
<td>International Classification of Diseases</td>
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<td>MBI</td>
<td>Maslach Burnout Inventory</td>
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<td>NVC</td>
<td>Non-Violent Communication</td>
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<td>SOC</td>
<td>Sense of Coherence</td>
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<td>TCI</td>
<td>Theme-Centered Interaction</td>
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<td>WHO</td>
<td>World Health Organization</td>
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1 Introduction

As I sit here, I feel tired, exhausted and isolated. My crown is burning. It is close to fall into ashes but, no matter how hard I try, I cannot extinguish the fire with my tears. My roots rot no matter how deep I press them into the ground. There is no reaction, no pushback, nothing.

Similar to what the tree in the picture on the front page might feel, can feel the stigmatizing effects that get placed on people due to the understanding of burnout that is prevalent in scientific and societal discussions. *El ciclo del pensador* (The thinker cycle) is the name of the piece of art that is painted on the wall of a house in Fanzara (Spain). While doing my research for the following work, the painting called my attention when I visited the village in spring 2019. The artwork of Isaac (Mahow) is a suitable visualisation of the topic burnout that is currently being discussed in a one-sided discourse putting the individual into the focus.

Just because the first focus is set on this person does not mean that there is nothing beyond. Just because we cannot see where the roots go, does not mean that they stopped growing. I therefore ask: what is beyond the individual? Who else is there with the person? What nourishes the person? How can it regain strength? What happens if all the ice is melted and the fire can burn without restrictions?

Within this thesis, I invite to take a view on burnout that allows to see beyond the individual and take the surrounding network into consideration. How does our perception of burnout change when we do not see the individual as isolated entity but as relational being with a network of interrelations? Which learnings and entry points become visible through this perspective change?
1.1 Author’s perspective

By providing a personal perspective, I hope to give an impression of myself and who I am as a person and author of this thesis. The experiences presented have been moving and forming me. While the meaning and significance of these experiences keep changing, they help to understand the emergence of this research in which I attempt to investigate how burnout can facilitate self-actualization of teams. Through this personal perspective I wish to make my purpose and motivations for writing this thesis transparent. These were essential contributions to my choice of research topic, and evolving questions, as well as the methods and literature chosen.

1.1.1 Adaptation

I was born in Germany in 1991 and grew up in a village in the south of the country. My parents live in a house surrounded by a garden and some fields neighbouring the property; this is where my older brother and I grew up. As a child I had the tendency to look for variety and new challenges in every situation. I changed the place of my room’s furniture on a nearly weekly basis. This was especially in winter time, when I spent more time inside and the habit was like a little game. I liked to look at my room differently. It drove my mother crazy to hear me moving the furniture. She complained that pushing and pulling the heavy things would leave marks on the wooden floor. When the bed was next to the wall, it did not feel the same as when it was next to the right or left window. Each time, the light fell differently into the room and gave me multiple new perspectives.

My parents highly trusted their children and for as long as I remember, they encouraged us to make decisions, follow our passions and to choose on our own what was best for us. On one hand, this independent focus meant that I learned to organize my life since I was little. I spent most of the time at my friends’ places, playing outside, swimming in rivers and
discovering the surrounding areas. I learned to adapt to my friends’ families and to conform to their structure. On the other hand, the self-reliance that I internalized as a child also meant that I mostly dealt with my problems alone. I got used to helping not to being helped. Sometimes I felt that there was no room for questions or doubts and that addressing a personal problem would take too much space and time from others. As I see it now, I pushed my own needs and feelings back and focused on others.

While I got involved in a variety of activities from sports, music and different voluntary activities, during my youth, I found a way to gain recognition and a sense of belonging. Helping others and adapting myself to their needs showed me that I was useful. I felt that I had a place as part of something bigger which gave me the right to exist. Once I had understood the underlying dynamics of settings and groups, I was able to navigate self-confidently within them and happily took over responsibility as well as guiding functions. Observing carefully helped me to adjust easily to new circumstances. This made me turn into pleasant company and a friend that always had a helping hand, an open ear and a free minute.

1.1.2 Losing ground

In the last few years, these described habits became a passion that made my life rather diverse and eventful including constant change and challenge. I was switching back and forth between voluntary jobs, freelancing, studying, internships, traveling and being with my family and friends. I felt drawn towards working with people and started coordinating courses and trainings related to experiential education,¹ team building and change processes. This constant adaptation fulfilled me as it allowed my passion and impulse for movement to emerge,

¹ According to the Association for Experiential Education, experiential education gets defined as “a philosophy that informs many methodologies in which educators purposefully engage with learners in direct experience and focused reflection in order to increase knowledge, develop skills, clarify values, and develop people’s capacity to contribute to their communities” (Association for Experiential Education 2017).
requiring self-reliance while offering personal freedom. While accompanying participants in their process, I learned a lot about people, their motivation, goals, fears, life concepts, communication patterns, and behaviour within the prevalent social structures. However, I hardly took breaks in these dynamics. In the spring 2017 I somehow lost myself in this discovery process.

The times when self-actualization was difficult, when I could not absorb more and when I felt myself losing control and connection to my professional or personal surroundings became more frequent. I feared not being taken seriously. Out of despair, I committed myself completely to what I was doing and tried to fit into how I imagined an idealised trainer to be. This meant to put all my passion and energy into the job, directing my whole life into it. My moods started changing. Unconsciously I was trying to balance my needs and expectations: trying to interact, to function, to pretend that everything was fine while feeling restricted and pressured by this behaviour at the same time. After a while, this habit got exhausting.

My way of interacting changed, and I postponed meeting friends, stopped replying to their messages, withdrew myself from engaging with my family. This pattern usually surfaces when I felt challenged and assumed that further interaction would add more complexity to situations that were already incomprehensible. I found it hard to motivate myself. When people started to ask questions, I mostly got harsh, cold and started pushing them away. I suspected I would get rejected and end up alone if I opened myself up, shared my concerns, my vulnerability, my frustration and my exhaustion. The more personal it got, and the more friends, family and colleagues tried to get hold of me, the more uncomfortable I felt and the more hectic it made me. My biggest fear was to be a burden for the people I loved and admired and to lose their respect, their love and the connection that I had felt with them. The jobs that I have loved before became an obligation and a way to earn money and I could not find joy and fulfilment in what I was doing anymore.
I was burned out. Physically, I was exhausted and would feel sudden waves of tiredness. My body was weak and simultaneously full of pain – especially in my back where stress and overstretch usually manifest themselves. Mentally it was hard to stay focused and rationally comprehend what was going on while emotionally I felt lonely and distant from others. In a spiritual sense, the stillness after coming back from my journeys, projects and trainings had slowly started to include self-doubts and a sense of dislocation in the world. In all the care and curiosity that I had devoted to others, I had forgotten to watch over myself.

I was frustrated about the world and angry about myself, drowning in my own misery and self-pity. Within my surroundings, I did not see a support network, that would have helped me to self-actualize and newly locate myself. The discrepancy of personal needs, actual behaviour and what was provided by the surrounding structures built up until a certain point when there was nothing but battered tiredness and exhaustion. I lost patience – I wanted to listen to myself, listen to others and to be listened to at the same time. I locked off and isolated myself, assuming nobody would be able to understand me, expecting that nobody could love me if I was weak, helpless and lost. I feared to be lonely, not realizing that it was me that was distancing and disconnecting myself from the world and the people and things that I cared about.

1.1.3 Getting closer to myself

The fascination for human interactions and interpersonal conflicts brought me to the Master Program for Peace, Security, Development and International Conflict Transformation in Innsbruck, from which this very thesis is written. I see a parallel between my own experiences, when working with groups and interpersonal conflicts, and the dynamics that are present within the broader peace and conflict field. In helping people, I find a satisfaction that makes me feel good about myself. To be touched and moved by conflicts for me means that life gets real – it
is when I feel the deepest connections to other people and when I feel alive. However, it was exactly this fascination of others and the feelings of their needs that made my own perception blur.

Within the studies I came to understand restlessness as part of myself and a result of my socialisation. Due to these insights, I started a training course for systemic counseling in May 2018. In this approach I found a home that allows me to consider my interest for human interactions, multiple perspectives and constant challenges as part of the life energy that supports many of my passions and who I am. These are the qualities that helped me to find jobs that I loved and where I felt that I could have a valuable impact. At the same time, I started to see that this way of living also allows me to hide behind other peoples’ problems. If I want to help others, it is essential to take care about myself as well and to be aware of and pay attention to my own needs. Taking part in this two-year facilitation training feels like spinning a red threat that connects seemingly unrelated chapters of my life. It therefore is more than a training course on facilitation, as it involves to not only think but also to live the world relationally, understanding myself as embedded in a network of interrelations that goes beyond myself and what I can grasp with my mind.

The points that have been mentioned in this section influence the motivation of the present research and the way how it is being conducted. Through writing this thesis, I would like to become more aware of the drives and needs that lie behind my tendency to burn out. I wonder if having had this experience also contains hidden potentials and the trigger for self-actualization? I see burnout as a warning signal or emergency break and as an opportunity to get closer to myself, understand my own messiness and contradictions. Through bringing these shadows into light, I hope to befriend them and deal with them in a conscious way that helps me to become a more conscious, wise and balanced person and peace and conflict facilitator.
1.2 Research interest

What contributed to my burnout was the image that I had in my head which implied I had to be enthusiastic and strong. I thought that, neither in my work as a trainer nor in other social roles, I could show weakness or exhaustion because it would turn me into a burden for others and make me lose my face. During the studies, I was surprised to find resonance and empathy from people around me when I showed my exhaustion, vulnerability and frustration.

This makes me follow Carl Rogers statement “[w]hat is most personal is most general” (Rogers 1961). I am confident of finding parallels and resonance in my research while at the same time, opening up the topic to a bigger audience. In the following section I will turn towards other authors and discuss and intertwine my personal research interest with their ideas. I will set a focus on burnout and the potential it offers.

1.2.1 Prevalence of burnout

I have seen my experiences reflected in others who share similar experiences of feeling the need to always stay strong, help others, and not cause trouble by needing help themselves. Within my direct surrounding as well as within my family, more and more people seem to lose contact to themselves and a feeling for their own needs while striving to fulfil the expectations that are set personally and through the familial, social or cultural surroundings. People that are active within the peace field often find themselves trying to fit with idealized images about their lives which are put upon them from society or their working environment. This is one reason why the psychologist Pia Andreatta (25/02/2016) stated the urgency of psychological first aid in the peace and conflict field, and with this need to break the often-prevalent taboo about this topic.

Alessandra Pigni (2016) emphasizes that burnout surfaces when expectations put people under pressure. In her opinion it is not the stressful surroundings as such that cause
burnout. The psychologist and counsellor Pigni has been investigating the causes of burnout within the peace field. She comes to the conclusion that people lose sight of purpose when they get the sensation that they are not able to control a situation that presumably could be controlled. In my own experience, my sense of purpose in my work dissolved. I was confused and exhausted throughout physical, emotional, mental and spiritual dimensions of my being, leaving me no energy to balance myself and to obtain equilibrium. Pigni (2016) considers burnout mainly as a symptom of unhealthy organizational structures and therefore puts the biggest responsibility into the organisational hands. Casserley and Megginson (2009) share the importance of a supportive working environment while putting the main responsibility for burnout in the hands of individuals.

1.2.2 Expanding perspectives on burnout

The common picture of burnout mostly focuses on naming a single cause for it (Berger 2013; Nil et al. 2010; Edwards 1977; Kompanje 2018; Newell and MacNeil Gordon A. 2010). I would like to invite a broader consideration of the phenomenon and its context. Stemming from their experience of consulting organisations and trainings about group dynamics, Fengler and Sanz (2012) emphasize the importance of a systemic consideration of burnout and the disentanglement from the one-sided focusing on the individual.

The focus on the person, so far, has largely neglected the view on the entire system and blanked out that congestion always comprises symptomatic character which points to current focal points among the business world and society. (Fengler and Sanz 2012, 13)²

Shifting the blame from one to the other already gives an idea about the complexity of burnout and its consideration. Expanding the perspective from purely considering the individual leads to a contextualization and view of the individual as relational being who is embedded in a

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² original citation in German: „Der Fokus auf die Person vernachlässigte bisher weitgehend den Blick auf das Gesamtsystem und blendete aus, dass Überlastung stets auch Symptomcharakter hat und auf aktuelle Brennpunkte von Arbeitswelt und Gesellschaft hinweist.” (translated by the author)
greater environment or system. Besides my call for a more systemic consideration of burnout, it is not the aim of this research to judge or blame parties and to adjust responsibilities. When looking at burnout systemically, burnout is not considered a disease which is attached to a certain individual. Burnout is rather considered the consequence of a system which has come out of balance. This raises the question: can a systemic consideration of burnout help to find entry points, forms of prevention or intervention that go beyond the pure focus on the individual? What happens when looking beyond the primarily devastating effects of burnout and shifting attention onto the learning that a systemic perspective could entail?

Diana Glouberman (2007) is a senior lecturer in psychology, psychotherapist and author of the book *The Joy of Burnout* in which she highlights that besides its potentially destructive character, burnout also contains a life-saving message that should not be underestimated. The American psychologist Abraham Maslow is known for his theories of innate human needs and psychological health. Maslow (2012) was convinced that humans get sick if their inner nature is denied or suppressed. If burnout is an expression of suppression and also serves like a warning signal, it contains the potential to uncover weaknesses and unknown blind spots besides its destructive and shocking characteristics. In a similar manner Casserly and Megginson (2009) emphasize the transformational nature that can result from the learning experience of burnout, and that can be both beneficiary for organizations and individuals.

Martin sees the ongoing need to “retrench and find ourselves again” (Martin, Peter 2011, 11) as basis to renew the excitement of work. This constant process of re-finding ourselves is related to the fulfilment of needs and called self-actualization in Maslow’s understanding. I see self-actualization not only as important in relation to renewed work-excitement but as vital part of human life. I therefore I see burnout as an opportunity to get in contact with needs, experiences or emotions from the past that have not been conscious before. So how can self-actualization be induced when the individual is seen as part of a bigger system?
For the scope of this thesis, I will focus on teams as an example of a social system, and research what learning burnout can contain in this regard.

**1.2.3 Self-actualizing teams**

Why talk about teams? The role of teams has hardly made its way into academic discussions about burnout (Fengler and Sanz 2012). I argue that the implications of burnout for teams, as well as the importance of self-actualization of teams, is often underestimated in practice. As human beings we are relational beings. Through our relations we automatically are led to interact with each other as well as with our environment. Teams, like families are socially constructed and convey complexity in their compositions and their dynamics that go beyond the simple sum of their parts. Dietrich therefore writes that “[e]ven though teams comprise individuals, they are as social systems holons of a more complex, higher order” (Dietrich 2017, 121). I am convinced that awareness about how we relate to our environment helps us to self-actualize. Thus, interpersonal relations and dynamics, like those present in teams, play an important role. When seeing burnout as the expression of a systemic imbalance this means that if a member leaves the system physically, the team is not necessarily liberated from the underlying dysfunction.

If a team is in a dynamic equilibrium with regard to its composition, allocation of functions, workload, information distribution, ethics, motivation and appreciation, it poses functioning continuum. If this balance is lost, symptoms of team burnout will surface. (Dietrich 2017, 121)

Burnout can therefore be seen as an energy that might not only work destructively towards one team member but might also affect other parts of the same group and radiate further, affecting the bigger system. A systemic consideration also allows us to see all parts not only as influenced but as influencing components that can contribute to the emergence of burnout. In the same way, these parts or team members can help to shift the potentially negative energy into another direction, leaving space for unfolding of potentials and inviting the actualization
of individual selves, the team and the whole system. Since characteristics of teams can be found on all levels and parts of society, the considerations taken in this work can be translated into other areas and even include “individuals with their inner manifoldness” (Mack 2016, 147). This research might therefore even serve those who are not concerned with the topic of burnout (or for those that did not consider themselves being involved).

The focus on teams also derives from my personal experiences while facilitating groups or teams or being part of such. As part of these experiences I have seen how team members can get to a point when they feel so familiar with the structures and dynamics within the group that they do not question them anymore. In these situations, team members are so involved and captivated within their own system that it gets hard to recognize what is going on. Fengler (2012c) uses a quote to describe this dynamic in burned-out teams. He compares the adaptation process of teams with a frog that gets placed into cold water. When the water gets heated slowly, the frog does not feel the change in temperature and dies. In comparison, when a frog gets thrown into boiling water, due to the heat it feels unbearable pain and jumps out of the hot container immediately.\(^3\) It is in this regard that I ask myself how and to what extent can an outside intervention help to shift a group’s energy into a non-destructive direction? How can facilitation, and peace and conflict work play a role in this?

1.2.4 Research question

John Paul Lederach, talks in his book *Preparing for Peace* about the “empowerment through self and context awareness” (Lederach 1995, 61). When applying this view, that Lederach calls *elicitive*, onto peace work, the peace workers automatically becomes part of the system and a party of the conflict. This turns peace and conflict workers, who I will call facilitators into

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\(^3\) With side reference to Senge (2006) Fengler points that he could not find a source for the tale (Fengler 2012c, 37).
potential helpers that aid to balance the system. Simultaneously they can also have a destructive impact on the system. As part of this thesis, I therefore want to find out more about facilitators’ experiences with teams and burnout. I want to find out how facilitation of groups and teams could contribute to use the transformative energy of burnout. From this I take the following research question and its respective sub questions for further investigation:

**Research question:**
How can burnout facilitate self-actualization of teams?

**Sub questions:**
- In what way can working with teams, that might be experiencing burnout, foster self-actualization of individuals and teams? Inhowfar can external facilitation be helpful in this regard?
- How can burnout and teams be encountered?
- How can related processes to burnout and teams be approached and facilitated?

**1.3 Methodology**

In this section, I aim to explain how I performed my research by describing the design of the research strategy that has guided me through the writing process and gives answers to my research interest. My research strategy includes a theoretical and an empirical component that aims to complement and broaden the prevalent view on burnout and its interrelation to teams. In the following sections, the philosophical implications for the selections of methods and the way how the research has been designed and executed will be described.
1.3.1 Research approach

First and foremost, I want to give an overview about the methodological approach that serves as a foundation for the following section. It is through our relations and through our stories that we form theories that help to understand our experiences. Starting from the idea that knowledge is created through our relations and the perception of how humans interact with our surroundings as well as with each other, a relational approach will form one cornerstone of the present work.

This research emerges from different sides and angles, starting from my personal record of burnout as well as my experience of working with teams. Therefore, “I speak as a person, from a context of personal experience and personal learnings” (Rogers 1961, 1). Taking a Scholar-Practitioner approach as a second cornerstone allows me to relate to and include my practical experiences while going beyond the conscious and unconscious learnings and knowledge that are implicitly part of them. I follow the idea that the scholar practitioner interrelates concepts, understandings, and methods from varied theoretical and practice perspectives. In addition, scholar practitioners employ research and practice principles in complementary ways such as using their experiential knowledge to enrich theoretical concepts and using structured empirical inquiry to examine the effectiveness of professional interventions. (McClintock 2004, 395–96)

What I aim for while writing this piece of research is to expand the prevalent view of burnout that I recognize in research, the practical field and in societal discussions. Through taking a scholar-practitioner approach, I see an opportunity to practice paradoxical curiosity which implies bringing together (seemingly) contradictory truths, perceptions and interpretations. This requires trust, patience and imagination since “[p]aradoxical curiosity seeks something beyond which is visible, something that holds apparently contradictory and even violently opposed social energies together” (Lederach 2005, 36). Rather than simply criticizing the prevalent view of burnout, I want to encourage a thinking and acting that allows all actors to
take responsibility for themselves and strive for empathetic relationship building. Through choosing a relational research approach, I aim to provide inspiration for the audience on how self-actualization might look like in teams that are experiencing burnout.

In the author’s perspective of this thesis I commented on the motivations that drive my research in personal terms and the ways that I have perceived burnout until this point. I do not aim to deny my personal involvement with and interest in the topic of burnout. In contrast, I want to make use of these experiences and therefore aim to express the resonance I feel during the research process and discuss the findings in relation to my own experiences. Relational research highlights the role of the researcher and states that his/her experiences, qualities, skills, and filters have an essential influence on the quality of the study (Anderson and Braud 2011; Josselson 2013). It is Lederach’s following quote that I aim to use as guiding principle leading through the research:

When we attempt to eliminate the personal, we lose sight of ourselves, our deep intuition, and the source of our understandings – who we are and how we are in the world. In doing so we arrive at a paradoxical destination: We believe in the knowledge that we generate but not in the inherently messy and personal process by which we acquire it. (Lederach 2005, viii)

It is thus important to mention that the experiences I have gained while facilitating groups and teams are strongly marked through a systemic, process-oriented and activity-oriented approach. For me as practitioner, this working approach is more than just a simple method. In practice, it involves every step of approximating, designing and performing groupwork as well as directing how I view both the clients’ and my own role. When doing research, the internalized learnings that derive from my practice do not disappear. My fascination for the systemic and more precisely, elicitive approach has led me to the perspective taken upon burnout, teams and its interrelations (among humans and the universe).

My experiences, my approach taken, my perception of the topic as well as my engagement with the theoretical academic discussions on the topic of burnout and teams are
interrelated in a cyclical manner in which continuing learning takes place. None of these aspects can be looked at in isolation since they are strongly intertwined and mutually influencing each other. Taking a scholar-practitioner approach implies a “continuing interaction between practice, on the one hand, and theory development and empirical research, on the other” (Kelman 2000, 284).

Ilene Wasserman and Kathy Kram, who consider themselves as scholar-practitioners, investigated the role that this double-identity holds. Their research was driven by the wish to identify better how the “need to create more bridges, roles, and meeting spaces to support and connect the work of individuals who value practice in the service of building new theory and who value theory in the service of practice” (Wasserman and Kram 2009, 18) could be met. The idea that leads the scholar-practitioner approach is to generate new knowledge while improving practice (Wasserman and Kram 2009, 12). I aim to create a more holistic understanding of the interrelation of burnout and teams that provides a foundation for action (McClintock 2004).

1.3.2 Research design

Since this research project connects scientific data, ideas and concepts as well as personal experiences that arise from working with teams and my involvement in the topic of burnout, the design and methods that had to be chosen for this research were meant to meet both areas. Due to the chosen Scholar-Practitioner approach, the theory that forms the foundation of this research, does not entirely stand by itself. It will construct on and be partly intertwined with my personal experiences from the practical field. After this conceptual part, I will present the practical component of this research that picks up on approaches from storytelling in order to generate first hand insights into facilitators’ experiences when working with teams and burnout.
In the research and writing process I dove deeper into theories and approaches that were known to me because either myself or colleagues used them in practice. I combined those with other ideas that arose from theory and which complemented, challenged and/or expanded the prevalent picture which led to an opening up of new perspectives and connections. This gets particularly apparent in my ideas about facilitation (chapter 2.5). In this ongoing learning process, I have seen an opportunity to actualize theoretical frameworks on which my work and applied concepts have been grounded. In the selection of literature, I was led by what Lederach calls serendipity. While staying with the ideas which resonated, I slowly built upon the learnings, assumptions and questions that had been emerging from my practical experiences. I engaged with concepts that fitted into my epistemology and left ideas aside to which I could not feel a connection at that moment or when I feared to go beyond the scope of this thesis.

1.3.3 Narrative interviews

Ruthellen Josselson’s (2013) locates the relational approach within the field of qualitative or narrative research. While referring specifically to the Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI) survey tool Casserly and Megginson (2009) claim in the introduction of their book *Learning from Burnout* that the prevalent (quantitative) use of research methods and tools, contributed to a one-sided view of burnout. Aiming to provide a space where other voice and perspectives that have been less present in discussions can be heard, I choose a qualitative approach. This approach will also aid in meeting the complexity that burnout as well as teams entail for me and the need for contextualization that thereby arises.

Narrative research is based on the idea that our identity as well as human life in general is arranged around and composed of stories (Josselson 2013; Wertz et al. 2011). According to

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4 My idea of serendipity (chapter 2.5.6) is based on Lederach’s (2005) concept which can be found in his book *The Moral Imagination.*
Josselson (2013) the way how stories are told might help us to understand how people see themselves, how they define their culture and what place they ascribe themselves in such. In order to find out how teams, in which burnout surfaces, can be worked with, I decided to talk to facilitators that work with teams or groups. The aim of these conversations was to hear about personal experiences that facilitators had while working with teams that have been concerned with burnout.

Teams are highly complex and dynamic systems that therefore differ greatly among themselves and call for a close consideration of composition and context. To meet this complexity, I decided to work with in-depth interviews that I structured in an open-ended matter. In this way, I allow the narrators “to explore and put into words aspects of themselves that have perhaps been in the shadows” (Josselson 2013, 14) without being limited by an external structure that would be put on them by previously defined questions. Josselson highlights the role of the research relationship in relational research and when conducting in-depth interviews. She states that “[t]he fully human encounter with participants is what enables people to tell us the often intimate details of their biographies and psychological states” (Josselson 2013, 12).

There are multiple ways to approximate a group setting and narrative interviews are a useful way that allows me to consider the interviewees as experts, experts of their own life with a great wisdom about their particular life experiences (Josselson 2013). The aim is to examine phenomenologically, allowing multiple definitions and perspectives on burnout, and the ways how people deal with it, to surface. The context of the particular situations narrated will allow to relate more easily to the viewpoints of the facilitators, the observed processes and the actions taken. In my role as a practitioner and researcher, it is my goal “to learn something about what is beyond [myself] and [my] pre-existing assumptions” (Josselson 2013, 2).
1.3.4 Research ethics

Adams, Holman Jones and Ellis talk about personal, relational and ethical risks that have to be taken into consideration when telling personal stories in research (Adams, Holman Jones, and Ellis 2015). For me it is important to view the research participants holistically. I do not aim to change their perception and understanding of their experience or life in general. I am aware that I make myself as well as the research participants vulnerable by exposing our stories and that this form of evocative research can also have different effects on others when being confronted with these experiences.

Since I have my own perceptions and experiences with burnout, this research is most likely to challenge my own understanding of the topic in the way that Josselson talks about “a picture that will be enlarged and corrected in the course of the research” (Josselson 2013, 15). I regard the same to be true for research participants as well as readers of this investigation. Adams, Holman Jones and Ellis describe impactful experiences as epiphanies that do not only touch and evoke reactions in the reader but also can be transformative for the researcher and the topic itself (Adams, Ellis, and Holman Jones 2017).

[T]elling our stories is a way for us to be present to each other; the act provides a space for us to create a relationship embodied in the performance of writing and reading that is reflective, critical, loving and chosen in solidarity. (Adams, Holman Jones, and Ellis 2015, 5)

Since I aim to make readers empathise and reflect upon the presented story, it is important to balance my own need to heal while also considering protecting myself, my relationships and other people (Méndez 2013). In order to allow a free elaboration of experiences and a way of talking in which the conversation partners could focus on their personal experiences, I refrained from integrating my research question and concepts like self-actualization that might have led to different perceptions and confusion.
Josselson (2011) points out the difference between a research that is made *about* a person and research that is made *with* the participant. What is meant here is that during the analysis, the focus shifts from perceiving the conversation partners as a holistic person that tells his/her story, to a filtering of shared experiences for research purposes and interest. Therefore, I want to make clear that the analysis of research material is based on what I perceive and might be far from the meaning that the spoken words originally entailed for the conversation partners.

### 1.3.5 Interview process

What follows is a description of the interview process that includes the recruitment of research participants as well as the preparation, conduct and analysis of the conversations taken. Being it my aim to keep the research directly connected to my personal reality as scholar-practitioner, I decided to choose conversation partners that were close to what I assumed to know. In my life, I often have been looking for answers that were lying outside of what I had already known, suggesting that a further or deeper engagement with my environment would not have brought new revelations.

This time, I took a different approach and looked for the treasure troves of experience that I assumed would open up in the surroundings in which I have been working with groups. I thus researched what kind of approaches, experiences and learnings in relation to teams and burnout are present within my surroundings. Some the people I talked to have been inspiring teachers, colleagues and companions who were influential in the process of my own learning and becoming a facilitator of groups and teams.

Due to my interest in a systemic consideration of burnout, I mainly choose conversation partners that apply a systemic and/or elicitive approach (chapter 2.5), regardless of whether they themselves explicitly name it as such. During my research, I also searched for local experts in the field of burnout and teams and found a self-help encounter-group that
addresses persons concerned by burnout and their relatives. While the composition of such
groups happens on a voluntary basis, I assumed it to be quite different from the pre-defined
teams that the other conversation partners work with. However, this kind of loose composition
would more likely lead the work to be client-centered, process-oriented and elicitive in its style.
Therefore, I decided that enough overlapping points were given to include an interview from
this field. This also allowed to challenge and question the framework and go beyond my
prevalent ideas of how teams and burnout could be worked with.

Characteristics of all conversation partners:

- Professional experience in working with teams (or groups) and burnout
- Working approach that is rather elicitive than prescriptive
- Self-awareness to be able to reflect own perceptions and approaches and a willingness
to share these learnings
- Diversity in gender
- Diversity in age; however, I identified people who had enough professional experience
to be able to reflect upon their approaches, lives and choices taken. Therefore, I
identified people who were practicing in their field for quite some time and who were
in the age range of thirty-five to sixty-five.

When looking for conversation partners, I designed an open call (appendix I) that summarizes
the aim of the talks. The idea was to focus on the lived experiences of the facilitators that took
part in the interview process. An information guide (appendix II) was sent to the conversation
partners prior to the talk which described the course and purpose of the talks. In total, I held
four conversations, of which one was with two people at once.
In preparation for the talks, I collected questions (appendix III) which I was interested to learn more about. The interview guide was a helpful tool that allowed me to keep track of organizational requirements and be more fully present with the conversation partners. Creating a list of questions was primarily aimed at disclosing my own interest, emphasis and conceptions. The summary questions, however, does not resemble a fixed set or guideline that was used during the talks. Neither a certain order nor certain kind of questions were asked consecutively in all conversations since the focus was put on staying close to the lived realities of the people.

Due to my ethical considerations, I offered the conversation partners the possibility to decide after the talk if they preferred their identity to be kept confidential. This step was intended to facilitate a space where the people were able to talk freely about their experiences.
This also meant that the compiled data could be deleted in retrospect if the clients feared that they had been sharing too many details bringing themselves or/and their clients into a vulnerable position. After the respective talks, all conversation partners signed a consent form, allowing their identities to be fully transparent within this thesis. The persons did not revoke the agreement. The permission of each participant to record the held talks and use the spoken words for analysis allowed me to use the names of the conversational partners openly within the thesis. Each transcript has been paginated consecutively to allow locating direct citations when analysing the gained data (chapter 3). Due to the ethical considerations of this research the transcripts have not been attached to this work.

1.4 Literature review

The following section will provide a summary of the literature that I consulted to write this thesis. I will introduce the main works and authors that framed this research. In the research question I ask how burnout can facilitate the self-actualization of teams. In search of an answer to this question, it was especially ideas and theories of humanistic science that I found helpful and which I see as the foundation for this thesis. Among the different schools of thought, it is mainly humanistic psychology that I will refer to. Humanistic ideas, systemic standpoints as well as insights from the gestalt approach all inspired and influenced my work on this topic.

The philosophical schools will be introduced first as they have been influential throughout the whole work. Their ideas shine through the different chapters and pages, sometimes more, sometimes less obvious. By combining the humanistic with the systemic approach, I wish to expand from the mainly individual focus of humanistic psychology to a broader systemic perspective. Secondly, I will present the main literature consulted to investigate the four main topics that constitute the research question: self-actualization, teams, burnout and facilitation.
1.4.1 Schools

Humanistic psychology focuses on the positive human potential and encourages self-exploration through self-awareness and mindfulness. It asks what it means to fully experience humanness (Schneider, Pierson, and Bugental 2015). Humanistic approaches draw upon a holistic view of human existence which includes physical, mental, emotional and spiritual aspects. Representatives of this approach are manifold and have long gone beyond the lines of the solely psychological field I will briefly introduce the ideas of some of the most influential people in the field: Rogers, Maslow, Satir and Cohn.

The psychologist Abraham Maslow is well known for his research on human need. He was one of the founding figures of humanistic psychology and its correspondent Journal of Humanistic Psychology which he founded together with Anthony Sutich in 1961 (SAGE Journals). Maslow searched for a way for psychology to break the limitations he found in behaviourism and psychoanalysis (Dietrich 2013). The psychologist Carl Rogers is known as the founder of client- or person-centered therapy and also counts as representative and influential figure for humanistic psychology. In his practice and research, Rogers was especially focused on the nature of relationships. His epistemological underpinnings were guided by a view of humans that included the conviction of a positive and social nature of human beings (Rogers 1961).

Similar to Rogers, Virginia Satir, gave particular attention to relationships in her practice. Satir is being considered the mother of family therapy that advocated looking at the human being not as isolated entities and looked upon people as woven into a net of relations. Further, she was one of the founders of the Mental Research Institute that came into being in Palo Alto in 1959. Ruth Cohn, another representative of humanistic psychology, was searching for a more holistic approach to psychology, communication and humanness in general. Cohn therefore developed a model known as Theme-Centered Interaction (TCI) which is aimed at
gaining a deeper understanding of individuals, groups and their thematic tasks as well as the processes, dynamics and interactions between these.

Within this thesis the elaboration of arguments is strongly influenced by ideas that stem from a systemic approach. Around the 1950s, systemic thinking found its way into therapy and consultation as a result of mutual suggestions from different places, institutions and ideas (Schlippe and Schweitzer 2015). Family therapy, arose as one aspect of contemporary systemic work, taking inspiration from psychoanalysis, psycho- and sociodrama and gestalt psychology. Today, systemic thinking has gone beyond family therapy and expanded its reach into social work, pedagogy, medicine. It can also be found in the consultation of individuals, couples, teams and organizations, including coaching, mediation and supervision (Schlippe and Schweitzer 2016). Systemic theories are manifold, and the scope of this work does not allow for a detailed elaboration and distinction of systemic schools and its representatives. I have mainly grounded this thesis in ideas of systemic thinking from the books of Schlippe and Schweitzer (2012, 2015, 2016). These books which are partly written in German offer a detailed explanation of systemic schools and ideas.

Gestalt psychology, a school of psychology, that builds the foundation for the gestalt approach was founded in the twentieth century. Originally, the gestalt approach arose as deviation from psychoanalysis. Since its emergence, it has constantly been transformed by new ideas and methods from practitioners. Fritz Perls (1973) is among the grounding figures of gestalt therapy. His book *The Gestalt approach and eye witness to therapy* served as inspiration for later gestalt research and practice. Within the thesis, the gestalt approach constitutes to different arguments and will therefore be referred to continuously.

5 Especially their educational books that are written in German offer a detailed explanation of systemic schools and ideas.
The transrational peace philosophy with its idea of the many peaces,\textsuperscript{6} incorporates the grounding ideas of humanistic and transpersonal psychology as well as the gestalt approach. Wolfgang Dietrich defined humanistic psychology as “a science of peace” (Dietrich 2017, 17) and emphasized the common origin of humanistic psychology and peace research as stemming from a post-modern school of thoughts. The trilogy on the many peaces and the ideas of Wolfgang Dietrich (2012a, 2013, 2017) can be considered part of the grounding foundation of this thesis.

I consider this research a form of peace work and a contribution to conflict transformation through which I aim to open up new perspectives and give inspiration for intervention strategies that aid self-actualization through burnout in teams. Besides its foundation in the formerly mentioned psychological field, the transrational peace research also derives from ideas of the scholar and practitioner John Paul Lederach. Among the most relevant ideas that shape the conceptual frame of this thesis, I consider Lederach’s concept of conflicts, his approach of conflict transformation, his pyramid of conflict (Lederach 1997) as well as his elicitive model (Lederach 1995).

1.4.2 Concepts

The idea that individuals are able to \textit{self-actualize} is a foundation of this research, and the questions for how burnout can facilitate self-actualization of teams. This draws on Abraham Maslow’s ideas expressed his book \textit{The farther reaches of human nature} (1993) which is being considered the trigger for humanistic psychology. In his research, Maslow put particular attention to \textit{self-actualized} people, those people that he described as having come closer to reach their potential capacities than others. Through his decade-long experience as counsellor

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{itemize}
\item[6] Dietrich describes in his book \textit{Interpretations of Peace in History and Culture} the multiplicity of different notions of peace worldwide. In his book he categorizes the so called “peaces” in five groups: energetic peaces, moral peaces, modern peaces, postmodern peaces and transrational peaces. (Dietrich 2012b)
\end{itemize}
\end{footnotesize}
and psychotherapist, Rogers, came to similar conclusions. Rogers, named “a capacity for the restructuring and reorganization of self- and consequently the reorganization of behaviour” (Rogers 1947, 18) in humans under certain conditions and named this a process of becoming. While other authors also contributed to the understanding of self-actualization taken in this thesis, Maslow and Rogers covered the biggest part.

The perspective that is taken on teams is primarily a systemic one which brings back in authors from the field of humanistic and gestalt approaches. Since the majority of these thinkers has already been mentioned in this chapter, their concrete influence will be made more explicit in the respective section on teams (chapter 2.3). It is particularly authors and books from the field of group and team dynamics that that are foundational to my research on teams. This includes the book *Group Dynamics* from Donelson Forsyth (2019), different works from Edding and Schattenhofer (2015a, 2015b) and Herwig-Lempp’s (2016) book on resource-oriented teamwork. Dependent on the context, the attention and importance that is given on group dynamics and processes, differs strongly. Donelson Forsyth, a professor at the University of Richmond and Chair in Ethical Leadership, studies ethical thought, leadership and groups and puts particular attention to psychological and interpersonal dynamics. Through their work as trainers and counsellors for group dynamics in profit and non-profit organisations, Edding and Schattenberger include their experiences from the practical field into their ideas on dynamics and characteristics of groups and teams. As founder of the first master program for systemic social work, Herwig-Lempp takes a clearly systemic stand on teamwork and its interventions.

In the abundance of burnout related publications, there are two authors that were particularly useful in regards of this thesis and that will therefore be mentioned at this point. Among them I count Matthias Burisch, a psychologist and founder of an institute for burnout

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in northern Germany.\textsuperscript{7} He has been investigating on burnout for more than twenty-five years. Burisch’s (2014) long-lasting research, which he presented in his German-speaking book *Das Burnout-Syndrom*, has served as helpful guideline while comparing and structuring differing perspectives and approaches on burnout. Another author that stood out for me is Jörg Fengler. The professor for clinical and pedagogic psychology, trainer for group dynamics and systemic counseling combines in his thinking many of the approaches that are of relevance to this thesis. In two of his publications\textsuperscript{8} he applies a systemic perspective on burnout and relates it back to dynamics in teams. Through his systemic perspective, Fengler takes various risk factors for burnout into consideration that amplify the view taken in most literature. Furthermore, a systemic consideration of burnout states it as phenomenon that goes beyond affecting a single person and reaches out for the whole team and its environment.

Due to my personal experiences and education in the field of facilitation, the understanding of facilitation that is being used in this thesis, is guided by a systemic approach (as mentioned earlier in this section) which gets intertwined with ideas that derive from elicitive conflict transformation and transrationality (chapter 2.1). Lederach, a scholar and practitioner of peace and conflict work, brought a systemic thinking about conflicts into the focus of applied peace and conflict work as well as into research within the field. Through his pyramid of conflict model, Lederach (1997) carved out the relatedness of conflict actors through either direct or indirect interactions. Lederach further distinguishes between prescriptive and elicitive approaches to conflict resolution and mediation training. The main difference of the two approaches lies in the consideration of the context of a certain setting. For example, this may include the cultural background of the conflict parties and the role of the facilitator as part of

\textsuperscript{7} The burnout institute that was founded in 2008 is called BIND (Burnout Institut Norddeutschland 2016).

\textsuperscript{8} I thereby refer to books that are known under the German titles *Ausgebrannte Teams* (2012), edited in collaboration with Andrea Sanz, and *Burnout-Prävention im Arbeitsleben* (2013).
the conflict. This gives focus to working with the conflict parties as primary resources for conflict transformation (Lederach 1995).

While Ledearch’s idea of the elicitive approach emerged out of his experiences in the field of capacity building, education and training in peacebuilding and conflict transformation, Dietrich picks up on these ideas and combines them with the concept of transrationality. What emerges is called elicitive conflict transformation “the methodological consequence of transrational peace philosophy” (Dietrich 2014, 53).

1.5 Thesis structure
In the following lines, I will give an overview about the overall thesis structure which encompasses a theoretical and an empirical part. After the introduction in chapter 1, in the first part of the theoretical chapter, I explained the philosophical foundation of this thesis which is grounded in the transrational peace philosophy (chapter 2.1). The following subsections of chapter 2 depict on the four main terms that constitute the research question: self-actualization, teams, burnout and facilitation. Firstly, I elaborate on an understanding of life as continuous transformation and self-actualization process (chapter 2.2). Secondly follows a part about human beings as part of systems and teams as particular representation of social systems (chapter 2.3). Thirdly, I discuss the concept of burnout, present current understandings of the term and apply a systemic view (chapter 2.4). In the fourth and last part of the theoretical chapter, I combine ideas and approaches of facilitation (chapter 2.5). In the last section of chapter 2, I summarize the main insights that derived from the theoretical investigation on the research topic (chapter 2.6).

After the theoretical part in chapter 2, follows the empirical part in which I present the results of the interview findings. Therefore, I firstly introduce the interviewees and their background (chapter 3.1). Secondly, I explain the evaluation process (chapter 3.2) that lead to
the interpretation of research findings that gets presented along the structure of inductively identified themes in the third section of the empirical chapter (chapter 3.3). In the last section of chapter 3, I highlight the main findings of the interviews in relation to the research topic (chapter 3.4). The empirical part in chapter 3 is followed by the overall discussion of the thesis findings, where I bring in my own voice more clearly, discussing ideas and results from the theoretical and empirical with my personal experiences. While the research questions which served as read threat in the research process are being answered firstly (chapter 4.1), this chapter also includes theoretical and practical implications that arose from this investigation (chapter 4.2). In the last part of chapter 4, I turn to my personal account and learning that derived from the thesis process (chapter 4.3) and conclude the research in chapter 5.
2 Theoretical foundations

After having introduced and located the research topic and the approach taken in the first chapter of this work, in this chapter, I will introduce the leading theoretical foundations of this thesis. Therefore, I will approximate the research question: how can burnout facilitate self-actualization of teams through the lenses of theoretical ideas and concepts drawn out from literature. Therefore, I firstly elaborate on the transrational peace philosophy that builds the grounding philosophical foundation for this thesis (chapter 2.1). Secondly, this part follows a description of the philosophy’s more concrete implications for life as ongoing process of transformation. It thus aims to specify and make transparent the idea of self-actualization (chapter 2.2).

Thirdly, teams are taken as an example of social systems in which imbalances can occur. Characteristics of social systems and of teams in particular are therefore an essential pillar on which the ideas of this thesis are grounded (chapter 2.3). Fourthly, I will give an overview of prevalent burnout definitions and understandings which then allows to look at burnout as disturbance of a systemic imbalance (chapter 2.4). Fifthly, facilitation of teams is seen as a way to evoke self-actualization of teams when blockages occur. The second last theoretical section will therefore circle around my understanding of facilitation and guiding principles that link theory and practice (chapter 2.5). Sixthly, I will summarize the main insights taken from the theoretical research in relation to the research question (chapter 2.6).

2.1 Transrational peace philosophy

The foundation of this work has been set by Wolfgang Dietrich’s philosophy of the Many Peaces. This research does not only follow these philosophical ideas but tries to explore and live them. The transrational peace philosophy describes the conceptualization of different understandings and interpretations of peace. Wolfgang Dietrich, the founder of the transrational
peace philosophy, came to identify a multitude of peace understandings among cultures and within history (Dietrich 2014). Through his personal (field) experiences as well as his academic exchanges, teachings and research within the peace and conflict field, Dietrich holds that there are as many different interpretations of peace as people on earth, and assigns those *Many Peaces* (chapter 2.1.1) into five major categories, the so-called peace families (Dietrich 2012). This section moreover contains a summary of the main transrational ideas and principles that are relevant in relation to the research topic (chapter 2.1.2).

### 2.1.1 The many peaces

Dietrich distinguishes between energetic, moral, modern, post-modern and transrational peace understandings and does not claim for completeness of his model. The difference of the peace families is drawn by one core value that is seen as predominant in each of the first four mentioned peace families: harmony is favoured in the energetic peaces, a longing for justice is present in the moral peaces, the need for security gets emphasized in the modern peaces whereas there is an understanding of different perceptions of truth(s) in the postmodern peaces (Dietrich 2012). Finally, the idea of transrational peaces combines the four mentioned values and understandings of peace in a holistic manner by identifying the dynamic equilibrium of its aspects (Dietrich 2014).

In the understanding of energetic peaces, there is no separation between human beings, things and nature. Everything is interconnected and interrelated wherefore the concept of individuality does not go in one line within an energetic understanding. Peace arises out of harmony in a dynamic equilibrium between nature, super nature and humans. Everything is considered energy and substance and can therefore only exist in relation and through cooperation. There are no dualities as there are no absolute truths about what is *right* or *wrong*. Life is seen as a steady cyclical procedure where purpose is not separable form a lager whole
since all-is-one and interrelated. Life therefore also is seen as constant transformation that occurs repeatedly in and through everything. Peace gets visible through lived experiences that begin on the inside of the self and then resonate from there, given that there is no objectifiable peace on the outside (Dietrich 2012). The energetic peace perspective plays a role in this research inasmuch as it touches my understanding of teams as social, complex and interrelated systems.

The moral understanding of peace, that circulates around the core value of justice, summarizes a thinking in polarities of good and bad, right and wrong and so on. It can best be understood when looking at monotheistic traditions and religious rules, norms and institutions or when thinking about patriarchal structures. God, or the ruler, determines these dualities and decides upon good and bad behaviour which is seen as the only truth. When following a moral understanding, human beings are born free and can make free choices between good and false, which means to obey to the pregiven rules and the sacred order of things. In this linear time conception, all existence is a struggle and a fight for the good and just life. Peace can only be gained through justice which is the leading principle. This further means the moral peace stand for a concept that is driven by fear which implies a life-long striving for rewards when doing good and getting punished when doing bad. It is a striving for a final state of salvation, that in the end, can never be reached. The moral understanding of peace gets important for this work when considering the search for causes of burnout. Guilt and blame are then often connected with a refusal of taking responsibility or admitting involvement in the system. The moral understanding also plays out in as much as it touches the morally imposed expectations on the behaviour of colleagues, top leaders or institutions.

Modern peace is based on rational thoughts that explain the world out of itself in terms of cause and effect. God and religion are substituted by the power of man. The only aspect that can stop this ongoing striving for progress and development is death. In this
mechanistic thinking, there is hope that if the human system gets good enough and civilized enough it will fight mortality. Therefore, in modern thinking, there is a striving to gain as much knowledge as possible in order to prolong life. Rationality can be seen as the only truth and logic that determines the state of mind, the way how humans understand themselves as well as how the world is being understood. Security is the value that drives this thinking and that leads to the establishment of nation states with clear borders, universal laws and generalisations of language that aim to meet the prevalent need to control and to predict life. Peace is hence being reached through structure and order as well as through being reasonable while disconnecting from the body and emotions. Dietrich points out that “the worldcentric perspective of a monologic and objectifying universalism easily leads into a violent thinking of uniformity” (Dietrich 2012, 146). The modern perspective gets particularly important for this thesis. First, because rational thinking has been most present in my life and secondly, because academic debates and discussions are dominated by reasoning which also takes an influence on the practical sphere. Birgit Allerstorfer (2018), a practitioner in the work of communal integration in Upper Austria, describes that her field “operates on the edge of the main theme of security” (Allerstorfer 2018, 218) while revoking modern ideas like fear. Since modern ideas do not build an exception in literature on burnout, engaging with this view will be required for parts of this thesis.

The postmodern thinking emerges out the confusion and frustration that arouse after the First and Second World War. If rationality, progress and technology has led to so much destruction and killing, then what is it all good for? Postmodernity describes a critique of modern structures and principles while staying in the same line of reasoning. Doubt become the driving force of postmodernity which leads to a thinking that cannot be escaped but needs to be continuously contextualized and evaluated (Dietrich 2012; Schlippe and Schweitzer 2016). What emerges out of this questioning is an opening up for diverse perspectives. This
newly discovered plurality includes that culture and context become majorly important. Peace is seen as the existence of differences and a multitude of truths. Therefore, there is no universal understanding of peace but a multiple changing perception of peaces. For this thesis, I will occasionally use a post-modern stand to question and contextualize ideas and concepts used in the process of the research. Following the premises of the thinking, it is not my aim to discard these theories but to put myself and my opinion in relation to it. Burnout itself can be seen as a concept that arose out of postmodern criticism about modern structures and establishment.

Transrational peaces describe the combination of the other four peace families. In a transrational understanding, the achievements of the formerly described schools are accepted as it gets acknowledged that the ideas and standpoints serve under certain circumstances. This automatically creates paradoxes and contradictions. Trans-rationality unites the rational with the emotional, the spiritual, the physical while it transgresses the limits of modernity and postmodernity by going beyond them (Dietrich 2014). Relationality becomes particularly emphasized in the transrational understanding of peaces which further considers the universe as interwoven net of connectivity where nothing can persist isolated, where everything is interrelated and part of a surrounding network. In this understanding, peaces are a dynamic equilibrium that describe an ongoing, never ending and imperfect process of adaptation that does not follow a static or linear structure.

Since I intend to use a transrational stand in this research process, there will inevitably arise paradoxes within the theory, the approaches taken and the consideration of the research findings. I do not aim to embellish or sleek these contradictions but let the plurality of perspectives and truths stand next to each other, reflecting the complexity and messiness of life. Transrational peace research, as the academic component of the transrational peace philosophy, aims to estimate the importance of these different thematic aspects of peace within specific situations regarding a systemic balance of the system. Epistemologically, the approach
is rooted within postmodern philosophy, humanistic and transpersonal psychology while also adhering ideas taken from the sociological system theory, the gestalt approach and other areas. After having described the foundational ideas, I will now move to a more specified explanation of terms and ideas which constitute this research.

### 2.1.2 Transrational ideas and principles

The transrational model\(^9\) elaborated from Wolfgang Dietrich is based on a multidimensional view of conflicts, including themes, layer and levels (Dietrich 2013). Dietrich expanded Lederach’s idea of conflicts by combining his insights with ideas from the humanistic and transpersonal field. Although, the transrational model will not be applied explicitly within this research, some of its underlying concepts might be of use for a greater understanding of the discussed topic and stands taken. Among these concepts I especially count approaching conflict based on the idea of transformation and the three underlying principles of correspondence, resonance and homeostasis which serve as guidance in the transrational model.

Through the idea of conflict transformation, Lederach (2003) offers an extended consideration of conflicts. This view includes and goes beyond the focus on the immediate problem and tries to identify and understand the underlying dynamics, patterns and relationships that contribute to the conflict. The idea of conflict transformation goes beyond the usage of techniques that address the immediate problem. Time gets particularly important in this regard. On one hand, the conflict transformation encompasses short-term solutions while it also strives for rather long-term oriented dynamic change processes that address the nature of the relationships and the social context of the conflict. Since “transformations often advance and then fall back before advancing again” (Kriesberg 2011, 50), conflict transformation therefore necessarily needs to be dynamic, an ongoing process that has no final stage (Dietrich

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\(^9\) See especially (Dietrich 2017, 25–82).
The guiding question of conflict transformation asks about how to end something that is not wished for and, at the same time, build something that we desire. It is this greater vision that gives purpose and direction to the transformative process (Lederach 2003). What could this greater vision entail when looking at teams that are experiencing burnout? How could this wished for idea provide guidance when approaching burnout in teams?

Dietrich (2013) explains his idea of conflict transformation through the term Verwindung which derives from the thinking of Martin Heidegger. In his understanding, conflicts are energy blockages. Human relationships and personal consciousness have to be remembered and neutralized, twisted and put into a new shapes “so that the social system can grow through it and, thus matured, discover and develop new choices” (Dietrich 2013, 8). This automatically turns the conflictive energy into the source for transformation. Lederach and Maiese (2009) suggest using multiple lenses that help to see complex aspects of the conflict lying in front and behind its visible layers and that also bring the overall meaning of conflict into focus. He argues that in order to see the whole picture of the conflict, there is a need for a conceptual framework that helps to unite these different lenses and that allows to address the immediate content of the conflict, its context on the deeper layers as well as the structures of its relationships (Lederach 2003). When trying to understand burnout as a conflict in teams, I need a multiplicity of lenses and an overall framework through which I can see what presents itself on the surface as burnout – the episode – and what can be identified as patterns that lie behind the first sight and symptoms – the epicenter. I assume that understanding the visible and less visible relations between these two aspects will provide a ground on which transformation can take place. The three transrational principles can thereby give orientation.

Correspondence as the first principle refers to the tantric idea of as within so without, as above so below which describes the interrelatedness of internal and interpersonal processes.
Correspondence implies that besides what gets visible as episode of the conflict, there is a dynamic causal interrelation for instance “between the inner socio-emotional need of each person for belonging and the outer acceptance in a concrete community” (Unesco Chair for Peace Studies 2014). Resonance as second principle occurs in form of dissonance as well as consonance and mainly concerns the relations of the conflicting parties. In a conflict, all parties can feel resonance on all the layers of their existence at once, although the narrative will only be visible on the surface. Resonance refers to the capacity to feel, to sense and to perceive how things or actors correspond. Empathy counts as precondition for resonance to arise (Dietrich 2017). Homeostasis as the third principle and one of the key concepts on which this thesis is grounded. It describes the idea that all live and behaviour is guided by a continuing process of adaptation (Perls 1995). Homeostasis describes the procedure through which the organism fulfils its needs, maintaining healthy and balanced under changing conditions. Homeostasis therefore is the natural urge and ongoing tendency of a system to bring itself back into balance, a dynamic equilibrium.

2.2 Life as continuous transformation and actualization

Since transrational peace research builds upon the idea of an “inevitable and constant renewed need for responsible choices, taken by people born free” (Dietrich 2014, 50), research in this field is therefore concerned with human behaviour, its encounters, relations and communications styles (Dietrich 2014). This also counts important for the thesis at hand. In the research question I asked how burnout can facilitate the self-actualization of teams. Expanding on the idea that a learning can be entailed in burnout and that it thus bears potentials for self-actualization of teams, the following section picks upon the idea of life as ongoing process of transformation and actualization.
While Maslow and Rogers use different wordings to describe what they understand as self-actualization or process of becoming, I find myself home and inspiration in their ideas. It is especially their conviction that human beings are able to change their self-concepts as well as their behaviour that inspired me to utilize some of their insights as foundation for this thesis. Before I come to describe self-actualization more precisely, I will elaborate on the idea of human beings as natural and continuing learner (chapter 2.2.1) which serves as basis for the following sections.

I will thus elaborate on these ideas that – due to what I have seen, felt and experienced in and about life – I came to believe. In the second sub section I therefore explain the idea of conflicts as source for self-actualization and learning (chapter 2.2.2) and stress as a natural response to conflicts (2.2.3). The subsequent sub section elaborates on the importance to express what is alive in us (chapter 2.2.4) while the last sub section summarizes the idea of self-actualization that I have taken in this thesis (chapter 2.2.5). While taking a scholar-practitioner approach, I will partly intertwine the ideas and approaches taken from other scholars and practitioner with my own questions and experiences. The learnings that I have taken so far are scattered and continue teaching and questioning me and my convictions while bringing up new food for thought. The ideas presented are therefore not set in stone, they rather represent the starting point of this research.

2.2.1 Human beings as natural learners

I see learning as an inevitable part of life. In my opinion, learning occurs constantly and, at times, unintentionally – even unwillingly in some occasions. I hereby follow Montessori’s\(^\text{10}\) pedagogy got known through Maria Montessori, an Italian physician, pedagogue and antropologist who investigated on the needs of children with learning disabilities around the beginning of the twentieth century. The pedagogical approach follows the idea of education as *aid to life* in which is aimed to evoke a love for lifelong learning.

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conviction of an intrinsically motivated impulse to learn and educate oneself if environmental factors allow so. From the first second on that we become a living cell in the body of our mothers, we start learning. The idea that humans are naturally driven by curiosity forms an essential part in my understanding of life and human behaviour. In my opinion it is curiosity for what is out there as well as for what is in us, that motivates humans to observe closely, to experiment, to challenge ourselves and our surroundings.

Rogers sees experiences as “highest authority” (Rogers 1961, 23) that allow to become aware of and to discover own truths every time. Through observation and direct experience, we as humans learn how certain aspects of life are interrelated. What we perceive and learn depends on the perspective taken. The reality that humans experience cannot be detached from its observer. It needs to be seen in relation to its subject and the respective context (Schlippe and Schweitzer 2016). Montessori pedagogy further follows the idea that learning does not occur in the same way for everyone but follows its own rhythm and pace which is based on the individuals capacities (Hedderich 2005). A distinction can also be made in how consciously we learn and experience. I agree with Rogers (1951) who explains that only a small part of our experiences is consciously experienced while other aspects remain in the background and can only be permitted into consciousness under particular conditions.

The neuroscientist Joachim Bauer, researches about the influence of experiences on our course of life. Bauer is convinced that “[e]verything we learn, find out and experience takes place in connection with interpersonal relationships” (Bauer 2002, 6). He argues that relationships with their respective emotions and learning experiences, take an influence on the whole body. This also implies that nerve cell networks change their fine structures and take an influence on human genes. Therefore, the genetic dispositions that we congenitally inherit are

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11 original citation in German: „Alles, was wir lernen, erfahren und erleben, vollzieht sich im Zusammenhang mit zwischenmenschlichen Beziehungen“ (translated by the author)
not the only factor that influences our life, interpersonal relationships, individual experiences
and environmental factors also take their part (Bauer 2002).

Similar to Bauer, Spitzer writes that “experiences of the soul become traces in the
brain” (Spitzer 2002, 3)\textsuperscript{12} and thereby points out the significance of emotions in the learning
process. Wolfgang Dietrich, the founder of the Innsbruck Master for Peace and Conflict
Studies, goes even further. In an article, he describes the educational approach taken within the
master program by referring to the conviction that it is experiences that make us into the persons
that we are. He describes learning not only as a rational understanding of realities but as a
holistic process that involves also physical, emotional, sexual and spiritual layers.

Holistic refers to the human being as entity with inseparable parts. Physical,
emotional, mental and spiritual parts are intertwined and interconnected and cannot be
examined individually. Being known for his holistic theory of the organism, the psychologist
and neurologist Kurt Goldstein (1995) was also convinced that learning needs impulses to take
place. Without a perceived trigger, there would be no need to adapt capacities to the
surroundings. Children naturally relate to their surroundings, exploring their environment, the
people on their side, themselves, their own bodies and their physical space. Even in the womb,
there is interaction with the environment that has an influence on embryos and vice versa.
Through experiences we thus learn “to discover that something is possible” (Perls 1973, 125)
while it simultaneously forces us to reorganize our way of seeing life.

To a certain degree, this helps to estimate the influence that the environment has on
us and our behaviour. At the same time, we get a sense for the way in which we affect our
surroundings. Such kind of learning automatically involves more than just a single, isolated

\textsuperscript{12} original citation in German: „Aus Erlebnissen der Seele werden Spuren im Gehirn“ (translated by the author)
person, “because the learning experience of an individual member always changes the whole social system” (Dietrich 2019).

In his book about experiential pedagogy, Werner Michl (2011) argues that learning becomes effective through challenges, own actions, the engagement of all senses, successes and memorable experiences and refers to results from brain research that underpin his argument. Expanding on this idea, Goldstein (1995) tried to move away from a one-sided thinking that followed the idea of either an imposed order from the outside or an internally formed order that naturally arises from within. He concludes in his writings that the environment steadily takes an influence on the organism and that it can serve both, as source for disturbance as well as for supplies. As “we meet on the basis of our sameness and grow on the basis of our differences” (Satir 1988, 34), every time we experience something, we relate it to what we ought to know, we compare, we add and we correct our perceptions and convictions, creating a new base and reality every time. This friction is what I find typical for conflicts and therefore ascribe them a huge potential for learning.

2.2.2 Conflicts – source of learning and self-actualization

How I understand conflict and how I approach it, builds one pillar of the conceptual framework of this thesis. I will apply my understanding of conflicts when looking at burnout and thus elaborate on these ideas in the following paragraph. My understanding of conflicts is led by the consideration of conflict as normal part of life and human relationships. It is conflicts that help to keep “relationships and social structures honest, alive, and dynamically responsive to human needs, aspirations and growth” (Lederach 2003, 18). My understanding of conflicts overlaps with Lederach’s assumptions as so far as I see conflicts as the results of social constructions which constitute different meanings and interpretations of human experiences, interactions and realities (Lederach 1997).
I do not see conflicts as a phenomenon that simply happens to people. Conflicts are results of situations and interactions which are constructed by people and later get perceived by them as conflicts (Dietrich 2013). In common language, conflicts are recognizable irritations in the natural flow of relationships. It is at this point, when the natural flow is disrupted that the perception and expression of feelings and emotions gets more difficult. Thus, it will seem complicated to communicate and understand what is going on. Satir (2001) considers conflicts as different ways of communicating. While she sees multiple forms of communicating in conflict, it is incongruent communication (chapter 2.2.4) that causes most confusion and tension. This perceived imbalance or inconsistency in behaviour is then generally described as conflict.

Following the conviction that “a conflict roots deeper than the events witnessed on the surface” (Allerstorfer 2018, 216), within my writings, I will refer to the primarily visible parts, the situations and expressions on the surface of the conflict, as episodes and to the less-visible parts of the conflict, which are more difficult to grasp, as epicenter:

An episode of conflict is the visible expression of conflict rising within the relationship or system, usually within a distinct time frame. It generates attention and energy around a particular set of issues that need response. The epicenter of conflict is the web of relational patterns, often providing a history of lived episodes, from which new episodes and issues emerge. If the episode releases conflict energy in the relationship, the epicenter is where the energy is produced. (Lederach 2003, 31)

These considerations are of importance for this thesis as so far as burnout, when seen as a conflict, requires an examination that goes beyond its presenting symptoms. “Live energy stems from the epicenter and radiates through all layers of existence until it becomes visible in the surface of the episode” (Dietrich 2014, 55). A conflict therefore emerges, when this life energy is blocked. Dietrich describes the episode of an conflict as the “immediate and visible situation on the surface of a conflict” (Dietrich 2014, 50).
In comparison to other concepts like conflict resolution, conflict transformation (chapter 2.1.2) does not assume conflict as something negative that has to be removed, suppressed or eliminated and allows the possibility of (re)building healthy relationships (Lederach 2003). Conflicts provide an opportunity to understand ourselves, others and our surrounding structures differently: “[t]he episode of conflict becomes an opportunity to address the epicenter of conflict.” (Lederach 2003, 32). Conflicts are therefore not only a part of life but give life, keeping us in a dynamic contact with what surrounds and touches us. In relation to this thesis topic I wonder what we can learn about the relationship structures and patterns that lie beneath the apparent symptoms of burnout? Which perspectives can be taken? What can be said about the contexts in which burnout occurs? How can an amplified understanding of burnout with its underlying dynamics open up possibilities and new perspectives for transformation?

When looking at conflicts as relational based this automatically forms all actors, from the grassroots, through the middle range to the top level of conflicts, be it individuals or groups, into relevant parts that contribute to the transformation of the conflict at hand (Lederach 1997). Relationality thus concerns all actors of the conflict, among all vertical and horizontal levels and positions of society. The interactions of these actors take influence on the whole system and therefore will create a completely new setting (Dietrich 2014). Who are involved actors when looking at burnout? What changes when we expand our lenses from the individual towards teams and the bigger system? Looking at the actors and interrelations that are present within the conflict setting, on one hand, means to look at the conflict episode as embedded in a greater systemic net. On the other hand, it means to draw from the resources present within the setting.

If, for a long time, conflicts are not being dealt with, they continue being dysfunctional and can become violent (Dietrich 2013). It can thus be helpful to take a look at how we as
humans respond to conflict. In the following subsection, I will therefore elaborate on stress that can be seen as result and natural response to what we perceive as conflicts.

2.2.3 Stress as a response to conflicts

When we approach conflict, it is helpful to have an understanding about stress and the influence it takes on human health and behaviour. Approximating stress facilitates relating to dynamics that openly or hiddenly influence burnout and teams. I therefore see stress as an opportunity to look behind the visual episode of burnout that presents itself on the surface. Stress occurs in “situations that people perceive as potentially threatening and that require special situational behaviours” (Fengler 2012c, 16). Stress for me means that there is friction. Friction between what is consciously or unconsciously expected, what one thinks to know, what one suspects to happen, to see, feel, hear or to smell.

In his research about stress, the Austrian-American doctor and biochemist Hans Selye introduced the expression stress into medicine and concluded that stress as well as other emotions, illnesses and injuries are connected to organic responses (Kaluza 2018). It is especially his understanding of interconnectedness between body and mind that revolutionized the medical field since the 1930s. This understanding forms a cornerstone of this thesis. Selye called upon a holistic view of persons that included body, mind, heart and spirit and defined stress as the effects of loads on the living body. His research was driven by the question why stress affects some people differently than others. Through his research, Selye wanted to show that stress concerns the whole organism and human being in all its faculties (Kaluza 2018; Selye 1976, 1980; Taché and Selye 1985).

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13 original citation in German: „Situationen, die Menschen als potenziell bedrohlich einschätzen und die ihnen besondere situationsbewältigende Verhaltensweisen abfordern“ (translated by the author).
Gert Kaluza (2018), a German psychological psychotherapist, coach and trainer who has been researching about stress since the 1990s, differentiates between three aspects in relation to stress: stressors, stress reactions and personal stress intensifiers. Stressors thereby describe requirements in our physical, mental and social environment: “[a]n event in the environment becomes a stimulus – or a stressor – whenever an individual’s homeostatic equilibrium is disrupted by it.” (Taché and Selye 1985, 17). Stress reactions are the responses to requirements or threats that get perceived, and which enable people in stress situations to be able to act immediately (Kaluza 2018). Reactions towards stress can be of manifold nature. Overlapping reactions can occur and physical, muscular, sensorial, motoric, hormonal, mental and interactional reactions condition and influence each other (Fengler 2012c).

Besides the stress stimuli and respective reactions, individual stress identifies influence what gets perceived as stressful and harmful and what does not. What gets perceived as stressors is influenced by the individual’s sociocultural backgrounds, own motives, attitudes and experiences and the respective interpretation of this situation (Taché and Selye 1985). Stress occurs due to a discrepancy between the environmental requirement on one hand and the own coping competences and the estimation of own resources on the other hand. The more importance we prescribe to a certain situation in respect to our own motives, the more stress we perceive (Kaluza 2018). Stress therefore occurs in different forms: distress describes frightening and burdensome situations that get perceived as uncomfortable while eustress describes situations that trigger excitement and curiosity (Fengler 2012c). It is particularly in new, unknown situation which are more difficult to estimate that the perceived stress level rises (Kaluza 2018).

Since every individual reacts differently towards stress, warning signals can play out distinctively as well. Experts therefore call for a conscious perception of personal stress indicators, Kaluza formulates this as follows: “[k]nowing your own individual stress response
patterns and perceiving them as sensitively and early as possible is the prerequisite for successful stress management” (Kaluza 2018, 32). In one of his articles, Selye described that the “holistic approach aims at enhancing our total well-being, in part through self-awareness. By learning to gauge our own innate energy, potential weaknesses and strengths, we can all benefit from this approach” (Selye 1980, 86). The medic therefore saw a need for an interdisciplinary approach to health and stress management that could help to establish homeostasis and that also emphasized the need of a self-responsible attitude of each individual (Selye 1980).

I see stress as a natural part of life that is neither entirely positive nor negative. Why humans react in this way can be explained by taking evolutionary lenses. In situations of attack or assault, stress occurred and enabled an intensified bodily reaction in order to meet the perceived danger. This generally resulted in two possible reactions: fight or flight (Kaluza 2018). Stress “increases people’s resistance and therefore improves their chances of survival” (Taché and Selye 1985, 19). Stress can hence be described as reaction that is in aid of survival, it is a “normal reaction of a normal person to an unusual situation” (Dietrich 2017, 135). Selye (1946) systematically researched stress reactions and found out that irrespective of the art of stimuli, the same course of stress manifestations occurs. He summarized these three stress phases as General Adaptation Syndrome (GAS). The GAS describes three different stages which are considered particular for long-term or reoccurring stress: alarm reaction, stage of resistance, stage of exhaustion.

14 original citation in German: „Die eigenen individuellen Stressreaktionsmuster zu kennen und möglichst sensibel und frühzeitig wahrzunehmen, ist Voraussetzung für ein erfolgreiches Stressmanagement“ (translated by the author)

15 I found an interesting parallel within the GAS and Ruppert’s ideas about the human psyche. Ruppert prescribes the psyche tree conditional states that can change due to the level of perceived stress. He talks about a splitting of the psyche that occurs in the last state in which the stress programs are not sufficient anymore. (Ruppert 2012).
When stress occurs, an alert reaction of emergency firstly activates emotional and physical reactions that hurry ahead of cognitive and conscious processes. It is emotions that trigger reactions that enable people to react faster than normally, which might be in aid of survival. The secretion of the neurotransmitter noradrenalin, influences organs and vessels that are situated along the vegetative nervous system. The energy supply is set on energy consumption and focused on heart, brain and muscles which results in an increase of blood-circulation, breathing, and activation of nerve tracks. The additional release of adrenalin prepares us for flight or fight (Kaluza 2018). The stressed person gets into a focused and awakened state that enables to quickly perceive and process information from the surroundings, and to react. Within this short period that can last from some seconds to a few minutes, the immune system is more active than normally while programs that are responsible for energy storage in the body, like digestion, shut down (Fengler 2012c; Kaluza 2018).

If the attempts to escape or handle the danger had been successful, the activated stress program stops, and the organism returns back to normal and rests (Kaluza 2018). This newly emerged state in which the organism equilibrates itself, can be described as homeostasis, as state of dynamic harmony with the internal and external environment: “If the response is adequate to the challenge, adaptation will follow as the stimulus is dealt with or a new level of homeostasis is reached” (Taché and Selye 1985, 18)

If this is not the case, the stress mechanisms continue and intensify, releasing more hormones. Since all focus is set on the primarily perceived stimuli, the stage of resistance describes increased resistance towards this agent. Selye (1946) discovered that while the organism adapts to this first impulse, it simultaneously decreases resistance towards other stressors. Cortisol initially prepares the organism for a longer stress period while feeding more energy into the system. In this phase, counter-reactions occur that contrast towards the deviations from the reactions in the alert phase and steadily bring back the body into a normal
state (Selye 1946). When the concentration of cortisol has reached a certain limit, an automatic mechanism of self-regulation stops further release (Kaluza 2018). Noradrenalin and cortisol also take an influence on the brain and its communication. In short stress periods, the release of noradrenalin leads to a strengthening of connections that are used within the brain to meet stress. This means that “stress thus proves to be an important catalyst for learning processes” (Kaluza 2018, 31).

If stressors reoccur or do not stop over a long time, the alert state remains, and adaptation cannot be upheld. The increased activation then slowly leads to a stage of exhaustion of body and psyche that negatively influences the health condition with dramatic consequences (Kaluza 2018). In ongoing stress periods, cortisol overfloods the body because its natural regulation cannot be upheld. This results in a weakened immune system and a delayed wound healing function. Own defence cells start attacking the own organism which makes the body more susceptible for virus infections and increases the risk of inflammation. Chronic stress therefore influences the back-formation of these nerve cells and synapses (Bauer 2002; Kaluza 2018). Performance loss happens either steadily or suddenly in this phase and can lead to physical weakening, addictions, depression, psychosomatic symptoms and other (Kaluza 2018).16

While the described hormones foster the adaptation to stress and enable using experiences in order to encounter and react to stimuli, thus, they can also have devastating effects on neuronal structures when it comes to long-term, chronic stress reactions (Kaluza 2018). Selye’s theory of the GAS further describes that stress influences every disease and that unsuccessful adaptation or coping to stimuli produces diseases of adaptation. Since its emergence, these ideas have manifested themselves in the interdisciplinary field and are

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16 A more detailed description of stress, (biological processes, dynamics, reactions, prevention) can be found in German in Kaluza (2018)
essential for the systemic consideration of burnout in this thesis. Fengler (2012c) emphasizes that the more continuous stress occurs or the more stressors prevail simultaneously, the higher is the risk of danger and exhaustion. The doses of stressors: the intensity, duration and frequency, decides if stress is perceived as helpful trigger that aids to prevail boredom, stagnancy and even psychological and physical decay. Therefore, stress and conflicts are not something that should be avoided completely. Kaluza (2018) is convinced that humans would feel meaningless and useless without stress. Stress challenges us and keeps us alive. Successful stress management therefore leads to a dynamic equilibrium between phases in which engagement and commitment prevail and those in which distancing and relaxation take precedence (Kaluza 2018).

2.2.4 Perceiving and expressing what is alive in us
Besides curiosity, – that I see as a leading drive in learning – respect and fear of the unknown can have a rather hindering effect. As Satir was convinced that “[c]ommunication is the greatest single factor affecting a person’s health and relationship to others” (Satir 1988, 79), she prescribed communication an essential role in life. All living is characterized by an ongoing process of occurring and changing needs that steadily cause imbalance of the organism. Since organisms are never isolated and always part of a bigger whole, needs can only be fulfilled in a back and forth of balance and imbalance and in interaction of the organism with its environment.

Communication in the face of distress
Satir observed a discrepancy of verbal and nonverbal communication that arises in form of four patterns in situations of distress. This discrepancy of thoughts, feelings, needs and behaviour results from a fear of rejection and an impulse to “use other’s actions and reactions to define oneself” (Satir 1988, 80). These reactions are called defensive communication styles since they
are aiming to hide personal weakness while complementing insecurity about one’s own worth. The way of communication influences the kinds of relationships that human beings hold and can lead to frustration, distrust, disconnection, and physical illness. Defensive communication styles contain the four types placating, blaming, computing and distracting (Satir 1988, 80–100).

In Satir’s understanding, people *placate*, so the other person doesn’t get mad. People *blame* so the other person will regard one as strong (if a person goes away, it will be her or his fault – not one’s own). Moreover, people *compute* so that one deals with the threat as though it were harmless, and one’s self-worth hides behind big words and intellectual concepts. Lastly, people *distract* so one ignores the threat, behaving as though it were not there (maybe if one does this long enough, it will go away). External expectations and demands lead a person “to think, and feel and behave in the way that others believe he *ought* to think, and feel and behave” (Rogers 1961, 110). As a result, feelings and needs get repressed and allowing them becomes externally, and often also internally, impossible while learning gets blocked. Humanistic representatives like Rogers and Satir talk in this regard about the creation of a mask, a false façade that covers up what is going on behind the surface. This façade blocks direct interaction between the environment and the individual or group. In gestalt psychology, such behaviour would be described as avoidance strategy.

**Illnesses due to a suppression of our inner nature**

Maslow, like Satir and other humanistic representatives, believed that a suppression of the inner nature, of feelings emotions and needs, would have drastic consequences and could, over short or long-term, lead to illnesses in various forms. Such kind of suppression further leads to disbalance and harmful, unhealthy outcomes that can also have destructive consequences for the person’s surroundings (Rogers 1961; Satir 1988). In other words, blockages and sicknesses occurs, when the organism cannot fulfil its needs and when it remains in a state of
disequilibrium for too long. In this case, the homeostatic process fails which can also lead to death of the organism (Perls 1973).

What creates expectations on the individual is the conviction that undesirable feelings like struggle, guilt, frustration, tension, unworthiness and others have to be avoided or healed (Maslow 1968). Such thinking is influenced by our family, culture and socialization as well as by our “intrinsic conscience”. According to Maslow (1968), these expectations that the individual entails on itself, result from a fear of exclusion and a need for belonging which leads to the creation of a mask that is meant to cover up those unwanted aspects. Cohn (2004) sees a necessity to experience unprocessed feelings instead of avoiding them. Being open for what is alive in us thus bears potentials: “[o]ne cannot choose wisely for a life unless he dares to listen to himself, his own self, at each moment in life” (Maslow 1993, 46). Experiencing allows us to let these feelings pass and prevents that they take control over ourselves. If needs are not consciously noted and addressed, they remain hidden drives. Ruth Cohn names avoidance as primary reaction to unprocessed experiences that she calls unfinished business. According to her, “unfinished business includes feelings, events, and memories living on in the human being without expression” (Cohn 2004).

Avoidance strategies

Claudio Naranjo (2017), a representative of the gestalt approach, is convinced that life suffers due to avoidance strategies which lead to bypass the present and seemingly circumvent the consequences of our behaviour. Incongruent communication and behaviour refer to a suppression of real thoughts and feelings and describes such an avoidance strategy. Conversely this means for Naranjo that freedom arises if we devote to life and become aware of our avoidance strategies. Perceiving, experiencing and expressing emotions thus need to be
“respected as the most fundamental right of human beings – regardless being realistic or an illusion” (Cohn 2016, 112).

Satir observed that “relationships stood on firmer, more nurturing and trusting ground when they found they could be straight with negative as well as positive content” (Satir 1988, 77). If thoughts, feelings and behaviour are in tune with each other, a feeling of wholeness emerges. Satir (1988) talks in this case about congruence. In his sociomedical research Aaron Antonovsky pursued the question why some people stayed healthy while others, with a similar stress level and working load did not. Salutogenesis as the search for the origins of health, entails this question. While looking for correlating factors that would contribute to health and recovery, Antonovsky identified that a certain view of the world enabled human beings to handle stress in a way that promoted health. This view of the world that he describes can be understood by three main drives that are called sense of coherence (SOC) (Mack 2016; Schnell 2016).

**Sense of coherence**

Antonovsky claimed that people’s health is influenced by their life orientation and that the comprehensibility, manageability and meaningfulness of one’s own life would influence the stress experience as well as the general reactions and weighting towards stress. A strong SOC leads to a lower stress perception as events are being conceived as logical and natural (comprehensibility) while the ability to cope with the stressor by accessing and making use of own resources is considered to be sufficient (manageability) and, challenges are worth to be encountered with effort and commitment since life feels that life makes sense (meaningfulness). While people with a low SOC can access and perceive a rather small

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17 original citation in German: „Gefühle werden als des Menschen ureigenstes Anrecht respektiert, — gleichgültig ob sie realitätsgerecht sind oder eine Illusion darstellen“ (translated by the author)
proportion of their resources, people with a strong SOC can react more flexible and adaptable towards challenges (Mack 2016).

**Comfort Zone Model**

A concept that I found helpful in this concern, is the comfort zone model. The model helps to become aware of own hindrances. It describes the learning process of human beings by distinguishing between three different zones: the comfort zone, the learning zone (also stretching zone) and the panic zone (also no-go zone). If the tool is being used, to see if bodily reactions, emotions, thoughts and behaviour are in tune with each other, it can give insights about the perceived stress level and sense of coherence.

The comfort zone, resembles situations and places in which an individual feels comfortable, at home and safe (Leberman and Martin, Andrew J. 2002/2003). In situations which are considered to be familiar and predictable and where the individual or groups feels confident and competent to respond to its environment, there is generally little learning to be expected. Stress is not or hardly perceived as behavioural reactions are taken in a well-versed and unquestioned. At the same time needs can be perceived and expressed without feeling restricted.

The learning zone describes situations and places where individuals feel challenged because of somewhat unfamiliar activities, places and situations. It is this zone where stress is perceived as logical and motivational factor, where potentials can be enhanced, and boundaries can be explored. There are different environmental factors that might lead someone to enter the learning zone, with curiosity being one possibility. If a reflection takes place, learning can occur: What makes the situation uncomfortable for me? What could be comforting factors that would support me in my learning process? If a feeling or thought emerges that the situation does not seem manageable or controllable anymore, it is possible to step back into the comfort
zone. Becoming familiar with formerly unknown and new aspects helps to gain comfort and trust which further aids to expand the comfort zone.

The Panic zone describes a situation when an individual is so far away from what would feel comfortable, that the situation is perceived as extremely stressful and overwhelming (Leberman and Martin 2002/2003). This phase is described by a low SOC in which stress occurs as the fear of the unfamiliar, unexpected and unpredictable and creates panic. Protection of the unknown that is perceived as danger, become the only concern in these kinds of situations. This results in impulsive and instinctive reactions

are markedly set off from reflexes, as well as from the learned performances. The instinct action is characterized by the fact that the organism carries out some complicated movements that appear very purposeful, either for its own life or for the life of its offspring. This is done without previous experience, independently of training, and often without any possibility of knowing in advance something of the success that is to be achieved. (Goldstein 1995, 151–52)

These reactions that Goldstein mentions can also be described as fight, flight or freeze. While all energy is focused on survival, learning gets impossible in these situations. If someone stays too long in this zone, Ruppert talks about traumatization and a splitting of the psyche into different parts. The boundaries of the different zones differ for every individual and pushing someone out of the comfort zone can have devastating consequences since personal boundaries are supressed and not visible from the outside (Leberman and Martin 2002/2003).

2.2.5 Self-actualization

Maslow (1968) focused on what makes healthy people and what creates healthy living conditions instead of focusing on reasons and contributing factors that lead people to get un-sick. Being convinced in the positive, or at least neutral, inner nature of human beings Maslow (1968) promoted dealing openly with this part of one’s self: “it is best to bring it out and to encourage it rather than to supress it. If it is permitted to guide our life, we grow healthy, fruitful and happy” (Maslow 1968, 4). Rogers (1961) describes the way that leads to this real self as a
process of becoming.\textsuperscript{18} This process is often troubling and painful as it is marked by facing deep contradictions and letting fall, bit by bit, the hiding façade. Self-actualization means “learning to break through one's repressions, to know one's self, to hear the impulse voices, to uncover the triumphant nature, to reach knowledge, insight, and the truth” (Maslow 1993, 51). This sobering work of transforming the self-concept creates a space of nakedness and vulnerability which “involves dying as well as peeling away layers and engaging with each. It invites the light – the burning ball of passion – as well as the shadows and underbelly of inner and collective exploration” (Murphy 2018, 284).

Like Maslow and Rogers, I see self-actualization is a process of slow unfolding of the self, a peeling off from layer after layer of what has been suppressed or denied before. In Maslow’s words, “self-actualization is not a matter of one great moment (…) [it] is a matter of degree, or little accession accumulated one by one” (Maslow 1993, 49). While I prescribe Maslow’s idea of self-actualization, to a rather linear way of thinking, that sees process as a steadily progression, my understanding of self-actualization is a rather circular one. In Roger’s writing, I find ideas that I can resonate with more easily. If considering a person as “a fluid process, not a fixed and static entity; a flowing river of change, not a block of solid material; a continually changing constellation of potentialities, not a fixed quantity of traits” (Rogers 1961, 122), then self-actualization inevitably has to be a dynamic, ongoing process of integration and differentiation that cannot be finished or reach a final stage.

For Virginia Satir (1988) the way to become more fully human is related to a strong sense of self-worth and the ability to maintain satisfying relationships. In her eyes, the ability to honour, appreciate, love and value oneself releases energy that later aids to (re)adjust one’s

\textsuperscript{18} While Rogers and Satir describe their ideas of self-actualization by \textit{becoming (more fully) human}, I would like to point out that it is not my conviction that a person who does not prescribe itself to live along the guidelines which these authors propose, is \textit{less} human. In my opinion, the wording which both authors used, can lead to confusing understandings of what lies behind the core of their ideas.
behaviour and allows to deal and cope with the challenges of life. Self-actualization therefore means to let things come into awareness without having the intention and need to understand and connect it immediately to the self and other experiences.

The idea of fully experiencing one’s feelings also stands out in Roger’s ideas about becoming a person. The more feelings are allowed to flow freely and the more they are accepted to be in all their complexity, the more they tend to find their “appropriate place” (Rogers 1961, 177) while contributing to a equilibrated state. Being allowed to experience freely helps the individual to discover unknown feelings and to let go off a mask that was thought to be a part of one’s own self. What lies beneath the façade is “the real self [that] is something which is comfortably discovered in one’s experiences, not something imposed upon it” (Rogers 1961, 114).

The mask resembles on one hand what the individual thought to be true about the own self, on the other hand, the mask resembles what the person has been presenting to the world. The process of becoming one’s self is not necessarily a conscious choice, it can as well be a natural process and “compelling necessity which the individual feels to search for” (Rogers 1961, 111). It can thus be noted that, what Rogers calls a tendency and capacity to become one’s true self “exists in every individual, and awaits only the proper conditions to be released and expressed” (Rogers 1961, 35). While in daily life there are numerous reasons that keep us from experiencing our feelings and attitudes, Rogers (1961) highlights the potential that arises from a safe space where the individual has the freedom to experience without having to expect dangerous or damaging consequences from its surroundings.

Being convinced that all human beings are involved in human relationships, Rogers (1961) describes his shift in thinking and approaching clients as a psychologist. In his attitude, he slowly moved away from the idea of changing, curing or treating his client into providing a relationship that might be useful for the other person’s process of transformation. Due to
observations on his clients and in his surroundings, Rogers came to the conclusion that predefined solutions had no long-lasting effect on the clients’ lives (Rogers 1951). Empathic understanding becomes crucial in this regard: “the more the individual is understood and accepted, the more he tends to drop the false fronts with which he has been meeting life” (Rogers 1961, 27). This empathic attitude means to see the person as s/he sees her-/himself while perceiving the same emotions without actually experiencing them. In Rogers words it means “trying to understand the client as the client seems to himself” (Rogers 1951, 30).

At the same time, Rogers (1961) does not prescribe the process of becoming a person exclusively to therapeutic settings. By contrast, he refers to relationships that provide a climate which lead to conditions that permit all sides to freely feel and express own feelings and get in contact with themselves. In his eyes, “change appears to come about through experience in a relationship” (Rogers 1961, 33). It can therefore be said that interpersonal relationships entail the potential to create an atmosphere, where acceptance of other people and their experiences is promoted, and where a deep empathic attitude to understanding each other is supported. Bauer (2002) argues that interpersonal relations are being shown and projected within the brain and further build the most effective way to meet physical and psychological stress.

Linked to the uncovering of the mask is the rising openness to experiences that Rogers (1961) observed in his clients as opposite to their defence mechanisms. This openness to experiences, an openness to what exists, includes an awareness of own feelings and attitudes inside, and awareness about situations and people on the outside. As a result of this ongoing process of discovering oneself and connecting what there is, trust in oneself, in one’s organism and in life as constantly fluid process, emerges. In the words of the gestalt approach, a willingness to drop masks is a change in interest which causes change in perception. This means that aspects that had been in the foreground before, become less relevant and shift into the
background while other things gain relevance and attract more attention whereby they appear in the foreground (Perls 1973).

If people find conditions and courage to let their masks fall, they become self-actualized and are described by Maslow as people that “have a wonderful capacity to appreciate again and again, freshly and naively, the basic goods of life with awe, pleasure, wonder, and even ecstasy, however stale these experiences may be for other people” (Maslow 1954, 214). What gets apparent in the writings of Rogers and Satir is that a person that is closer to one’s self, communicates more congruently and expresses feelings more freely instead of suppressing them.

Being one’s true self means “being a sensitive, open, realistic, inner-directed member of the human species, adapting with courage and imagination to the complexities of the changing situation” (Maslow 1954, 181). Resilience seems to be more present within self-actualized people than others as these people are breaking free from expectations and listen to their core. Self-actualization can therefore also be consider “the organism’s procedure of coming to terms with the outer world” (Goldstein 1995, 169). Taking more responsibility for their own actions and decisions, liberates self-actualized people from what seems meaningful to others. The outcomes, or interim results, of such people’s behaviour are described by Rogers (1961) as more constricive coping with one’s life which can be described as more satisfying and in a more socialized way. Rogers was convinced that a person that is being engaged in an ongoing process of becoming is “less frustrated by stress, and recovers from stress more quickly” (Rogers 1961, 36).

In one of his articles, Compton a representative of positive psychology, who researched psychology of well-being for over fifty years, points out myths and misinterpretations about Maslow’s self-actualization theory. Hereby Compton (2018) stresses that Maslow’s idea of self-actualization was not meant to describe an exclusively self-focused
process. In contrast, Maslow (1987) prescribed strongly self-actualized people a behaviour which was marked by interest, high tolerance and feelings for others, social engagement and more profound interpersonal relationships.

While Maslow focuses in his theory of self-actualization exclusively on individual processes, Rogers (1961) does not consider the process of becoming the true self which one really is, as limited to individuals. He sees a potential to expand the idea on other systems like groups, organisations and nations and expects similar concomitants. A leading assumption of my research follows the idea of teams as potential source to for self-actualization. Characteristics of teams will therefore be explained in the next part of this research.

### 2.3 Teams

After having elaborate on my understanding of life as ongoing process of transformation and actualization in the last section (chapter 2.2), this section centres around teams as examples of social systems. Since I ask in the research question how burnout can facilitate the self-actualization of teams. Understanding characteristics of teams gains importance for being able to understand the effects that burnout can have within these social systems and what self-actualization would mean in this regard. The selection of teams, as representation for social systems, was taken because of several reasons, one of them being my personal experience in facilitating different kind of group and team settings. Moreover, social systems are manifold, and teams form an inevitable part of every person’s life. Taking a look at group and team characteristics will open up perspectives and unsheathe qualities that cannot be taken and seen by studying the individual as isolated entity.

Before I move to characteristics about teams, I will firstly introduce what I mean when I write about systems (chapter 2.3.1). A short introduction to groups (chapter 2.3.2) will further help to recognize particularities of teams (chapter 2.3.3), its potentials (chapter 2.3.4) and
challenges (chapter 2.3.5). The subsection about maintaining equilibrium (chapter 2.3.6) explains a perspective that might help the team to sustaining and actualizing itself while the last subsection circles around dysfunctions of teams (chapter 2.3.7) that cannot be transformed without external facilitation. I want to point out at this part, that the elements mentioned in this part, resemble a selection of dynamics and characteristics that I found relevant in relation to teams and the thesis topic. This led, among other, to exclude an elaboration of team’s formation and composition processes, assuming that most readers would be working or relating this reading to already established teams.

2.3.1 Thinking in systems

Systemic thinking is based on a constructivist view of the world. Systemic thinking, like the gestalt approach follows the premise that “human nature is organized into patterns or wholes, that it is experienced by the individual in these patterns, and that it can only be understood as function of these patterns or wholes of which it is made” (Perls 1973, 3–4). In conversations and interactions these different perceptions of the world get visible through language (Schlippe and Schweitzer 2016). Systems are therefore not an existing entity by themselves but a particular consideration of human reality and a way to communicate it. Systemic thinking can therefore describe “a way of understanding how human beings in groups work” (Satir 1988, 130).

In line with von Schlippe and Schweitzer, I see systems as “any group of elements that are interconnected by relationships and delimitable from their environments by a boundary” (Schlippe and Schweitzer 2016, 31).19 While living systems can be organisms and of biological, psychological and social nature, they are all united by a self-organizing tendency

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19 original citation in German: „eine beliebige Gruppe von Elementen, die durch Beziehungen miteinander verbunden und durch eine Grenze von ihren Umwelten abgrenzbar sind“ (translated by the author).
that best gets explained in terms of dynamics and complexity (Schlippe and Schweitzer 2015, 2016). Since reality is considered to be constructed in the human mind, everyone has their own view of reality and acts according to their own thoughts and experiences (Mack 2016; Schlippe and Schweitzer 2016). Due to the system’s interrelatedness “alteration of any part may produce changes in any other part” (Rogers 1951, 487). This means that no effect is exclusively attributable to a single cause and every variable counts as influential factor which sets the system in movement. The forms of expressions that describe the interrelations of systems, count: behaviour, language, communication and information in varying degrees (Mack 2016). Interactions with the system and its environment can lead to intensified effects on the system due to feedback reactions and repetition (Mack 2016). These interrelations and mutual dependencies mean that a “system and its environment are each circularly linked” (Mack 2016, 237). This turns the system into an idiosyncratic, complex phenomenon that reacts towards changes in a non-predictable way and does not allow to be directed and controlled from the outside in a linear fashion (Schlippe and Schweitzer 2016).

Life is dynamic, so the system also needs to be dynamic and living in order to sustain itself. Goldstein wrote that “[u]nder adequate conditions the normal organism seeks further activity” (Goldstein 1995, 163). Part of it is a sustaining tendency is described by an evolving order and sequence that arises within and in relation with the environment which creates a sense of consistency. This order is defined through the interactions, reactions and actions among the systems parts (Satir 1988; Mack 2016). In highly interconnected, dynamic systems, spontaneous order arises without an outer regulative authority (Schlippe and Schweitzer 2016).

Mack (2016) points out that living beings mostly build superordinate systems. These subsystems that arise at a certain degree of complexity, maintain the system’s stability (Mack

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20 original citation in German: „Ein System und sein Umfeld sind jeweils zirkulär vernetzt“ (translated by the author).
The thinking in systems and subsystems essentially results in boundaries, lines which can be considered agreements upon the system’s identity and purpose. What counts as part of a system depends on the perspective taken and can only be defined in relation to its environment. Since boundaries are used to distinguish who belongs and does not belong to the system, they support identity building (Schlippe and Schweitzer 2016).

Boundaries need to be understood in a dynamic sense that implies a constant reevaluation, crossing lines and modifying them over and over again (Schlippe and Schweitzer 2016). They are therefore not rigid, objective lines that resemble what there really is. What I mean here is not a physical boundary which needs to be made or defined explicitly. Boundaries of social systems rather describe subjective perceptions about the interconnectedness of elements and their respective relationships (Mack 2016). It is ideas, beliefs, behaviour and information that somehow differs from its surroundings and that helps to define boundaries (Diamond 2007).

Homeostasis refers to the core idea of self-organizing systems of modern system theory. It is a natural, dynamic process within life “the natural urge to return of balance. To get out of balance and to regain equilibrium” (Dietrich 2012, 47). It thus describes the natural tendency of a system to re-find its balance without a need of being guided, structured or directed (Schlippe and Schweitzer 2016). While striving self-preservation, living systems remain the same until something changes it (Satir 1988). If conflict arises within or with outer influences, energies from the environment can be adapted into the system and allow for movement (Dietrich 2017). In other words, homeostasis refers to a process of adaptation between satisfied and unsatisfied needs and the system’s characteristic to regulate its internal environment and maintain a dynamic balance. Boundaries prescribe the frame in which this back and forth takes place (Perls 1973).
2.3.2 Forming groups

As psychologist Donelson Forsyth (2019) studies groups, leadership and ethical thinking and is convinced that there is rarely any human being without connection to other human beings. We are who we are because we are related. Maslow talks about our “deeply animal tendency to herd, to flock, to join, to belong” (Maslow 1954, 44). Humans therefore have a natural tendency to form groups which leads to groups being a natural part of human life (Edding and Schattenhofer 2015b). While groups thus taken an influence on society, they also influence their members, “constrain them, guide them, and sustain them” (Forsyth 2014, 2). Relating ourselves to others, gives us a sense of who we are and where we can situate ourselves in the world.

Maslow (1954) points out that belongingness orientates us and can have destructive effects when not being fulfilled. What motivates people to form groups is a “unsatisfied hunger for contact, for intimacy, for belongingness and [by] the need to overcome the widespread feelings of alienation, aloneness, strangeness, and loneliness” (Maslow 1954, 44). While the need to belong generally exceeds a desire for independence of others, it can cause tensions when being unfulfilled (Forsyth 2019). In social systems, human interrelations are the constituting and system-forming elements (Mack 2016). When defining social groups, Edding and Schattenhofer (2015b) point towards communalities and an inner connection as characteristics that lead to a sense of community which arises “when a group of people share geography, values, experiences, expectations or beliefs” (Diamond 2007, 47).

Every human being can make use of its own wealth of experiences which emerged due to encounters with different groups. Forsyth argues that it requires to understand groups in order to understand people and “why they think, feel and act the way they do” (Forsyth 2019, xv). Through groups we as humans learn how to interact and relate to each other. We observe behaviour and learn about how others react towards each other, towards us and our actions.
This further influences feelings, the perspective taken on the world and how judgements are made in respect to other members and the environment (Forsyth 2019).

When we join or form a group, we create a boundary that separates us from other systems and creates identification (Mack 2016). Identity research starts with the assumption that the feeling of belongingness to groups defines a multitude of social identities (Edding 2013). All the social roles and identities that we prescribe ourselves can only exist because we are in relation to others. In an ongoing process, human beings assign themselves to different groups through which one or another social identity gets activated. There are social systems that we naturally, willingly or unwillingly form part of. We cannot choose to be a member of our family or a neighbour of the person that lives right next to us. Even if we wish to deny this belonging and do not prescribe ourselves the role of a son or daughter, we will still continue to be the child of our parents. This kind of fateful and unresolvable relationship however does not count for every kind of system. In sport clubs or political parties, it might be easier to refrain from being a member.

Due to personal and cultural experiences, groups are differently perceived and understood and there is no consensus about groups as social phenomenon, neither in everyday life, nor in scientific discussions (Forsyth 2019; Levi 2017; Edding and Schattenhofer 2015b). What looks like a group from the outside can thereby be perceived differently from the perspective of a single member since externally visible characteristics not necessarily point towards an inner cohesion of the members towards each other and towards the group (Edding and Schattenhofer 2015b). Since groups are dynamic, so is the cohesion and commitment in the group (Forsyth 2019).
2.3.3 Characteristics of teams

Being a member of a group is similar yet not quite the same as being a member of a team. While today, the expression team refers to a group of people which joins together to work on task or who function as a team in sports, the term team originates from English and derives from agriculture where it was used for animals that were placed together to the plough (Herwig-Lempp 2016). Edding and Schattenhofer (2015a) describe teams as force field in which different interests, requirements and needs come together and result in the particular form of cooperation that will be at hand. Like an animal that cannot plough the field alone and needs to find a common rhythm with the other animals, being a member of a team requires more collaboration and coordination while it also allows to work towards a task that could not be faced individually.

Besides the typical group qualities, counting: interactions among the team’s members, goals, interdependence, boundaries and cohesion, teams can be seen as task-focused groups that work towards a common goal (Forsyth 2019). Herwig-Lempp (2016) points out the particularities of teamwork by referring to it synergy effects. The idea of synergy derives from the physician Hermann Haken and refers to the cooperative interplay of single parts which constitute to the self-organization of the whole system (Schlippe and Schweitzer 2016). The individuals, that form part of teams, contribute to the whole by bringing their own realities to the systems they enter. With the time, the team develops common etiquettes, habits and processes and creates its own reality. Dietrich defines this arising reality and organization of teams as an intransparent complexity: “[e]ven though teams comprise individuals, they are as social systems holons of a more complex, higher order” (Dietrich 2017, 121).

Edding and Schattenhofer (2015a) state that teams have to render three main services. Firstly, the team needs to fulfil a certain task for which it has to be set together and founded. A compelling goal of consensual nature increases the coordination within the team and the
member’s motivation to contribute to the whole (Forsyth 2019). Secondly, the team needs to convey something to its members that meets the member’s needs and interest to a certain extent. This second service can be manifold and realized through a feeling of success, recognition, belonging, personal fulfilment and monetary compensation (Edding and Schattenhofer 2015a). If this second service works out well, it would lead to a “feeling of belongingness, of being one of a group, of identification with group goals and triumphs, of acceptance, or having a place, a homeness” (Maslow 1954, 72). Thirdly, a team has the task to preserve and maintain itself (Edding and Schattenhofer 2015b). This leads the team to strive for stability and continuity which means that it needs to be open towards changes and able to adapt towards movement in the environment.

The process of task fulfilment, team member satisfaction and self-preservation, thus leads to the emergence of a particular team organization. The team’s order and organization naturally arises with time and decides on the quality of cooperation that is present within the team (Edding and Schattenhofer 2015a). The more time and attention a team spends to organize their procedures, the more influence it takes on its “reliable interdependence, coordinated thought and action, a compelling purpose, adaptive structures, and cohesion” (Forsyth 2019, 357) and therefore its satisfaction and performance. Defining structures, rules, norms and roles, creates orientation and meaning for the inner and outer world of the team (Mack 2016). This also involves setting boundaries that define tasks, responsibilities and describe the team’s possibilities for action (Edding and Schattenhofer 2015a).

According to Luhmann (1984), social systems constitute themselves through communication which keeps the different elements interrelated and allows for stability. Teams are forced to internally and externally communicate in order to fulfil their tasks, create order, build and maintain relationships, encounter changes and find a right for the team to exist. In reference to Luhmann, Dietrich (2017) sees communication in teams as an “operational modus
of a higher order” (Dietrich 2017, 120) by which he refers to the change in quality that occurs to the system’s elements due to communication.

The member’s need to take decisions upon the way of communication which has a structuring and self-regulating effect on the system (Dietrich 2017). Choosing one form of communication, excludes other ways of interpretation. Communication and thus reduces complexity. Simultaneously, the decision for a certain kind of communication takes influence on the relationships and other elements of the system: “[a]ll group members are interdependent to a degree, but members of teams are so tightly coupled that no member can determine his or her own outcome” (Forsyth 2019, 357). The order of communication can therefore never be perceived in its entireness, being more complex than the consciousness of each member (Dietrich 2017). It is thus through communication that resonance can arise within the team as well as in relation to its environment.

Communication can be addressed towards the outside and can also be expressed through agreements and meetings that are taken out secretly. Hence, tasks and boundaries can be defined explicitly and formally, they can as well be defined informally or even implicitly. Edding and Schattenhofer (2015a) therefore point out official and unofficial hierarchy, rules that are formally set and those that are really acted upon. While explicit rules can be defined by the team members themselves, implicit rules often only become visible if they are being crossed (Schlippe and Schweitzer 2016). To team members, their organization can be so natural and self-evident that they work according to the structures without being conscious about them or to what extent these take an influence (Forsyth 2019).

The history of a team can serve as additional decisive factor for the emergence of order within teams and give insights into relationships structures and the specific team culture (Edding and Schattenhofer 2015a). While Lederach talks about cultures as seedbeds of peace and conflicts, in groups and teams, culture is “rooted in the shared knowledge and schemes
created and used by a set of people for perceiving, interpreting, expressing and responding to social realities around them” (Lederach 1995, 9). Interest and needs can widely differ while influencing conditions like the overall frameworks, working requirements, working conditions as well as team members and the teams composition can change (Edding and Schattenhofer 2015a). With the time, this can create tensions in the team if the team culture is understood and defined differently.

2.3.4 Potentials of teams

Teamwork resembles split of modern structures, that are based on individualism, progress and capitalism. However, I am convinced that there is more to teamwork than separating tasks and responsibilities. Teamwork for me goes beyond extracting the best expert knowledge in the most practical way and fastest time. Teamwork for me can be sense-giving, fulfilling and inspiring – a form of convivir, of communal living together. A team can thus boost sharing, empathy, creativity, mutual support, emphasize personal qualities and unfold potentials than hardly appear outside of the collective space.

Synergy occurs if the resources and standpoints which are present in the team are combined in a way that creates a multiplicity of perspectives and possible (re)actions. This complementation creates a bigger overall output – both in terms of quantity and quality – than the sum of individual outputs (Herwig-Lempp 2016). I recognize the idea of synergy also in Satir’s (1988) idea of positive pairing that she describes in her book The New People Making. Positive pairing describes the establishment of successful and supportive relationships between (at least) two people of any kind, age, gender, being lovers, friends, co-workers or other.

Hierarchical structures and different power positions do not hamper positive pairing since the nature of these relationships lies in the recognition of the persons personal value. Positive pairing allows the expression of emotions and needs and acknowledges them while
encountering each other with full attention and focus every time (Satir 1988). If pairing functions and each part takes responsibility for own actions, competition becomes obsolete and leaves space for cooperation with each other (Satir 1988). Dietrich further highlights that “[i]f a team is in a dynamic equilibrium with regard to its composition, allocation of functions, workload, information distribution, ethics, motivation and appreciation, it poses a functioning continuum” (Dietrich 2017, 121).

Forsyth (2019) names the cohesiveness of groups as indicator for the group’s health and as the result of a series of group processes or group development patterns. Cohesiveness links member to the team and contributes to relationships of trust that resist over time, difficult circumstances and conflicts. Various contributing factors can lead to the emergence:

- attraction towards other group members and the group as a whole
- common group identity and feeling of belonging
- shared commitment on goals, structures, tasks, roles, responsibilities and procedures.

Cohesion refers to “integrity, solidarity and unity” (Forsyth 2019, 153) and can, on one hand, result in higher satisfaction, closeness between members, identification with the team, decreased stress and turnover. On the other hand, it can also lead to emotional strain due to the pressure to conform and expectations that can be perceived as restrictive. Similarly, if acceptance and support are present within the team, it becomes a resource in and by itself (Herwig-Lempp 2016). While, if a team does not support each other and does not work well together, it can block individual as well as group performance and well-being.

2.3.5 Challenges for teams

Being a member of a team also bears its shadow side, since partaking in a team requires time and patience, concentration, effort, the willingness to in tune and cooperate with each other. Affiliation can have salutary effects if a close connection is felt to other team members.
Conversely, a feeling of isolation and distance from others can cause unhealthy changes in the immune, neurological and hormonal system (Forsyth 2019). Manipulation of members, suppression or exerting pressure on members are examples for dark side effects that Edding and Schattenhofer (2015b) list for groups and which as well can be counted for teams.

Herwig-Lempp further points towards the ongoing need for attention that is necessary to deal with processes like decision-making that need to be adjusted and coordinated within the team. If this cannot be upheld, “[t]eams gradually start slacking because they do not longer rub against and stimulate each other, but feel self-sufficient and do not find an incentive to move” (Herwig-Lempp 2016, 40). 21 What is therefore necessary is a regular and ongoing updating procedures and raising awareness about structures, rules and ways of communication which allows to handle, adapt and (re)act to incidents without a need for escalation.

A previously established organization can also restrict the autonomy of the team and its single members. The pattern that emerged gradually without a particular reason will then lead to a specific form of behaviour and ways of communication that will be hard to break (Schlippe and Schweitzer 2016). In systems “[w]here restrictive rules apply, family members sometimes resort to complicated detours.” (Schlippe and Schweitzer 2016, 103). 22 The same is true for team members.

If team member do not acknowledge the personal value of each, a suppression or denial of emotions and needs can be the consequence, and lead to a disappearance of this positive nature of relationship and can result in symptoms like trouble or pain (Satir 1988). Incongruence further serves as an indicator for disturbances and disrupted equilibrium in the

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21 original citation in German: „Teams erlahmen allmählich, weil sie sich nicht mehr reiben und gegenseitig anregen, sondern sich selbst genügen und kei- nen Anreiz mehr sehen, sich zu bewegen“ (translated by the author)

22 original citation in German: „Wo einengende Regeln gelten, greifen Familienmitglieder manchmal zu komplizierten Umwegen“ (translated by the author).
team. The longer humans react in that way the less aware they are about other parts or possible ways to react. If the homeostasis is hampered, resonance cannot flow freely:

a team can be more attractive, more emotional, more intelligent, warmer, more spiritual and more able to resonate than any of its individual members. It can, however, remain less able to resonate, despite the attractiveness, emotionality, intelligence, empathy and spirituality of its members, when internal communication leads to unfavourable changes in quality and thus fosters dysfunction. (Dietrich 2017, 128–29)

Misunderstandings, exclusion and insecurity go hand in hand with blocked resonance and can lead to rising strain. Dietrich (2017) points towards a discrepancy that evolves in these moments and that describes the longing wish for change due to rising strain and the inability to encounter the prevalent conditions because actions that would meet challenges get hindered. If agreements remain unclear and conflicts are being negated, they lead to further movement under the surface and disrupt the dynamic equilibrium. Teams thus have the responsibility to reassure inner permeability while staying also open for outer resonance (Dietrich 2017). Communication therefore needs to be distributed, transparent, adapted and filtered in order for it to be understood and serve its purpose.

2.3.6 Maintaining dynamic equilibrium

While cause-effect relationships about group-dynamics were in the focus of simple theories, Levi (2017) talks about a shift towards models which are aimed to aid the team facilitate its own processes. The more a team is conscious about and willing to make use of its leeway, the better and fulfilling a team can act and does not need to consider itself as the odd one out in the organization (Herwig-Lempp 2016). This subsection will give an idea about what conflict might mean for teams and about how those could be perceived and addressed.

Satir (1988) was convinced that a system breaks down or dies due to a defect or lack of care and prescribed every member a significant role in changing the system and keeping it ongoing. She sees respect for one another as prerequisite for fulfilling relationships. If we
manage to see the personal value in each and every person despite different power positions or other differences we perceive, this influences the way in which we as humans see, encounter and treat each other: “the ingredients of all successful and satisfying pairing are the same, whether the two people are lovers, parents, children, siblings, friends or co-workers” (Satir 1988, 331).

Since realities are socially constructed, they can therefore also be reconstructed. This process of reconstruction happens through friction, through a rubbing of different perceptions, of different customs, communication styles, values and concepts. Continuous dynamic and general unpredictability constitute this circularly linked world which means that “the ability to connect to its environment keeps the social system alive in the long term” (Mack 2016, 241).

The ability to resonate as well as to receive resonance are thus a prerequisite for dynamic equilibrium. A strong tendency for self-preservation with rigid structures and boundaries can serve the systems viability, it can as well block changes and have restrictive effects causing strain. Only if systems stop reinsuring their established structures and boundaries and allow to become disorganized and chaotic, a dynamic adaptation and learning becomes possible (Mack 2016). For this dynamic equilibrium, a constant interplay of self-actualization and self-preservation is therefore necessary.

While this process sometimes happens naturally, the model and idea of Theme-Centered-Interaction (TCI) allows to become aware of own responsibilities and perceive disturbances within the system and in relation with its environment. TCI is a relational concept based on present behaviours and actual needs which visually can be presented like a triangle embedded in a globe. In this so-called 4-factors model, the individual (I), the group (We) and the theme (It) build a triangle and are surrounded by a circle resembling the environment.

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23 original citation in German: “die Anschlussfähigkeit an seine Umwelt hält das soziale System auf Dauer am Leben” (translated by the author)
The globe symbolizes the environmental frame in which the I, the We and the Theme join together and interact with each other.

The idea behind TCI is to obtain a relative, dynamic balance between the three corners of the triangle and its different realities. Cohn (2016) describes TCI as a method for leaders to lead themselves and their groups which is aimed to disengage from manifested conscious and unconscious rigidities. The focus of the method lies in the theme that structures the events of the group and its interactional processes. The theme describes the reason for the composition of the group, gives its purpose and structure. If no leader is present within the groups, the method can be used as a self-regulating tool by the group as well.

Cohn’s model is based on three axioms. The first axiom describes the dependency and interdependency of humans and the world. Personal autonomy increases with the awareness of the own interrelatedness to everything and everyone (Cohn 2016; Dietrich 2013). The second axiom relates to Cohn’s ethical concept and emphasizes the incontrovertible worthiness of all
human beings by calling for mutual respect (Dietrich 2013). The third axiom explains the limits of humans freedom of choice as being restricted from internal and external boundaries – which can also be extended (Cohn 2016).

Cohn (2016) further developed two postulates that aim to keep the balance between the paradox of personal autonomy and mutual interdependence. Be your own chairperson describes the first postulate and encourages the individual to become aware of its inner circumstances, feelings and needs in every situation. At the same time, it means to become aware of the own contextual dependency. The slogan “love it, leave it, change it” (Löhmer et al. 2018, 51) refers to taking responsibility and standing by one’s own decisions which means to willingly engage or refrain from engagement.

The second postulate is referred to as disturbances have precedence and a trust in the process. This sentence describes the interfering character of disruptions and the call to give these irritations priority. Even though disturbances redirect the attention away from the theme, they are being considered a natural part of life and useful indicators for unfulfilled needs. If physical, emotional or spiritual needs are being ignored, Cohn (2016) states that one’s actions and thoughts get blurry, insecure and further lead the group away from its theme. Decisions therefore would be taken unassertively and lose their binding character. Consequently, the energy flow of the system would be irritated or blocked.

TCI for me means to acknowledge that I am connected to human beings, their ideas and actions; not only at my side but all around the world. If I acknowledge myself as part of the world, I become aware of how I influence take an influence on it as well as how it does take an influences me. If I do not feel comfortable and disturbed with what is going on (in

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24 While Cohn (2016) states humanness as valuable and inhumanness as threatening value, I disagree in this regard. When following a transrational approach, ascribing or denying value is a matter of perspective and, at least for me, would not exclusively refer to humanness but to so much more.
myself, my team, my surroundings and the world itself), it is my responsibility to take initiative and trigger transformation.

When TCI is used in teams, it involves a call to take responsibility for oneself and to go beyond that. If imbalanced in the team or another person is sensed and creates irritation, TCI calls to give priority to this disturbance, relate oneself to the imbalance and to decide whether to love it, leave it or change it. Leveling or flowing can be a response to perceived imbalances that allows to “heal raptures, break impasses, or build bridges between people” (Satir 1988, 93) and can result in congruence. Leveling means that in response to perceived incongruent behaviour, thoughts, physical reactions and feelings of another person, I react by transparently addressing them and the reactions they have on me.

TCI and Satir’s idea of levelling responses thus become a tool which aid to perceive and address conflicts in teams and their surroundings. Through TCI, the team thus can identify and make use of its own leeway. Since communication is something learned, the form of communication can also be changed again and aid creating what Satir calls “nurturing relationships” (Satir 1988, 78). In groups or teams, TCI can thus be a useful tool for self-actualization, keeping a dynamic balance between the theme of the team, the I, the We and the globe that describes the environment in which all the other factors are embedded.

2.3.7 Dysfunctions

Teams become dysfunctional when “the flow of energies and movement towards the desired balance is blocked” (Dietrich 2013, 52). Whenever resonance, as precondition of functioning systems is hampered, dysfunctions occur and complicate further resonance. Besides continuous incongruence (chapter 2.2.4), “[d]isturbances occur where boundaries are either being drawn
to strong or to weak” (Schlippe and Schweitzer 2016, 45). In this regard, also Dietrich points out the influence that every involved element has on the system, too:

Dysfunction means that one or more of the involved parties keeps opting for courses of action that influence the dynamic equilibrium of the system for prolonged periods of time. (…) The decision for this option may be rooted in one or more of the involved parties not realizing or, owing to inner blockages of awareness, excluding more constructive courses of action. (Dietrich 2017, 137)

If the prevalent stress and disbalance is not being perceived and communicated, the potential for self-healing is blocked. While referring to Jeru Kabbal’s idea of reality checks, Dietrich (2017) uses the same expression to describe a searching for dysfunctionalities within the system. What is meant here, is to use a number of questions as a tool “to bring back one’s awareness to the present moment” (Unesco Chair for Peace Studies 2014) and the situation at hand. Due to the nature of team communication that automatically changes the quality of the team and its members, this check-up cannot be undertaken by a member of the team. Since the foundations of teamwork develop as the teammates experience working together, teams require group rather than individual practice. (…) Only by confronting the learning situation as a group can the team engage in team learning. (Forsyth 2019, 365)

This means that team dysfunctionalities do not get apparent through a single member, the whole team needs to be considered. Since the resonance is hampered in such moments, the potentials for empathy and creativity of the team cannot be accessed. The team is greater than the sum of its parts and needs to be considered as whole unit, therefore

[a]n outer-systemic perspective is necessary for one, an external snapshot after which results can be subsequently injected into the system as energy from the environment to be used for the selection of new options. The reality check of a system requires support through external multipartial supervision. (Dietrich 2017, 122)

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25 original citation in German: „Störungen finden sich da, wo Grenzziehungen entweder zu stark oder zu schwach vorgenommen werden“ (translated by the author)

26 The psychologist Jeru Kabbal devoted his life to find out how to improve one’s relationships and quality of life. He is most known for having invented Dehypnothereapy, the ClarityProcess® and Quantum Light Breath Mediation.
Forsyth (2019) writes that the complexity of cognitive and interpersonal demands that are required for teamwork and for it to flourish, make external support likely. Adapting energy from the respective surrounding is thus a way to release intrinsic resources. In this research, I follow the assumption of burnout as possible expression of systemic dysfunctions. Respectively, I elaborate on burnout in the following.

2.4 Burnout

After having gained an understanding of self-actualization and teams as representation of social systems in the last two section, this part is centred on burnout as potential form of a systemic dysfunction. In the research question I asked how burnout can facilitate the self-actualization of teams. Before I introduce a systemic understanding of the phenomena that aids to understand its evocative characteristics and potentials that can contribute to self-actualization, I firstly elaborate on the state of the art in current burnout research and the expression’s understanding in daily life (chapter 2.4.1). This structure will help to understand the standpoint that has been taken on burnout within this thesis. Getting familiar with a more clinical understanding of burnout that is based on diagnoses (chapter 2.4.2) and its prevalent focus on the individual (2.4.3) therefore serve as base to understand the systemic interrelations (chapter 2.4.4) that cannot be detached from burnout.

While single perspectives might be put aside, I mainly try to go beyond the prevalent ideas and combine them in order to create a more comprehensive picture. Taking this stand is meant to create a broad and diversified understanding of burnout that allows to take multiple perspectives on the phenomenon and enables a wide range of interventions. I thereby make no claim to present a complete picture. I rather aim to give an impression of communalities and contradictions that are present in practical and academic opinions about burnout. One aspect that gets important when perceiving and approaching burnout is the understanding of
phenomena as process (chapter 2.4.5). Especially when looking at burnout in teams (chapter 2.4.6), seeing burnout as a process explains the difficulty to identify its signs and design appropriate forms of intervention.

2.4.1 Introducing burnout

The expression burnout has gained considerable practical relevance within society and, by now, goes beyond being discussed primarily within the sociopsychological field (Hedderich 2014; Weber, Andreas and Jaekel-Reinhard 2000). Burnout seems to be everywhere and gives cause for prevention programmes, workshops and seminars, counselling, psychotherapy, e-health programmes and articles in magazine about effects and causes of burnout. Therefore, burnout occasionally gets considered a modern epidemic, a common illness and a fashion diagnosis (Kaschka, Korczak, and Broich 2011).

Burnout describes a radical life change, a state of exhaustion, being overwhelmed or feeling literally – burned out. The term burnout is composed of the two words burn and out. When used as a verb, the word burn means to injure or alter with the aid of flames or heat (Soukhanov 1992). A burn as a noun describes a wound or damage that has been caused by fire or heat (Cambridge essential English dictionary 2011). The expression as such is used for humans as well as for objects that can burn out or can be burned out. Humans can further experience burnout, suffer from burnout or live through burnout. Regarding these different usages of the word, it gets apparent that burnout is looked upon in terms of a phenomenon that is harmful, unwanted, destructive, uncontrollable and that might be fed or influenced by humans but that can hardly be consciously intended by them.

The starting point in academic discussions about burnout is often described by an article from the American psychologist Herbert Freudenberger from 1974. Freudenberger primarily focused his investigation on burnout in helping professions and pointed out different
physical, behavioural and psychological signs that he recognized in himself as well as in colleagues that worked in alternative self-help or in the field of crisis intervention (Freudenberger 1975).

### 2.4.2 Diagnosing burnout

While health care is primarily structured around diagnosis and a thinking of diseases, in systemic settings it is uncommon to talk about clinical diagnosis. Schlippe and Schweitzer (2012) highlight the misleading tendency that might arise when making diagnoses and using expressions like diseases, illness, sickness or disturbance. The terms resemble social and linguistic constructions, descriptions that are meant to ensure the traceability of treatment and therapy, based on clearly formulated guidelines, aimed to facilitate the communication between professionals and those concerned. In medical terms, burnout is considered a syndrome and not a disease (Burisch 2014). This means that it is therefore understood as a state in which specific symptoms get visible while the underlying disorder remains unknown. The usage of concepts like burnout can protect the concerned from social exclusion, feelings of guilt, excessive demands and build the base for financial compensation from health care.

Since certificates of incapacity for work increasingly name burnout as root cause for sick-leave (Kaschka, Korczak, and Broich 2011), burnout takes an influence on health economics and health care politics. In the International Classification of Diseases (ICD), burnout gets listed as *occupational phenomenon* and factor that influences health status. When

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27 The thinking of diseases applies especially to the areas of psychotherapy, psychiatry, psychosomatics, medical psychology and clinical psychology (Schlippe and Schweitzer 2012).

28 Schlippe and Schweitzer (2012) tried to bridge the gap between systemic therapy and conventional approaches in one of their books. Therefore, they organized underlying assumptions and interventions of the systemic approach around concepts of disturbances and medical diagnoses. The ideas that the two authors presented in their book serve as primary inspiration for this chapter in which their assumptions will be adapted to burnout.

29 The International Classification of Diseases (ICD) that gets published by the World Health Organisation (WHO) is the international standard for reporting diseases and health conditions. Internationally recognized diagnosis keys are being published in the ICD.
comparing the tenth and eleventh version of the ICD, the description gets more specific and turns from a “state of vital exhaustion” (World Health Organization 2016) that is related to life-management difficulty, to a phenomena of the occupational context that results from unsuccessfully managed workplace stress and should not be adapted to other fields (World Health Organization 2018).

In contrast to the ICD, I support the conviction that burnout reaches beyond the occupational field, that it “is not associated with certain workplaces, circumstances, sex or age” (Weber, Andreas and Jaekel-Reinhard 2000, 513). Freudenberger (1975) already highlighted that besides burnout being particularly looked upon in industry, business and caring-related professions, it can be found among every part of society. It can thus occur among managers and teachers just as among students, housewives/men, unemployed (Burisch 2014; Eberle 2019). According to Burisch (2016), the change in definition from the tenth to the eleventh ICD has thus negative consequences for people who are concerned with burnout outside of the occupational field like care-giving relatives who are now excluded from the diagnosis.

This disagreement on a definition of burnout causes confusion in the burnout discussion, science and practice (Weber, Andreas and Jaekel-Reinhard 2000). Categorizing concepts like burnout can convey social risks if a diagnosis has rather hindering and blocking effects than protective ones. Hedderich (2014) for instance points out that due to the similarity in symptoms, doctors alternatively diagnose depression in order to settle with the health insurance.  

In fact, it seems that the words burnout and depression are often used interchangeably. Schaufeli (2017) emphasizes exhaustion as shared core symptom which

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30 Hedderich’s argument was taken for the situation in Germany and might, due to the international acceptance of the ICD, also apply elsewhere.
31 When taking a closer look at burnout and depression, differences can be recognized. Depression and its symptoms concern every life aspect while burnout mainly focuses on the occupation or task (Eberle 2019). While in an advanced stage of burnout, symptoms are similar to those of depression, Burisch (2014) differentiates between anger and fear as prevalent in burnout and grief and melancholy, which he prescribes to depression. Burnout further occurs due to clear and comprehensible conditions of overload (Burisch 2014).
might have let to burnout being partly referred to as stress-induced exhaustion depression. This handling allows financial compensation and treatment that covers the health needs of the people concerned (Hedderich 2014).

At the same time, the examples of Burisch and Hedderich show that the “stipulating power of diagnoses” (Schlippe and Schweitzer 2012, 20) creates a tunnel vision. The spectrum between stigmatization and a protection against blame and exhaustion describes a wide scale. Therefore, when using such kind of constructions like burnout, they continuously need to be questioned and actualized (Schlippe and Schweitzer 2012). Systemic thinking asks who benefits from or gets harmed by a diagnosis and tries to support the way which offers most freedom of action. The question I want to pose at this point is not whether there is a general need for diagnoses and disturbance-based thinking; I rather want to point out when and for which purposes such thinking can be of aid (Ludewig 2000).

2.4.3 Beyond the individual

The emergence of burnout in dissimilar life situations is the reason that makes it hard to grasp. The majority of burnout models is not based on empirical studies but on individual observations of researchers and practitioners and their intentions to categorize burnout symptoms (Au 2017; Burisch 2014). The Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI), a self-evaluation scale, got invented in 1981 by the social psychologist Christina Maslach. It marks the emergence of empirical research on burnout, measured through the three predetermined parameters: exhaustion, reduced personal accomplishment and depersonalization (Burisch 2014; Fengler 2012c; Weber, Andreas and Jaekel-Reinhard 2000). Different authors claim that the widespread usage of the Maslach Burnout Inventory influenced the theoretical debate around burnout and lead to

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32 original citation in German: “festschreibende Kraft von Diagnosen” (translated by the author)
a rather one-sided view and research (Hedderich 2014; Casserley and Megginson 2009; Schaufeli 2017).

In the media and scientific articles, burnout is mainly considered an individual problem (Lammers 2012). Sanz (2008) argues that the common explanations for burnout that focus on individual factors lead to a stigmatizations of those concerned. If a diagnosis turns into the central point of communication, this creates a tunnel vision that only allows to see the individual in relation to its problem and so creates the risk to get adopted unrelatedly into everyday language (Schlippe and Schweitzer 2012). A lack of feedback upon the prevalent narration can lead to entanglements in perspectives and realities where accusing condemning and defending one another becomes daily business (Mack 2016). This dissonance then turns burnout into patterns of inflexible communication (chapter 2.2.4) in which expectations of expectations function as driving force and block the perception of existing resources:

Burnout can have a deadly impact even beyond its erosion of the soul. It can be detrimental to your health, your ability to cope, and your personal lifestyle. It can lead to a serious deterioration in your job performance. And these costs are not just yours alone – they are felt by everyone who is affected by you, both on the job and at home. (Maslach and Leiter 1997, 18–19)

In this statement, the individual is still the starting point from whom consequences spread out into the interrelated environment. In comparison, in the systemic approach, diseases are not seen as personal characteristic of a person (Mack 2016; Schlippe and Schweitzer 2016). The person is considered the symptom carrier who neither owns the disease nor does s/he get reduced upon it. Considering burnout as consequence of a disturbed, imbalanced system means that it emerges in situations when different interests are contradicting and create an inner catch-22. In an interview, Schmidt calls this phenomena a “gruelling war of ambivalence” (Schönberger 2016, 23). This means that the perceived physical reactions can be interpreted

33 original citation in German: “zermürbender Ambivalenzkrieg” (translated by the author)
as a warning or stop signals of nature and the human organism: “[i]f the head says go and the body says no, one should listen to the body before burnout sets in or one’s capacity to function well is comprised” (Freudenberger 1986, 250). Due to these contradicting interests, stress occurs:

Stress is the price that individuals have had to pay to survive as animals; humans now pay the same price to accomplish what they consider great things. There should be a proportion between what people want to do and what they can do, between the significance of challenges they rise to meet and the prices they will have to pay as a consequence. Their goals and priorities should be established accordingly. (Taché and Selye 1985, 22)

Systemically, a disease gets considered as part of critical life circumstances and interpersonal relationships, it thus points towards interactions that are perceived as dysfunctional, disturbing or disturbed (Schlippe and Schweitzer 2012, 2015). Instead of naming it a personal weakness or ascribing it to personal incapacities like loss of control or a loss of energy, Schmidt calls burnout the competence of a person, an appropriate response of the emotional and biological system which sends messages about needs that had been ignored before (Schönberger 2016).

While other authors also see burnout as reaction of a healthy person towards ill conditions (Rösing 2003; Schönberger 2016; Weber, Thomas 2011), Freudenberger points out that burnout does not emerge on an individual which is isolated and detached from its surrounding. Thus he calls it “a demon, born of the society and times we live in and our ongoing struggle to invest our lives with meaning” (Freudenberger and Richelson 1980, 6). Burnout therefore resembles the symptom of a disturbed system that gets visible on its surface. It thus bears consequences that reach beyond the individual level.

This in turn means that burnout can be seen as an “adequate response to the larger societal and organizational context – on the individual and at the group level alike” (Sanz 2008, 89). Therefore burnout functions like a warning signal not only for the individual itself but for teams or whole organisations (Schönberger 2016), the working world and society (Fengler and
Sanz 2012) and as a barometer towards societal circumstances (Sanz 2012b). This warning effect however only counts if the indicators are seen in relation to the own position and when the responsibility for the occurrence is not exclusively put on the individual and its incapacities.

Like mentioned earlier (chapter 2.2.3), “[w]hen ‘negative stress’ becomes chronic and is not dealt with adequately it leads to adverse effects on the health” (Weber, Andreas and Jaekel-Reinhard 2000, 514) and can have particularly devastating consequences that can be as far reaching as suicide. Moreover, Lammers (2012) writes that expanding the perspective from the individual pays off. He thereby points towards the effects of stress that reach beyond the individual, emphasizing that stress affects the creativity and productivity of human beings in general, the congruence of decision making, and its consequences produce high costs. If a situation remains stressful over a long time and when multiple stressors accumulate (Fengler 2012c). In such case, the system might not, by itself, find its way back into a homeostatic dynamic.

2.4.4 Systemic interrelations

Living systems are dynamic and therefore marked by continuous transformation. In these processes, relationship patterns occur and form themselves around what had been described as disturbance (Schlippe and Schweitzer 2012, 2015). While these relationships came into being in correspondence to the disturbance and in an attempt to maintain the system, these relationships simultaneously influence and constitute the disturbance. I claim that if burnout considered the symptom of a systemic imbalance, it needs to be looked at holistically, taking the whole system and its interrelations and corresponding effects into consideration. In his book about burned-out teams, Fengler (2012b, 2012a; Fengler 2013) names different actors who contribute to team burnout and who can also pay their share to preventive interventions. His
allocation of actors gives an impression about the interrelatedness of social systems being involved in burnout.

![Diagram of systemic interrelations of burnout]

*Figure 2-2 Systemic interrelations of burnout*

*own graph inspired by Fengler’s (2012a, 2012b, 2013) 6-factor risk/prevention model of burnout teams*

While the graph gives an overview about social systems being involved in burnout (Figure 2-2), in the following lines, I will give examples of members (shown in brackets) that could constitute these systems. In total I count the person (with its particular characteristics, experiences and worldviews), the person’s private life (involving partnerships, family relations and friends), the target group (if existent; in form of clients, customers, patients, relatives that need to be cared for), the team (colleagues from work, volunteers, school, region/spirituality), leadership (head of the team), institution (companies, communities) and the society (culture, language, political/social/economical system) as affected, contributing and possible preventive systems. All of these factors can be affected by burnout, they can influence and constitute it as well as they can pay their share in terms of interventive measures.
I would like to point out, that the taken subdivision into the seven factors or systems and the mentioned examples could also be taken differently. Models as the one presented here bear the risk to assume completeness and look at the named factors in an isolated fashion. What I find as considerable is not the systems or their categorization as such but their interrelatedness. The way how the people from these different systems and life understandings interact and communicate, plays out into the emergence and responses towards burnout. Out of this perspective, burnout inevitably has to be considered a highly complex phenomenon that has long-lasting and far-reaching consequences which cannot be calculated because of its unpredictable systemic interplays.

Sanz (2008) interprets the prevalent focus, which explains burnout through individual factors, as a defence strategy from the environment that tries to avoid facing conflicts, taking responsibility for its actions and getting in touch with its own capacity limits, weaknesses and feelings of powerlessness (Sanz 2012b). The different actors in the graph show resonance bodies. A defence strategy is a sign for dissonance towards each other, a referral and avoidance of getting in contact with each other. On the individual level this might mean that powerlessness and worthlessness arise and that the individual is challenged to deal with these feelings appropriately (Sanz 2008). When dissonance is felt towards a team, whatever is seen as problem can be compensated by increased efforts from the rest of the team which can further cause a collective burnout symptomatology.

2.4.5 State or process

Burnout perceptions can be differentiated in process-oriented definitions and state-oriented definitions (Schaufeli 2017). When understood as state burnout refers to symptoms that are used to describe a psychological phenomenon considered negative in its nature, when considering process-oriented approaches, burnout is rather looked upon as an ordinary
phenomena that describes “a normal response to an abnormal situation” (Schaufeli 2017, 121). This multidimensional aspect of burnout symptoms commonly gets described in literature while it is being pointed out that indicators are intertwined, contradict or condition each other (Burisch 2014; Eberle 2019; Weber, Andreas and Jaekel-Reinhard 2000). This implies that burnout does not always take the same course and that symptoms vary in form and degree from person to person and will thus be felt differently from every person (Freudenberger 1975).

In this thesis, I follow the understanding which sees burnout as rather long-lasting process that gradually builds up at a slow pace. In her consideration of Burnout, Sanz (2008, 2012b) tries to shift the focus from the person towards group and organizational based interrelations. She therefore developed an eight-stages model that derives from her experiences as practising counsellor and supervisor. It aims to show the particularities, symptoms and behaviour patterns of team burnout and the disbalances of the team during that process and allow to gain clarity about possible forms and points of intervention. While authors like Weber and Jaekel-Reinhard (2000) and Au (2017) explain burnout on an individual level through a discrepancy of outer expectations, environmental factors and personal capacities, Sanz comes to a similar conclusion when referring to burnout in teams. She describes the process as a “spiral of negative attention” (Sanz 2012b, 52) in which a disbalance of outer expectations and inner resources is at hand and increases gradually.

The first stage describes a euphoric atmosphere in which idealism a multitude of ideas prevail. The group follows the visions and ideas of pioneers that take the lead while agreements are hardly made explicit. Due to the high velocity and hyperactivity of this phase, the team seems strong and united from outside while it quickly overestimates own capacities. In the second stage the excessive demands get visible. There is increased pressure to perform while

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34 original citation in German: „Spirale der negativen Aufmerksamkeit“ (translated by the author)
no agreements are being made between the team members which leads to low trust and an increasing number of violated rules. Taken effort is not being rewarded and concerns are not dealt with openly but come to the surface through debates on principles. In these cases, teams continuously show more deviant behaviours and can be disintegrating. Missing structures and opportunities to build and adapt interpersonal relationships further lead to blockages that maintain the team in a continuous stage of overload (Sanz 2008).

In the third phase, the atmosphere in the team is nervous and marked by fear which leads to a focus on rational discussions. The members are helplessly pondering and searching for answers. The team as such cannot be perceived as united anymore. While refusing to look for inner constitutions, blame towards the outside is typical. Mistakes and unreliability become common themes. The fourth stage is marked by exertion while strength and resources are slowly fading. Team members start distancing and withdraw from work, the team and the clients. Reactions are cynical, aggressive, defensive, brusquely and marked by a lack of willingness to cooperate.

Missing success is typical for the fifth phase in which the team is hardly able to work. Misjudgements lead to a loss of quality and quantity and make every member fear for his/her job. In this stage the team is not able to re-find its equilibrium by itself. First people escape responsibility, leave the team or get fired. In the sixth phase, general helplessness gets apparent. Team members resign from work while the team gets conspicuous towards the outside through its declined creativity, problem-solving skills and increased complains. Exhaustion marks the seventh stage where all effort is avoided. The amount of accidents increases while team members are giving up, becoming ill or quitting their jobs with feelings of anger and frustration. The eighth phase is marked by complete withdrawal from the former team, organisation and the whole setting. This stage that Sanz named burnout describes farewell, separation and dismissal.
When understanding burnout as systemic dysfunction, if a transformation of blockages is aimed for, additional energy necessarily needs to be fed into the system from an external point. When inviting for or planning interventions, I see it as an important starting point to be able to locate and address signs of burnout. Sanz’s list can thereby serve as an inspiration and orientation. While a disbalance in the whole system can take more time to become apparent, the prevalent disturbance often becomes visible through individuals who function as symptom carriers of the whole system (Fengler 2012b; Sanz 2012b). I therefore consider it important to also be aware of individual signs of exhaustion and refer to Burisch (2014) at this point, who created an intersection of burnout descriptions that he found in literature. His process-based list of individual burnout symptoms that can be found in the attachments of this thesis (appendix V). Besides its unpredictability of symptoms due to differing contexts, Burisch sees a communality in burnout cases: the feeling of being trapped, creates a subjective helplessness that further produces chronic stress (Burisch 2014).

The complexity of teams that was explained in the last section (chapter 2.3), and the unpredictability of burnout signs and symptoms complicates to answer the research question on how burnout facilitates the self-actualization of teams. In order to find a comprehensible answer to this question, it becomes important to understand the interrelations between teams and burnout. In the following sub section will therefore put attention to the particularities and characteristics of teams in the face of burnout.

### 2.4.6 Particularities in teams

In this subsection I will point out some particularities of burnout and teams. In an article, the two sociologists Eichmann and Bauernfeind ask the question “how much team is optimal” (Eichmann and Bauernfeind 2012, 124)\(^\text{35}\) and thereby point towards the versatile effects of

\(^{35}\) original citation in German: „Wie viel Team ist optimal?“ (translated by the author)
teamwork on the individual which they call the “teamwork paradox” (Eichmann and Bauernfeind 2012, 124): teamwork can be a supportive factors that aids to disburden the individual and reduce stress, it can as well pose a health risk when it becomes a challenge due to communication difficulties in the team or rigid norms and structures. Consonance consequently has rather supportive effects while dissonance rather has rather isolating effects. Lammers (2012) names uncertainty about the own job and the lack of goals go beyond the individual and concern the team as a whole, as reasons for stress, a decrease in team communication and a pulling back from the social (working) environment.

The atmosphere in the team and working quality suffer from missing team strategies that help to face conflicts, denied responsibility, illnesses and harmful decisions (Lammers 2012). In teams, own actions are dependent on the cooperation and communication with other members. In an attempt for appreciation and a fear of failure and denial of own competences, the team can therefore establish a pattern of “voluntary self-exploitation” (Moosbrugger 2012, 112) that leads to an inner logic of mutual adaptations towards the behaviour and expectations of other team members. In the systemic approach there is less focus put on how a certain disturbance came into being than on the question of its solidification and chronification: how a system manages to adjust its interactions in a way that consciously create the same patterns.

Chronification thereby refers to “the result of an active, though often unconscious, community effort, not as the result of an in-persona deficit” (Schlippe and Schweitzer 2012, 30). In the case of burnout in teams, the chronification of self-exploitation can lead to exaggerated working efforts and a transgression of capacity limits because taken actions result in new expectations which solidify over time and lead to a constantly rising pressure

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36 original citation in German: “Teamarbeits-Parodoxie” (translated by the author)
37 original citation in German: „Chronifizierung wird als das Ergebnis einer aktiven, wenngleich meinst nicht bewussten Gemeinschaftsleitung angesehen, nicht als Ergebnis eines in der Person liegenden Defizits“ (translated by the author)
When taking this perspective, burnout occurs due to incriminating and stressful life situations as well as through incongruent, dysfunctional relationships. Thus, burnout can be seen as result of a dissonant, disturbed or irritated interaction within social systems.

If this pressure and feeling of excessive demand remains for a long time, the team loses its protective and supportive function for the individual (Sanz 2012a). A segregation and isolation of team member is then the case and leads to feelings of powerlessness and worthlessness. Consequently, stiffened disturbances pose particular challenges for social systems in terms of coordination and cooperation (Schlippe and Schweitzer 2012). Deuerlein (2012) describes the psychosocial defence as typical reaction towards unconscious fears and thereby refers to a natural human reaction that filters dangers in order to remain capable to act. On the other hand, when dangers are blanked out completely this can mean that risks cannot be estimated appropriately. They are denied and natural alarm systems lose their protective function (Deuerlein 2012).

While the culture of a team or institution is “rooted in the shared knowledge and schemes created and used by a set of people for perceiving, interpreting, expressing and responding to social realities around them” (Lederach 1995, 9), a disbalance in teams arises as the team strongly focuses on maintaining itself and forgets to stay in motion and adapting itself (Sanz 2012b). The team’s culture thus builds an influential factor on the team’s dynamics that are hardly visible (Deuerlein 2012). If cultural boundaries, the value system and norms of the institution or the team are too rigid, this leads to a solidification of patterns. Then reactions, manners and standards are being lived without adapting towards the team’s and tasks’ dynamics. These habits further turn into the reality of the team’s daily life.

Perceiving and questioning these patterns from within the team therefore becomes difficult. Like previously explained through the frog tale (chapter 1.2.3), Fengler (2012c)
considers the denial of reflection as particularity of burnout teams. When looking at burnout through the lenses of TCI it becomes clear that the joint overall responsibility has not been met. Stress in teams poses particular challenges. Therefore external help becomes necessary and can aid teams to get unburdened (Fengler and Sanz 2012). In the following section, I therefore introduce facilitation as a way to encounter team conflicts and to set impulses in case of prevalent dysfunctions.

### 2.5 Facilitation

In the previous parts of this chapter, I have explained characteristics of self-actualization, teams and burnout. The relation between burnout and teams has been made more explicit in the last chapter, however there is still no answer on how burnout can lead to the self-actualization of teams. While the research question asks *how can burnout facilitate the self-actualization of teams*, in this section, I will focus on the idea that stands behind facilitation and the particular approach that is relevant when considering facilitation for teams that experience burnout. When focusing on burnout on the team-level, considering teams as representation of a social system, this means that taken interventions also need to look at teams in their wholeness and embeddedness in a greater social system. The following section is therefore centred around facilitation as a way of peace and conflict work, an approach to encounter life and to accompany related processes. On one hand, facilitation resembles a possibility to work with groups, on the other hand it goes beyond being a working style. Facilitation for me is not something that I *do*, it is something that I live. It thus goes beyond the application of methods and tools, involves my whole being, taking an influence on what I believe, what I perceive, what I feel, what I think and how I act. Facilitation thus is complex: how can I describe what I live?

Before the particular approach of facilitation which drives this whole work is being explained more explicitly, I will introduce the term facilitation (chapter 2.5.1) and locate the
expression between different influential schools (chapter 2.5.2). Afterwards, I will elaborate on my ideas, inspirations and convictions, bringing in my voice more clearly than in the previous chapters. How people are being addressed and approached through facilitation (chapter 2.5.3) is therefore as important a providing of spaces (chapter 2.5.4) which serve as starting point for intervention. In the section called *Entstörungen* (chapter 2.5.5), I will explain the aims of facilitation while the following chapter rather depicts on the convictions which lead the direction of interventions (chapter 2.5.6). The last part of this section highlights the self-understanding of the facilitator (chapter 2.5.7) who, through the intervention in the system, turns into a part of the conflict him-/herself.

### 2.5.1 General understanding

Facilitation is a term that has been gaining more importance since the beginning of the twenty first century and can be found in economic, political and non-profit organizations as well as in educational settings and many others (Hogan 2002). Following the wish to demystify, what she calls, the “craft” (Hogan 2002, 3) of facilitation, Christine Hogan, a professional facilitator and educator, started investigating on the historical roots and origin of the profession. Facilitation traces back to two Latin words: *facilis* an adjective which means easy, and *facere* a verb which means to do or to make. Facilitation therefore describes the act that refers to making something easier, helping to bring about something more easily. Through her research Hogan came to the conclusion that facilitation emerged out of different fields, disciplines and cultures and aims to “help us communicate better as human being and make more sense out of the world” (Hogan 2002, 1). The purpose of facilitation can thus be defined as easing life and the understanding of it.

While definitions and understandings of facilitation widely differ. The International Association of Facilitators (IAF) acknowledges and supports different approaches, applications
and perspectives to facilitation. Since its foundation in 1994, the IAF is dedicated to advocate and educate on facilitation while setting standards and providing accreditation for people within the field. Within the writings of this thesis, a facilitator is understood as midwife and catalyst who eases the process without determining it. Hogan (2002) writes that facilitators like midwives accompany only short birthing phases of groups. A midwife helps in the process of giving birth but does not give birth itself, s/he is not present at conception nor does s/he celebrate important life transitions with the child (Hogan 2002).

2.5.2 Between different schools
Due to the diverse backgrounds that contribute to the facilitation field38, the language and culture that constitutes the disciplines can differ widely (Hogan 2002). The IAF’s members for instance are committed to use a code of ethics which guides their professional practice (International Association of Facilitation 2019). In contrary, the schools and works constituting the perspective taken in this work stem from my personal experience, education and a multitude of influential factors. I see elicitive peace work, the systemic approach and conflict transformation as consequence to the formerly described view of conflicts and now introduce its key.

While a contextualized application can be found in different stages of this thesis, this paragraph mainly aims to give a rough and abstract overview about the chosen schools. Making use of ideas about facilitation from different schools and practice felt complementing and let me choose a structure that combines statements from different authors instead of letting them stand for themselves. However, in an attempt of staying close to the original ideas and texts, I decided not to adapt or change the expressions and to let them stand side by side. The language

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38 A summary of different influential streams and disciplines on facilitation can be found in Hogan (2002, 8–9).
being used will therefore be marked by vocabulary that stems from the facilitation of teams and organizations within the profit- and non-profit sector, systemic thinking, experiential and non-formal learning as well as from the peace and conflict field and in particular the Innsbruck School.

The used ideas have been influential and inspirational for me and bring together workings and living worlds between which I am used to transit. Since I assume that the same familiarity is not the case for every reader of this thesis, I will give some examples and background information that might help to understand and locate the standpoints taken. While differing working contexts take an influence on whether it is being talked about clients, participants, conflicting parties or team members, a change in expression for me does not lead to a different understanding of facilitation. Further, the term facilitator for me summarizes and comprises roles that can be referred to in this chapter as counsellor, peace and conflict worker, space holder and others.

When referring to the systemic approach, I do not exclusively allude to a particular school of systemic thinking. I rather aim to comprise all attempts taken in this regard, highlighting those aspects, that I consider relevant in relation to the thesis topic. Methodologically, the transrational peace philosophy as taught at the Innsbruck School, results in elicitive conflict transformation which can be seen as method, art and science at the same time (Dietrich 2014). Through the elicitive approach, I found a way to work with a multiplicity of lenses when looking at burnout and teams and to create a framework for conflict work in which transformation can take place. As the word *elicit* entails, the idea of the elicitive approach is to evoke and bring bringing forth something which is already there. Like systemic facilitation, the elicitive approach requires a shift in attitude that sees the individual as holistic unity that does not consider body, mind, spirit and emotions as separate and considers the individual as interconnected being in a cosmovision of collective wholeness (Murphy 2018).
2.5.3 Working with experts

In the systemic approach, every person is understood as expert of the own life. Systemic work is informed by the intention that lies behind the client’s call for support and starts with the client’s wish to transform his/her current situation (Ludewig 2000). This step implies awareness about a prevalent dysfunction in relationships and a wish to change something about it. This further involves the willingness and readiness for change to occur. This is also the only requirement towards the involved conflict parties before starting to work elicively (Dietrich 2017).

Relationality is the guiding principle which drives my idea of facilitation and supported through all schools. This puts the main interest on human beings, and it takes their interconnectedness into the focus. Thus, no personality can be detached from its context and will always be influenced by its surroundings as well as every individual will take an influence on the overall system (Satir 1988). Whatever is being observed, understood or perceived, is considered to be an interpretation which is influenced through the lenses of the recipient and the result of social constructions (Schlippe and Schweitzer 2015). Moreover, perceiving different realities means that every behaviour is a reaction towards the circumstance of the prevalent reality and thus makes sense, if you know the context (Schlippe and Schweitzer 2016). Therefore, every perception about a situation is equally valid and meaningful and cannot be grasped entirely when looking upon it from the outside.

Diamond (2007) highlights that the resources which are necessary for transformation are intrinsic within the clients and points towards the systems natural tendency to balance themselves out. While the access to such competences can be sometimes blocked, “the individual has a sufficient capacity to deal constructively with all those aspects of life which can potentially come into conscious awareness” (Rogers 1951, 24). Facilitators try to set impulses that aid to transcend the blockages which hinder the perception and usage of resources.
for transformation that are already existent (Schlippe and Schweitzer 2012). Being the experts of themselves and of their own lives, the clients decide upon what seems appropriate and helpful for them while the facilitator functions as process-companion who makes offers and provides inspiration that can be accepted or refused (Mack 2016; Schlippe and Schweitzer 2016):

it becomes impossible to consider that a family, or a community, an organization or a nation, can benefit from being worked on from the outside. Living things change and grow in a healthy way, not because they are made to by outside forces, but because they want to, or because they do so naturally. Even in instances where the impulse to change has come from an outside stimulus, actual behavioural change occurs from within. It cannot be imposed. (Diamond 2007, 50)

While using theatre as method for community building, Diamond came to understand that “[a]n invitation from one individual or an organization is not enough to guarantee that the invitation is actually from the community” (Diamond 2007, 52). Even if systemic work is done in a forced context (consultation or therapy might for example be dictated by state officials due to legal procedures), it still orients itself with the intention of the client. Conjointly carving out the client’s intention gives orientation and sets the frame in which interventions are allowed to take place (Ludewig 2000). Getting to know and valuing the systems structures hence is essential and interventions become untenable or have destructive effects if they are not attuned to the prevalent structures (Schlippe and Schweitzer 2016).

2.5.4 Providing spaces

Facilitation means to find a way to transform blockages, disturbances and conflicts in a way that leads them away from having destructive consequences. Thus, systemic interventions are meant to enable transitions that allow individuals and social systems to move from a certain order state into another and to give up detachment from a sense attractor that has led to fixated patterns and a blockage in the system (Schlippe and Schweitzer 2015). Symptom, problems
and diseases are not objects but processes, formed by the actions and through the communication of different persons. One task therefore is, to create a space in which opportunities for transformation occur more frequently than they would otherwise (Schlippe and Schweitzer 2015).

While Lederach talks about a “safe container” that is needed for conflict transformation, Jennifer Murphy works with the image of a sacred space of learning and transformation that opens up possibilities for awareness and building of consciousness while allowing “recognition of our radical human dependence, independence and interdependence” (Murphy 2018, 267). This container like frame and safe space needs clear boundaries as it is meant to give orientation and trust that allows the actors to engage with what there is and to encounter each other (Lederach 1995; Dietrich 2014). A provided space thus is a place for the estranged to meet, exchange, engage and even embrace; where they create and re-cerate common ground in contested histories embedded in their social and physical geographies. (Lederach and Lederach 2010, 4–5)

It is the “proximity of conversation and processes that permit people to touch and feel a sense of safety and change” (Lederach and Lederach 2010, 199). A container “holds the unique capacity and potential to both experience and create echoes” (Lederach and Lederach 2010, 10), allowing resonance to arise between all actors of the conflict. Although communal or individual blockages might be present, it is within such spaces that perceiving and imagining differently becomes possible and transformation can take place (Murphy 2018). Sharing a spatial component means to “leave traces of light and understanding” (Allerstorfer 2018, 222) by welcoming participation and exploration of the topic that presents itself as urgent and relevant in the eyes of the conflict actors.

In order for this safe space to emerge, a certain attitude towards the conflicting parties and their situation needs to be considered. Through his experience in facilitating processes of individuals and groups, Rogers (1961) names the willingness of the facilitator to understand
the inner world of the client/s as contributing factors to the atmosphere of freedom in which a moving in thinking, feeling and being can take place. While “in the midst of conflict people want to be heard and understood” (Lederach 1995, 52), curiosity hence is one quality of facilitators that equip themselves with an “attitude of not-knowing” (Schlippe and Schweitzer 2016, 54),\(^{39}\) aiming to allow a multitude of perspectives to arise and exist simultaneously.

In order to be perceptive within the conflict system, which means to use the potentially transformative energy of the conflict for transformation, the elicitive facilitator needs to be able to resonate with the involved conflict parties (Dietrich 2017). Empathic engagement signifies respect for the human beings involved in the conflict and acceptance of their behaviours, needs, drives and fears. Empathy also means to see “the presented problems towards the deeper patterns of relationships, including the context in which the conflict finds expression.” (Dietrich 2014, 50). Resonance therefore is an essential precondition of conflict work and concerns every conflicting party. Facilitators therefore can be considered an all-partisan third party of the system (Mitchell 1993).

### 2.5.5 Entstörungen

Systemic interventions are targeted to reduce the systemic complexity of the setting and trigger pleasant associations, Schlippe and Schweitzer (2012) use the German expression *Entstörungen*. The interventions aim to focus rather on the salutogenetic than the pathogenetic factors. Ludewig’s describes the aim of the systemic approach by finding a balance between problem alleviation and handling problems. While, in the first case, the intention lies behind relieving pain and diminishing the problem perception, *handling problems* rather refers to an extension of choices, leading to a mobilization of resources (Ludewig 2000). Literally the term *Entstörung* could be translated into English like a de-disturbance, something that leaves room

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\(^{39}\) original citation in German: „*Experte des Nichtwissens*“ (translated by the author)
to be unfolded, disentangled and verwunden. Before disentanglement can take place, the system’s complexity is supposedly increasing since the systemic approach aims to uncover hidden resources through allowing a multitude of perspectives to arise.

Working elicatively means to first take and enter the conflict as it is. Due to the intelligence of living systems, past behaviour, decisions and struggles are seen as consequence of an adaptive behaviour. While every behaviour has a meaning for the cohesion of the whole system, disturbances and symptoms resemble a form of survival of and protection for the respective system (Schlippe and Schweitzer 2012). The idea of the systemic approach is not to focus on what cannot be changed anymore and to move away from a remorseful attitude towards the past. Seeing the situation as given provides the ground on which transformation can take place. An appreciative perspective towards the past and towards emerged strategies is therefore typical for the systemic approach as it sets free transformational potentials. Lederach (1995) therefore talks about empowerment through context-awareness, which is why the elicitive approach is intended to draw out and draw upon present communal held knowledge which is related to transforming conflicts between individuals, groups and in communities.

Language and the stories human tell, shapes their realities and bring to light different standpoints. Telling of stories leads to an awareness about the own influence of patterning communication processes and the responsibility that own involvement entails (Schlippe and Schweitzer 2015). Stories resemble opportunities for resonance to arise. The systemic approach is based on the idea that transformation occurs through a change in cognitions, emotions and behaviour: “[t]he potential for change lies in our ability to recognize, understand, and redress

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40 While Schlippe and Schweizer (2012) use the German verb verwunden to describe the disentanglement and reduction of complexity through therapeutic interventions in relation to health disturbances, Dietrich (2013) makes use of the same word (chapter 2.1.2) when describing the transformation of conflicts.
what has happened, and create new structures and ways of interacting in the future” (Lederach and Maiese 2009, 8).

An exchange of stories allows to carve out contradictions in the perceptions about clients’ lived experiences while it also brings forth overlapping and communalities of perception that are referred to as commonly held convictions (Schlippe and Schweitzer 2015). This procedure is aimed to enable re-narrating seemingly intransigent images, destabilize attractors and thus transform cognitive, emotional, behavioural patterns (Schlippe and Schweitzer 2016) and transgress perceptions and conversations about what does not work (Schlippe and Schweitzer 2015). Instead of a talking about problems that are believed to bring forth more problems, the systemic approach asks for exceptions and the plausibility of certain behaviour (Schlippe and Schweitzer 2016). Facilitation is therefore supporting way to change and retell these patterns instead of finding out the reasons for their establishment.

2.5.6 Sense of direction

Facilitation is understood as an offering of ideas and impulses that are aimed to create movement within the conflict system and among its relations. Although these movements might be intentional, their consequences cannot be predictable due to the chaotic and complex character of social systems which have a life of their own (Schlippe and Schweitzer 2016; Kriz 1995). Since it is “better to rely upon the client for the direction of movement in the process” (Rogers 1961, 12), it is not the elicitive facilitator that takes the decisions or the exclusive responsibility for action. It is the conflict parties themselves that indicate the direction, rhythm and method of transformation (Lederach 1995). This consequently results in a flexible handling of a systemic consultation or therapy according to its goals, issues, settings and time frame.
Schlippe and Schweizer call this the “principle of tailor-made intervening” (Schlippe and Schweitzer 2012, 33).

Lederach and Lederach (2010) talk in their book When blood and bones cry out about collective healing. For the two authors, this means to stay in touch with individual as well as with collective voices. Finding a balance between a consideration of individual needs and having an eye on the whole is also highlighted by Ludewig (2000) when he describes characteristics of working systemically. Facilitation thus implies a re-creating of common ground (Lederach and Lederach 2010) which aids to indicate stages and communalities where collaboration would be possible and synergy effects could be used. Working systemically thus means to work towards a collaborative spirit in which the inputs of every member of the social system are being considered (Schlippe and Schweitzer 2015). A common history or a glimpse of common reality allows sense to arise according to the teams existence, goals, functions and principles (Dietrich 2017). Although perceptions and interpretations might still differ between the single members, the own place in the overall structure and corresponding tasks becomes clearer and allows communication between the other members to flow freely.

Facilitation for me means to trust into one’s intuition when finding a balance between interfering and trusting in the process. This thus implies to care enough to neither use the other not to interfere in the person’s process and to prove that “satisfaction comes in having set him free to grow in his own fashion” (Rogers 1961, 84). Serendipity is what Lederach (2005) calls this sense for direction and venture, having a “foot in what is and the other foot beyond what exists” (Murphy 2018, 273). When using this expression, I particularly refer to Lederach’s description that he uses in his book The moral Imagination. Lederach considers serendipity as important quality in peacebuilding. This “[a]ccidental sagacity links the unexpected in the

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41 original citation in German: “Prinzip des maßgeschneiderten Intervenieren” (translated by the author)
social environment with a capacity to observe it, see what it means, and innovate appropriate
responses” (Lederach 2005, 128–29), it thus means to trust in process and people who are
having the wisdom of transforming their conflicts. At the same time stands the acceptance of
intuition as legitimate aspect of the own personality that leads to take decision and action
beyond reason. Serendipity for me implies to work with what there is while it also implies
being able to imagine, having the “capacity to see what is found along the way and adapt
creatively while keeping a keen sense of purpose” (Lederach 2005, 129).

2.5.7 The facilitator as a tool

Dietrich sees the concept of elicitive conflict transformation as a “greatly expanded approach
to understanding peace and conflict” (Dietrich 2013, 5) and describes elicitive conflict workers
a central actors. This does not mean that they are experts that observe, analyse and resolve the
conflict but because they add themselves as party into the dysfunctional system and therefore
become a tool that influences the surrounding network (Dietrich 2017).

While the facilitator perceives the team’s order through its personal lenses and can
therefore never have a complete picture, this outward perspective can bring forth aspects about
inner dynamics, that the team members, due to their personal involvement, are not able to
recognize. Being able to express and describe the own perception is a prerequisite for external
team facilitation. It is confidence and conviction about the facilitator’s perception that can lead
to movement and transformation, even if the given opinion may not be welcomed and generate
resistance within the team (Edding and Schattenhofer 2015a). Courage to dare tasks that go
beyond the own comfort zone, beyond the usual and expected is one of the key ingrediency
that Dietrich ascribes to elicitive conflict workers.

Hints, hypothesis, speculations, assumptions, intuitions are an important working tool
in the systemic approach (Schlippe and Schweitzer 2016) and questioning relationships patters
which contribute to maintain the disturbance can set impulses that release covered resources and enable perspective change. Instead of silencing these voices, they are brought into consciousness and given space. This means formulating questions and translating these considerations into a transparent form to which the clients can relate themselves and respond to openly. Different question techniques help to convey that distinct perceptions are expectable, acceptable and, in fact, something natural. Through questions, new information is gained while it simultaneously also generates new information (Schlippe and Schweitzer 2015).

For the elicitive conflict worker, the principle of correspondence implies that the working environment automatically mirrors the inner world of the facilitator (Allerstorfer 2018). The elicitive conflict worker’s view of the conflict will always be incomplete and fragmented because it is “not possible for the elicitive conflict worker to have an overview of the entirety of the conflict, a conflict of which he or she has become part” (Dietrich 2017, 86). Since “[i]n open systems, homeostasis feeds off the energy from the respective surroundings” (Dietrich 2017, 119), the extent to which a conflict worker can or wants to be the energy resource for the dysfunctional system plays an essential role.

Therefore, self-awareness is an essential requirement for elicitive facilitators. Becoming a part of the system signifies that the conflict worker can contribute to balancing the system as well as cause harm and further disturbances (Dietrich 2014). Therefore, facilitators “must have a deep comprehension of self, her own context and biography” (Murphy 2018, 273) and need to know their own triggers, wounds and shadows. Dietrich points out the need for to communicate congruently, authentically but selectively and talks in this regard about the conflict worker’s process of ongoing choices that need to be taken between self-preservation and self-extension. This process involves “one of the facilitator’s core duties and sometimes challenges to rebalance him or herself” (Allerstorfer 2018, 228) and to know own limits that are described through the “individual’s own stability, flexibility and capacity for
resonance” (Dietrich 2017, 138–39). While a decision towards own physical and mental health need to be prioritized, pure self-preservation would conflict with the openness and imagination that is required when meeting conflict parties.

This section has shown that facilitation requires more than the simple applications of methods and tools. Elicitive conflict work thus requires more subtle skills than the prescriptive which is why Lederach also calls peace work a skill an and art (Lederach 2005). Dietrich therefore suggests a training that encompasses physical, psychic, mental and spiritual training and facilitates staying present, attentive and empathic in the conflict (Dietrich 2014). In order to understand if facilitation can be a way to approach the complexity teams and lead to a self-actualization of such in the face of burnout, I will summarize the hitherto existing research findings in the previous chapter.

2.6 Summary of theoretical findings

Engaging with different schools and authors in the previous sections of this chapter, helped to clarify the understanding of self-actualization (chapter 2.2), teams (chapter 2.3), burnout (chapter 2.4) and facilitation (chapter 2.5). Figure 2-3 give a visual overview about the four main key concepts which constitute the research question. Within the following lines, I will interlink the insights from the four sections and shortly summarize the main findings that have been taken in regard to the research question: how can burnout facilitate the self-actualization of teams?
I firstly want to point out here, that burnout is not a living thing and can therefore, by itself not do anything that would facilitate self-actualization. It is thus important to consider that the research question asks for the way in which burnout, that is already present within a system in some form, can facilitate the self-actualization of teams. The question thus asks for the dynamics that can be evoked when burnout has been addressed.

Secondly, the question remains open, if teams actually have the ability to self-actualize. When we self-actualize as human beings, we transform. When we get in touch with ourselves, when we are not afraid to feel ourselves, to recognize our needs and to express what there is, we actualize the perception of our selves as well as the perception from what surrounds us. This shift in perception might be smoothly and hardly noticed, especially when done on a regular basis. While, if the shift occurs in large intervals, it can be rather difficult and painful. What happens through this shift in perception, is that the world that we thought we had known, changes, as well as our realities and our truths transform. This necessarily entails the need to realign, to position oneself anew and to re-think and re-feel (own) roles, positions, purposes, relationships, attachments, responsibilities and so much more. Self-actualization means to be in tune with oneself as well as with the rest of the world.
While Maslow’s idea of self-actualization focused exclusively on individuals, Rogers (1961) could imagine for self-actualization to also go beyond the individual. Teams are holons that are bigger than the sum of their parts. This means that it is not only the team members that can actualize themselves, it is as well the team as a whole with its interrelations and interactions that can be actualized. Just like on an individual basis, self-actualization of teams can lead to the falling of masks and a decreased stress perception. For teams this means to become aware about its own nature, culture and interrelations.

For Dietrich, a team works as functioning continuum if it is “in a dynamic equilibrium with regard to its composition, allocation of functions, workload, information distribution, ethics, motivation and appreciation” (Dietrich 2017, 121). While I consider such teams as self-actualized, this description does not always apply. Eichmann and Bauernfeind (2012) described that teams simultaneously entail the ability to support their members and surroundings as well as to pose particular challenges (chapter 2.4.6). Since burnout occurs due to incongruent and dysfunctional relationships (chapter 2.4.6) and psychological defences (chapter 2.4.6) can filter dangers in a way that lead the team to become blind for its own situation which means that teams can become dysfunctional.

Since imbalance poses particular challenges for teams (chapter 2.3.5), in case of dysfunctionality external help can feed back energy into the system (chapter 2.3.7) and set impulses for transformation (chapter 2.5.5). How such impulses might look like and how teams that are concerned with burnout can be approached from external facilitators, will be covered in evaluation of the empirical findings which follows in the next chapter.
3 Empirical part

After approaching the search question *how can burnout facilitate the self-actualization of teams* from a theoretical perspective and engaging with the topics of self-actualization, teams, burnout and facilitation in the second chapter of this thesis, I will now move to the empirical part of this research. The following chapter thus comprises the main findings that were conducted in the empirical part, namely the evaluation of interviews that were taken with different facilitators. While the theoretical part revealed facilitation as a possible way which can aid the self-actualization of teams in the face of burnout, the main focus of the empirical part was put on concrete approaches of facilitation which can lead to the self-actualization of teams. The main focus for the conceptualization of interviews thus followed the quest of how facilitators encounter groups and burnout.

The first part of this chapter encompasses a detailed introduction of interview partners (chapter 3.1). Since the talks were held in a narrative form, the asked questions were emanating from the conversation. Thus, each interview took a different course which gave the conversational partners the opportunity to focus on concrete experiences. Being aware of the background and context from which the conversation partners speak, aids to locate their answers and described approaches that are being introduced in the third part (chapter 3.3). The same counts for the second part of this chapter which encompasses the process of evaluation. In making transparent how I interpreted the interviews (chapter 3.2) I aim to facilitate connecting to the talks and respective insights more easily.

3.1 Introduction of the interviewees

In the following section, I will introduce the facilitators that I asked to share their experiences concerning burnout and teams. While all consulted persons work with teams or groups, the approaches of facilitation, the understanding of roles and concrete settings differ. In order to
understand the perspectives presented in the findings, and in particular the view’s taken on burnout, it is hence helpful to gain an overview about the context from which the facilitator’s personal experiences emerge.

<table>
<thead>
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<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
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<td>Conversation partner(s)</td>
<td>Hector Tello Mabarak</td>
<td>Georg Schobert</td>
<td>Daniela Lemm and Ute Schmidt</td>
<td>Dorothea Lehmann</td>
</tr>
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<td>Date, Time</td>
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<td>15 April 2019, 10 am</td>
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<tr>
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<td>1 hour 50 minutes</td>
<td>1 hour 55 minutes</td>
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<td>Via skype</td>
<td>In person</td>
<td>In person</td>
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<td>Dormitz (Germany)</td>
<td>Windischletten (Germany)</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Héctor Tello Mabarak (2019, March 13) has been working in Mexico with outdoor activities for more than twenty-two years. He started working in summer camps for children which lead him to the field of teambuilding where he has been working since nearly twenty years. At the beginning of his career, Tello’s work had a recreational focus which was meant to create opportunities for integration. In 2003, he started working for Outward Bound Mexico. Getting to know the association’s structure and the experiential learning approach gave him the insight that besides having fun and being entertained, adventures in the outdoors and natural environment can also serve as a vehicle for significant learning. For four years, Tello has been
the executive director of Outward Bound Mexico, offering programmes for groups and individuals aiming at personal development, teamwork. Depending on the intention, the group size can greatly vary and start up from six persons in more educational settings to the size of whole cooperations encompassing a number of 800 people for “processes of integration and personal recognition” (interview with H. Tello Mabarak, 2019, March 13, 12).42

As social pedagogue, Georg Schobert (2019, April 15) has been working in different functions, including leadership positions, in residential homes of child and youth welfare in Germany for more than fifteen years. Schobert further works as systemic counsellor and family therapist in his own practice and as trainer for systemic trainings. Moreover, in his function as supervisor for individuals and teams in psychiatry, he facilitates different team processes including team development, team counselling and team supervision. In his work, Schobert also researches the interrelation between outer conditions and what he calls “inner conditionality” (interview with G. Schobert, 2019, April 15, 20).43 While Schobert sees Burnout related to various of his working environments, it is particularly experiences from his supervisions with teams, his observations and personal experiences when touching his own capacities that he draws from for the conversation. As supervisor, Schobert accompanies teams for total duration of two years. Within one year he supervises about ten teams that range between four and fifteen people.

Daniela Lemm and Ute Schmidt (2019, April 15) facilitate a self-help group in Germany for people concerned with burnout, their relatives and those interested in the topic. After the group had been founded about five years ago, Lemm responded to an article in the newspaper which asked for support in facilitating the group in 2016. Through engaging more

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42 original citation in Spanish: “procesos de integración, de reconocimiento de individuos” (translated by the author)
43 original citation in German: “innere Bedingtheit” (translated by the author)
closely with burnout, Lemm hoped to gain a greater understanding of the topic and those concerned and being able to use these experiences in the work with her clients as alternative practitioner. Schmidt in contrast, has experienced burnout herself. Through joining the facilitation team in the same year, she enabled the group to stand, meeting the requirement of having at least one person concerned among the facilitators. The self-help group which Lemm and Schmidt facilitate together with another woman, is an open group which can be joined voluntarily and takes place once a month for two hours. During the conversation, Schmidt mentioned that they also started networking and creating collaborating with the local health care office, a working group for mental health and other institutions, they aim to establish an emergency service and reach out to the public.

Dorothea Lehmann (2019, July 16) has been working with teams in Germany for more than twenty-five years. After studying psychology, she got in contact with the field of experimental education. Together with some colleagues, she then founded a company that firstly specialized on working with groups in the experiential educational field and on outdoor-based work with companies in the style of team developments. Today, the company still focuses on accompanying team processes while the outdoor-based part has taken a back seat. Besides differing occasions that comprise foci on conflicts, changes, growth and other, Lehmann (2019, July 16) points out that it is cooperation and in particular relationships of cooperation which link all different kinds of work the company does. The sizes of teams in Lehmann’s working context can differ from about four to forty people while the average would be “between 10 and 20” (interview with D. Lehmann, 2019, July 16, 9)44 people with a time frame of one and a half to two days.

44 original citation in German: “zwischen 10 und 20” (translated by the author)
3.2 Interpretive lenses

The following section explains the evaluation process that followed after the conversations with the facilitators. The interviews were held either in Spanish or German and have been transcribed in full length in the original language. In order to allow the reader to have a coherent reading experience, I translated direct citations within the text into English. Moreover, the original statements are provided in a footnote in the original language. In all the interviews held in German, dialectic speech was used. While aiming to stay close to the told narratives and display the participants particular way of speech and talking, I did not transcribe dialectic expressions phonetically into standard forms. This allows to recognize pauses of thought and distinguish between statements that were taken by the participants with certainty and those that were taken more hesitantly or changed during speech. In a similar vein, fillers have been transcribed as far as possible and, when depicted in English, the words have been translated in a way which could be pronounced in a form which is close to its original pronunciation. For example, the filler “ähm” in German, turned into “um” or “em” in English. In order to allow a clear understanding of the symbols used in direct citations used in this thesis, an overview about the applied transcription rules can be found in appendix (IV).

Listening to the recorded talks and transcribing the conversations enabled me to engage with the findings of the conversations in various ways. I thus could work out a number of patterns which were standing out for me and helped me to identify different themes. I first read through the transcripts, letting the voices of the conversation partners talk to me again. While reading through my notes afterwards, I looked for themes, communalities, differences and complementation in the conversations. Then, I clustered themes within each interview while taking notes and summing up the content into short explanations, headings and arguments. This last step was repeated several times, each time selecting more closely what
felt interesting information that could complement the research quest. The categories that were formed to present the findings describe a sequence of aspects that the conversational partners considered important when facilitating groups. While in practice, the contexts and working approaches of the research participants strongly differ, and a difficulty to generalize was mentioned several times within the conversations, this categorization is aimed at giving an overview about key terms and standpoints taken.

3.3 Insights from the interviews

In this section, the results of the interviews are being presented descriptively according to the inductively formed structure of themes that I identified in the evaluation process which has been described in the previous section. The results are listed due to the contributions of the five conversation partners. Only those aspects that were mentioned could be coded based on the responses of the respective respondent. Since the interviews evolved along the narrative that was chosen by the conversational partners, some themes have not been covered in all conversations.

3.3.1 The facilitator’s understanding of burnout

Before going further into details about the content of the conversations, I will firstly present some of the facilitators’ personal understanding of burnout. Since their convictions serve as a base for arguments, I consider it important to start from here because this allows to follow the residuary stands taken.

For Tello burnout is accumulation of unexpressed errors and conflicts that lead to different phases and do not occur in the same way for every individual and group. He is convinced that burnout can lead to a cathartic moment that awakes something inside which had been unconscious and leads to reach unknown potentials. When explaining burnout in teams,
Tello makes use of Tuckman’s model of group formation. He finds it instructive to understand the idea of the storming phase that entails, what he calls, a “duality pattern” (interview with H. Tello Mabarak, 2019, March 13, 3). In this phase, the group can either reach “(win) () win agreements” (interview with H. Tello Mabarak, 2019, March 13, 2) or it can develop dynamics that lead the group to get involved in fights and vicious circles that hinder further movement. If this is the case, Tello sees a parallel to burnout. Tello said that “burnout can be identified as lack of motivation for new projects, lack of creativity and innovation” (interview with H. Tello Mabarak, 2019, March 13, 3), a lack of communication and a lack of structures and routines.

For Schobert, burnout means to think about what gets diagnosed as such. He relates his understanding of burnout to people’s load-bearing capacity and in particular their physical capacity. Furthermore, Schobert sees burnout connected to overload and fears, which he also calls “the phenomenon the fear of the fear” (interview with G. Schobert, 2019, April 15, 10) that can also lead to the creation of an own reality and a lack of connection to the surroundings.

While Lemm considers burnout a “serious illness” (interview with D. Lemm and U. Schmidt, 2019, April 15, 27) that needs it is time to build up and therefore also requires about the same amount of time until people “get fit again” (interview with D. Lemm and U. Schmidt, 2019, April 15, 32). Schmidt, explained that burnout “just manifests on the breaking point, 

\[45\] In the 1960s Bruce Tuckman came up with a stage model for group development which reached widespread usage within the practical field. The different stages describe how groups form and transform and how structures, interactions and relationships among the members shift before the group reaches its potential. Each of the five stages (forming, storming, norming, performing and adjourning) describes reoccurring patterns which he observed in groups (Forsyth 2019; Levi 2017).

\[46\] original citation in Spanish: “dualIDAD de: de patrón” (translated by the author)

\[47\] original citation in Spanish: “a acuerdos (ganar) ( ) ganar” (translated by the author)

\[48\] original citation in Spanish: “el burnout se pUEde identificar como falta de motivación a nuevos proYectos, falta de: creativiDAD e innovación” (translated by the author)

\[49\] original citation in German: „das Phänomen die Angst vor der Angst“ (translated by the author)

\[50\] original citation in German: “schwere Erkrankung” (translated by the author)

\[51\] original citation in German: „wieder fit sind“ (translated by the author)
which is already existent in the (. ) body” (interview with D. Lemm and U. Schmidt, 2019, April 15, 8).52

In Lehmann perception, burnout is “a very diverse picture” (interview with D. Lehmann, 2019, July 16, 4)53 with various stages which she would firstly characterize “as differently burdened” (interview with D. Lehmann, 2019, July 16, 4).54 While the final stage of burnout for Lehmann would lead to a total psychic and mental breakdown.

3.3.2 Making use of burnout as a concept

While the understandings of burnout differed greatly among the conversation partners, I also found differences in the way how the concept is being used by them or they perceive its usage of others. Tello said that while on an individual level as well as within his own team, burnout plays a big role. He finds it difficult to integrate into his working context since “is not necessarily a concept which is integrated in in in the collective” (interview with H. Tello Mabarak, 2019, March 13, 5).55

Schobert experiences a difference in the way how burnout and its symptoms have been related to in society. He thereby explains that while twenty years ago, a burnout diagnosis rather caused fear in employees because “it used to be a shame (. ) not to be able to do one’s job” (interview with G. Schobert, 2019, April 15, 5).56 In his opinion this then led to health hazards being trivialized. Nowadays, Schobert said, burnout rather is considered the result of high performance and therefore seen “like a war hero medal” (interview with G. Schobert, 2019, April 15, 5).56

52 original citation in German: „sich halt auf die Sollbruchstelle legt, die eh schon im (. ) im Körper vorhanden ist“ (translated by the author)
53 original citation in German: „ein sehr vielfältiges Bild“ (translated by the author)
54 original citation in German: „unterschiedlich belaster“ (translated by the author)
55 original citation in Spanish: “no necesariamente es un concepto que está integrado en en en el colectivo” (translated by the author)
56 original citation in German: „früher wars ne Schande (. ) seine Arbeit nimmer machen zu können“ (translated by the author)
April 15, 4). Schobert is convinced that now the perception of burnout is placed somewhere between these two sides. In his opinion this becomes visible through increase mindfulness of people with themselves “but also the leaders are more mindful of (.) the people” (interview with G. Schobert, 2019, April 15, 5). One example that Schobert mentioned in this regard is a more mindful consideration of health requirements and the emergences of institutional programmes for preventive health care.

While pointing her experiences from the self-help group, Schmidt said that burnout as a diagnosis can have a releasing effect on people and led more than one participant to the “confirmation that it is REALLY as BAD as he had always been feeling. Because nobody wanted to believe him” (interview with D. Lemm and U. Schmidt, 2019, April 15, 9). On the other hand, Lemm points to the stigmatizing effect of burnout which also influences the perception of the person concerned. This then leads people to naturally isolate themselves in work and private spaces since they cannot trust to be taken seriously. In order to avoid making themselves vulnerable, participants from the self-help group thus generally recommend others to withhold a burnout diagnosis.

Lehmann’s explained that she does not make use of the concept of burnout in her work with teams and rather orients her work on “the topics that they have” (interview with D. Lehmann, 2019, July 16, 12). She also named her personal difficulty to transfer the concept of burnout on teams because of the lack of a phased-based concept that explains the team’s respective processes. Similar to Tello, she further pointed out that burnout is not a common concept in relation to teams who would name their concern differently:

57 original citation in German: „wie so ne Kriegsheldenmedaille“ (translated by the author)
58 original citation in German: „aber auch die Leitungen gehen achtsamer mit (.) den Menschen um“ (translated by the author)
59 original citation in German: „Bestätigung, dass es WIRKLICH so SCHLIMM ist, wie er sich immer gefühlt hat. Weil es wollte ihm keiner glauben“ (translated by the author)
60 original citation in German: „an den Themen, die die haben“ (translated by the author)
it's very unfamiliar for teams to even (...) describe themselves like that. I do not think they do that. They then say, we're a shitty team, or we have a stupid boss, or we work in a stupid business, or it currently is just so exhausting, or it makes no sense here.” (interview with D. Lehmann, 2019, July 16, 10)\(^61\)  

Lehmann is not sure if it would be helpful to make use of the expression burnout in relation to teams. She points to different consequences that this could entail for teams. On one hand, she sees a positive effect if the usage of the expression would lead the team members to a “longer pause and questioning, what are we actually doing” (interview with D. Lehmann, 2019, July 16, 10)\(^62\) on the other hand, burnout could have threatening and debilitating effect as well if “understood as devaluation that one just does not manage as a team to deal adequately with loads” (interview with D. Lehmann, 2019, July 16, 10).\(^63\) Lehmann explained that different situations and contexts entail manifold invitations to deal with requirements. She further elaborated that these requirements which can be externally or come from oneself can also be too much to deal with and lead to dysfunctionality.

### 3.3.3 Team in relation to burnout

In this part, I will summarize in which way the conversational partners see a relation between teams and burnout. When talking about his first experiences with burnout, Tello describes a realization which he had about the team members whom he was working with: “what was (.) happening to them. At the personal level::: had (.) a consequence on the collective level” (interview with H. Tello Mabarak, 2019, March 13, 2).\(^64\)  

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\(^61\) original citation in German: „dass das sehr ungewohnt ist für Teams, sich überhaupt (...) selber so zu beschreiben. Das machen die glaub ich nicht. Die sagen dann halt, wir sind ein Scheißteam, oder wir haben einen blöden Chef, oder wir arbeiten in einem blöden Laden, oder ist grad wahnsinnig anstrengend alles, oder es macht hier keinen Sinn“ (translated by the author)  

\(^62\) original citation in German: „ein stärkeres Innehalten und nochmal hinterfragen, was machen wir eigentlich“ (translated by the author)  

\(^63\) original citation in German: „als Abwertung verstanden wird, dass man es als Team halt nicht schafft, angemessen mit Belastungen umzugehen“ (translated by the author)  

\(^64\) original citation in Spanish: “lo que les estaba (.) sucedió. A nivel:: personal tenía (.) una consecuencia a nivel colectivo” (translated by the author)
individual and the collective raises the question about individual, and collective responsibility about processes, and the identification of conflicts: “I am individually responsible for::: the conflict in which I find myself (.) but I am also part of a group. And the group, collectively, is generating certain circumstances that hELP or do NOT hELP (.) to transcend individually (.) each conflict” (interview with H. Tello Mabarak, 2019, March 13, 3).65

When talking about the relation between teams and burnout, Tello also talks collective stress and makes use of Johann Galtung’s triangle of violence66. Every group can express burnout differently in Tello’s opinion and burnout on a collective level has to be identified differently than through emotional and physical reactions and, due to its diversity does not get tangible. He also explains this by referring to Otto Scharmer’s U-Theory67, explaining that “different individuals with the same resources, completely different outcomes because (.) from WHEre they are acting is completely different” (interview with H. Tello Mabarak, 2019, March 13, 4).68

For Schobert how a team understands itself takes an influence on the emergence of burnout. In newly composed teams, Schobert has “never met the phenomenon” (interview with G. Schobert, 2019, April 15, 11)69 whereas he sees a higher probability for burnout in established teams that are faced with change processes.

65 original citation in Spanish: “YO soy individualmente responsable de::: el conflicto en lo que me encuentro (.) pero también soy parte de un grupo. Y el grupo, colectivamente, está generando ciertas circunstancias que aYUdan o NO aYUdan (.) a transcender individualmente (.) cada conflicto” (translated by the author)
66 In the 1970s, the Norwegian peace researcher Johan Galtung tried to broaden the common interpretation of peace at that time that was focused on direct violence. Galtung thus differentiated between negative and positive peace and developed a concept of violence by dividing into: direct violence, structural violence and cultural violence. Galtung’s ideas can be found in his article Violence, Peace and Peace Research (Galtung 1969).
67 Scharmer’s idea of the Theory U describe a theory of learning, management and change processes that can be found in his book The Essentials of Theory U (Scharmer 2018).
68 original citation in Spanish: “diferentes individuos con los mismos recursos, outcomes completamente distintos porque (.) desde DÓNde están actuando es completamente distinto” (translated by the author)
69 original citation in German: „das Phänomen also nie angetroffen“ (translated by the author)
Lemm sees a relation of burnout and teams as so far as “if someone had burnout and then returns to the same team, the team is not the same anymore” (interview with D. Lemm and U. Schmidt, 2019, April 15, 22).\(^70\)

Lehmann explains that burdened teams feel stressed because, due to their “inner fabric” (interview with D. Lehmann, 2019, July 16, 4),\(^71\) they react in a particular way to the invitations that they perceive through external circumstances.

### 3.3.4 Perception

This paragraph will pick on the stands taken from the conversational partners in terms of perception and seeing things differently. For Tello there is no clear formula that could be followed to identifying symptoms of burnout in teams and all depends on the abilities of the person who, for some reason, perceives that the team reacts differently than it normally would. When applying Galtung’s idea of the different forms of violence, Tello said that it becomes easier to identify aspects that have habit and manifested themselves in the structures and culture of the team that they are not recognized and seen as anymore. While he highlights that there is no need to get that far, he said that if aspects become directly visible like slamming doors, working extra hours or communicating screamingly, this often turns into “the moment to act↑”(interview with H. Tello Mabarak, 2019, March 13, 14)\(^72\) in which companies ask for external help.

Tello said that “emotions are a vehicle to understand where we aRE” (interview with H. Tello Mabarak, 2019, March 13, 9)\(^73\) and being able to experience emotional moments that are often not part of the working context, allows to later integrate and recognize these

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\(^70\) original citation in German: „wenn einer ein Burnout hatte und dann in das gleiche Team zurückkommt, das Team nicht mehr das gleiche ist“ (translated by the author)

\(^71\) original citation in German: „inneres Gefüge“ (translated by the author)

\(^72\) original citation in Spanish: “es el momento para actuar↑” (translated by the author)

\(^73\) original citation in Spanish: “emociones son un vehículo para entender en donde estAMOS” (translated by the author)
movements within other contexts like the working environment and create a different understanding of work. While in moments of desperation, indicators for burnout are often ignored, Tello explained that having a sense for collective emotion and collective perception means to more easily identify those indicators for burnout that are not obviously visible. Tello further stated that everyone can listen to the group, recognize indicators and name the group’s needs.

Schobert points out that perceptions within teams and team members can differ greatly and that due to the personal and professional background of each person “experience is always a very individual experience” (interview with G. Schobert, 2019, April 15, 6). He said that “a phenomenon (. . .) that I often encounter, that people (. . .) that what (. . .) they know what would be good for them in certain situations of pressure, (. . .) especially avoid doing” (interview with G. Schobert, 2019, April 15, 20). During the course of his career, Schobert began putting a stronger focus on health care issues, realizing that within the service sector “the employee is actually the most valuable” (interview with G. Schobert, 2019, April 15, 15). Schobert sees a potential in working individually with clients. He is convinced that supporting single employees to do a good job also pays off for the team and said that when one team member slackens chain reactions can occur.

Lemm and Schmidt explain that they can witness how the perception of the participants in regard to their own situation often changes. For Lemm, this includes the participants attitudes towards themselves who “learn to think differently about themselves” (interview with D. Lemm and U. Schmidt, 2019, April 15, 9) and to stop thinking about

74 original citation in German: „Erleben ist immer ein sehr individuelles Erleben“ (translated by the author)
75 original citation in German: „ein Phänomen (. . .) dem ich sehr oft begegne, dass Menschen (. . .) das was (. . .) sie wissen, was gut für sie wäre unter bestimmten Drucksituationen (. . .) besonders vermeiden das zu tun“ (translated by the author)
76 original citation in German: „der Mitarbeiter eigentlich das Wertvollste ist“ (translated by the author)
77 original citation in German: „lernen, über sich selber anders zu denken“ (translated by the author)
burnout like a failure. Schmidt said during the conversation that it is often relieving for the people of self-help group “to realize, yes that’s not because of ME, but that’s because of the advisor I have” (interview with D. Lemm and U. Schmidt, 2019, April 15, 28) and to identify the aspects on which they cannot have an influence. Schmidt also said that due to the stigmatization around burnout and the lack of understanding that is often the case in the old workplace, it can be easier for employees to change the workspace and start a new position where there is no need to mention their diagnosis.

Schmidt is convinced that burnout leaves marks on the person itself at that “the body remembers that” (interview with D. Lemm and U. Schmidt, 2019, April 15, 3). While, in her personal case, her heart is the weak point, the exhaustion can be felt for everyone in a different part. She therefore likes to consider burnout as a companion that gives direction and indicates if things get too much.

Lehmann points out that teams react to stress very differently. Lehmann said that it can be helpful to distinguish between problems and restrictions: “a problem can be solved and then it goes away or at least becomes smaller. A restriction remains” (interview with D. Lehmann, 2019, July 16, 12). In Lehmann’s eyes, trying to solve or change restrictions can lead to frustration and the experience of continuous failure and “therefore a possible ingredient for, I’d say, I’ll now stick to the term burnout” (interview with D. Lehmann, 2019, July 16, 12).

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78 original citation in German: „wieder zu merken, ja das liegt nicht an MIR, sondern des liegt an dem BerATER, den ich da hab“ (translated by the author)
79 original citation in German: „der Körper merkt sich des“ (translated by the author)
80 original citation in German: „ein Problem kann ich lösen und dann geht’s weg oder es wird zumindest deutlich kleiner, Eine Restriktion bleibt“ translated by the author)
81 original citation in German: „damit eine mögliche Zutat auch für, sag ich mal, ich bleib jetzt mal bei dem Begriff Burnout“ (translated by the author)
3.3.5 Methods, tools, techniques

In this section, I summarize what the facilitators ‘do’ in their work. This theme thus shows the specific tools, methods and techniques the facilitators apply and the meaning that they ascribe to those. Tello grounds his work on experiential learning and uses games, nature and adventure to create spaces which reach beyond the known daily routine of his participants, putting them into more vulnerable positions in which intuition plays an important role and helps them to be more open and perceptive.

Introducing Tuckman’s model to the team can aid them to work out the team’s current phase through which their own positions and team dynamics get more tangible. Other than that, Tello offers theories that aid to work more profoundly on the team’s topics, which can mean to “identify what are the conflict styles, styles of personality, the management styles, the styles of (.) well collectively identifying our objectives” (interview with H. Tello Mabarak, 2019, March 13, 7).^82

Through a “series of compromises” (interview with H. Tello Mabarak, 2019, March 13, 11)^83 at the end of his work with groups, Tello tries to make sure that the worked-out results do not get lost. He therefore asks the question about which aspects from the past does the team not want to work on anymore, which therefore needs to be dropped or changed. On the other hand, he asks for aspects that need to be kept or additionally added.

Schmidt explains that the exchange with people in a similar situation is often relieving for the participants of the self-help group. Through the atmosphere in the meetings, Schmidt sees the participants’ necessity met to, through an exchange with like-minded people, compensate what they cannot gain from their normal surroundings. Schmidt considers it

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[^82]: original citation in Spanish: “identificar cuáles son los estilos de conflicto, estilos de personalidad, los estilos de administración, los estilos de (.) pues colectivamente identificar nuestros objetivos” (translated by the author)
[^83]: original citation in Spanish: “serie de compromisos” (translated by the author)
important for the participants of the self-help group to have a space where they can meet each other on one eye-level and Lemm points out that the space needs to offer the possibility for everyone to express oneself.

Methodologically, language is the main tool that guides Lehman’s work which tries to provide the team with a greater understanding “about description, meaning explanation of how psychic processes take place” (interview with D. Lehmann, 2019, July 16, 6).\(^8\) Besides the usage of different models, she also combines tools based on language with images and creative artistic methods.

Lehmann highlights that a process “in the sense of clearing up, clearing out, in the sense of prioritizing” (interview with D. Lehmann, 2019, July 16, 22)\(^8\) can be discharging for teams. She names working on conflict as another possibility: “clarify areas of tension to such an extent that they are not permanently causing additional stress” (interview with D. Lehmann, 2019, July 16, 5).\(^8\) Methodologically, Lehmann points to the square of values\(^7\) as a tool that aids to sensitizes the team about the value of differences and allows it to understand their current position and behaviour. Lehmann started to emphasize more on voluntary options that where focused on self-empowerment. Through practical seminars, she therefore started to provide basic knowledge about the emergence of stress and strain aimed for the participants to take responsibility for “what one evaluates HOW” (interview with D. Lehmann, 2019, July 16, 17)\(^8\) and to decide how one wants to interpret and react to an invitation for stress. In her view

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\(^8\) original citation in German: “über Beschreibung, also Erklärung, wie psychische Prozesse ablaufen“ (translated by the author)
\(^8\) original citation in German: “im Sinne von Aufräumen, ausmisten, so im Sinne von nochmal neu priorisieren“ (translated by the author)
\(^8\) original citation in German: „Spannungsfelder soweit geklärt werden, dass das nicht ein permanenter Zusatzstress ist“ (translated by the author)
\(^7\) Lehmann here refers to the value and development square of Schulz von Thun (1989, 43–63).
\(^8\) original citation in German: „was man WIE bewertet“ (translated by the author)
stress and self-empowerment meets the need of many organizations where there is a high interest and demand to deal with the topic of stress.

3.3.6 Cooperative behaviour

This part encompasses the connections that the facilitators see in terms of cooperation behaviour of teams and burnout. Tello argues that independently of the team’s stage or maturity, images about the others exist which is why he wants to create spaces where the team members can newly get to know each other like persons, “RE-LEARN who they are” (interview with H. Tello Mabarak, 2019, March 13, 8) and identify connectors with others. For him this means to engage with the question of: “What do we share, beyond what makes us different?” (interview with H. Tello Mabarak, 2019, March 13, 8). Tello is convinced that experiencing fun and sharing common moments helps to dilute differences and thereby refers to Plato: “Plato said (.) that I get to know a person much more in one hour of game than in a year of conversation” (interview with H. Tello Mabarak, 2019, March 13, 9).

Schobert said that in teams where cooperation prevails and where there is a higher tolerance for making mistakes than in competing teams, the way how stress is seen and dealt with is more relaxed. In such teams it is more unlikely to find burnout and “weaknesses of individuals, are then, so to speak, only becoming visible after YEARS” (interview with G. Schobert, 2019, April 15, 7). In contrast, Schobert said that capacity limits are reached more easily in teams where competition is prevailing and where mobbing and outdoing others leads to an increased stress perception. In teams where a culture of competition prevails, perceiving

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89 original citation in Spanish: “REAPRENDER quiénes son” (translated by the author)
90 original citation in Spanish: “Qué compartimos, más allá de qué nos hace distinto?” (translated by the author)
91 original citation in Spanish: “Platón decía (.) que conozco muchísimo más a una persona con una hora de juego que con un año de conversación” (translated by the author)
92 original citation in German: „Schwächen Einzelner, die werden dann sozusagen erst nach JAHREN sichtbar“ (translated by the author)
oneself as part of a larger context also becomes more difficult in Schobert’s eyes. Schobert sees little room to influence cooperation, and said that “personal sensitivities often play SO much of a role that you simply well (.) also reach limits” (interview with G. Schobert, 2019, April 15, 13).93

While Schmidt points out that the perception of stress can be higher because there is a lack of recognition and a lack of “only so very minimal details and humanitarian behaviour” (interview with D. Lemm and U. Schmidt, 2019, April 15, 31).94 This can be one reason that complicates the reintegration into the old workspace where “no change in structures” (interview with D. Lemm and U. Schmidt, 2019, April 15, 21)95 has occurred. In the conversation Lemm said: “we assume that relatives are also often not well because they do not know how to deal with (.) the persons concerned” (interview with D. Lemm and U. Schmidt, 2019, April 15, 18)96 which often leads them to keep back their own condition, not knowing how to deal with their strongly burdened relative and trying to avoid additional stress.

Lehmann explained that “in a well-functioning system, actually easier to SHARE work and (...) one can better support each other and thus achieve more, so too in terms of synergy effects” (interview with D. Lehmann, 2019, July 16, 20).97 She therefore talks about teams who can work like a leverage and mean that unpleasant work can be perceived as easy and fun. In her opinion, this happens when team members treat each other with appreciation and mutual recognition. On the other hand, Lehmann points out that settings with high time

93 original citation in German: „da spielen oft persönliche Befindlichkeiten SO starke Rolle, dass man da einfach also (.). auch an Grenzen kommt“ (translated by the author)
94 original citation in German: „NUR so ganz minimale Kleinigkeiten, Menschlichkeiten“ (translated by the author)
95 original citation in German: „an den Strukturen nichts geändert“ (translated by the author)
96 original citation in German: „wir unterstellen ja↑, dass es Angehörigen auch häufig nicht gut geht, weil die nicht wissen, wie sie mit (.). dem Betroffenen umgehen sollen“ (translated by the author)
97 original citation in German: „in einem guten funktionierenden System auch tatsächlich leichter Arbeit zu TEILEN und (...) man kann sich halt besser unterstützen und damit auch mehr schaffen, also auch im Sinne von Synergieeffekten“ (translated by the author)
and performance pressure and a low tolerance for mistakes rather lead to a climate of fear. She highlights that “the willingness to cooperate decreases under stress” (interview with D. Lehmann, 2019, July 16, 20)\textsuperscript{98} which takes an influence on relationships, people’s health, individual behaviour and workplace changes. On the other hand, Lehmann said that “good climate in teams helps to endure stressful situations, but only for a certain amount of time, at a certain intensity” (interview with D. Lehmann, 2019, July 16, 20)\textsuperscript{99} She therefore considers improving cooperation and distributing loads as one possibility for teams to discharge each other.

In her work, she tries to offer “contrasting experiences” (interview with D. Lehmann, 2019, July 16, 6)\textsuperscript{100} for teams through which they can “make the experience in a team after all, we are indeed able to cooperate (…) it is not that we cannot do it” (interview with D. Lehmann, 2019, July 16, 6)\textsuperscript{101} Practical tasks and team experiments are ways that allow the group to newly experience a sense of achievement and finding sense through successful cooperation.

### 3.3.7 Communication

In this section, I describe the results that facilitators mentioned in relation to communication behaviour of teams and burnout. Tello points out that “how we form ourselves can also lead to↑ how we relate to each other” (interview with H. Tello Mabarak, 2019, March 13, 4)\textsuperscript{102} and explains that burnout, on one hand, can become visible through the a lack of communication that blocks “the possibilities to identify (.) from WHERE these are emerging °h (.) well barriers

\textsuperscript{98} original citation in German: „die Bereitschaft zu kooperieren nimmt unter Stress ab“ (translated by the author)
\textsuperscript{99} original citation in German: „gutes TeamKLIMA ähm hilfreich, Belastungssituationen auszuhalten, aber immer nur auch über eine bestimmte Zeit, unter ner bestimmten Intensität“ (translated by the author)
\textsuperscript{100} original citation in German: „Kontrasterfahrungen“ (translated by the author)
\textsuperscript{101} original citation in German: „in einem Team überhaupt wieder die Erfahrung zu machen, wir sind ja in der Lage zu kooperieren (…) es ist nicht so, dass wir das nicht können“ (translated by the author)
\textsuperscript{102} original citation in Spanish: “como nos formAMos también puede llevar a↑ como nos relacionAMOS” (translated by the author)
and obstacles that are not letting us see burnout” (interview with H. Tello Mabarak, 2019, March 13, 5). If perceived failures and conflict do not get addressed, they start accumulating and get to a point where “group performance is seen:: reflected because one of its links is not being effective” (interview with H. Tello Mabarak, 2019, March 13, 3).

At the same time, communicating openly in his opinion helps to be more attentive and to more easily identify burnout indicators. When facilitating teams, Tello aims to create spaces of trust and free trial in which a talking about own mistakes can take place. It is therefore important to work in a physical space which allows people to open up, to share and to listen. When working on communication with teams, Tello makes use of different techniques and tools that help to communicate more assertively and effectively. Tello points out that while specific positions and roles which exist in some institutions to address team matters, a certain position or hierarchical levels does not mean that indicators for disfunctions cannot be perceived and addressed.

Schobert said that in situation of high stress “communication um (. ) is almost no longer taken out verbally” (interview with G. Schobert, 2019, April 15, 13) and people stop being considerate of each other. Therefore, it can be helpful to identify the processes and ways of communication that are prevalent and those that are needed. Schobert, thus, names communication as an area which can be influenced easily: “there one can redevelop quite a bit” (interview with G. Schobert, 2019, April 15, 13). Through establishing ways of communication and sticking to these procedures can be a way to decrease friction within teams.

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103 original citation in Spanish: “las posibilidades para identificar (. ) desde DÓNDE están surgiendo estas "h (. ) pues barreras y obstáculos que no nos están dejando tras en ver el burnout" (translated by the author)

104 original citation in Spanish: „desempeño grupal se ve:: reflejado porque uno de sus eslabones no está haciendo efectivo“ (translated by the author)

105 original citation in German: „da, da wird (. ) Kommunikation eh (. ) fast nicht mehr verbalgeführt“ (translated by the author)

106 original citation in German: „da kann man ziemlich viel nachentwickeln“ (translated by the author)
Lemm considers team communication as influential factor for burnout that is worth being considered and needs to be trained. Schmidt highlighted that people with a burnout diagnoses find themselves faced by the question about communicating openly about it. Lemm said that while employers often want to know the reasons for sick-leave, Schmidt explains this through the different perceptions of mental and physical problems that are present within society and assumes that employers fear people with mental health problem because they “are afraid that soon he will not come back or whatever” (interview with D. Lemm and U. Schmidt, 2019, April 15, 2). In Lemm’s opinion “this then becomes like such a rat race (...) and (...) then of course makes it all worse” (interview with D. Lemm and U. Schmidt, 2019, April 15, 3–4).

Lehmann explained that stress leads to perceive social relationships and work as stressful and mean that “aspects like loss of meaning, cynic etcetera then also occur strongly” (interview with D. Lehmann, 2019, July 16, 4). She gives the example of a “INSANELY pronounced culture of mourning” (interview with D. Lehmann, 2019, July 16, 17) within teams and explains that in such a situation a team “just manages to keep itself completely in problem trance” (interview with D. Lehmann, 2019, July 16, 5). If the perception of a team is primed in such a way that everything is being considered negatively, in Lehmann experience this makes it hard to really work with the team. Compensating this burdening perception is therefore important in her eyes which leads her to take a stand that rather focuses on discharge processes, asking the question of “how can I change processes of evaluation and perception, so

107 original citation in German: „weil die Angst haben, der kommt gleich wieder nicht mehr oder was auch immer“ (translated by the author)
108 original citation in German: „das ist dann wie so ein Hamsterrad (...) und (...) macht natürlich dann insgesamt schlimmer“ (translated by the author)
109 original citation in German: „auch so Aspekte wie Sinnverlust, Zynismus usw dann auch stark auftritt“ (translated by the author)
110 original citation in German: „WAHNSINNIG ausgeprägte Jammerkultur“ (translated by the author)
111 original citation in German: „es halt schaffen, sich komplett in Problemtrance zu halten“ (translated by the author)
that certain things are no longer perceived as so stressful, or that I move um POSITIVE things more into my perceptive focus” (interview with D. Lehmann, 2019, July 16, 13). A way to discharge teams in her work, includes creating rituals that function “like a pill” (interview with D. Lehmann, 2019, July 16, 5) and enable the team to recognize and become aware of good things and successes.

### 3.3.8 Meaning of interventions

Besides the effort and resources being put into a facilitated session, Tello said “the biggest risk I see is that NOTHING↑ HAPPENS” (interview with H. Tello Mabarak, 2019, March 13, 10). Tello also points out to the general risk that the topic or conflict turns out to be more profound and complex than it had been expected which might lead to the team realizing that “structurally we have much more to work on↑” (interview with H. Tello Mabarak, 2019, March 13, 10). This can also include that people leave their work which cause the management a greater need for additional resources. Tello is convinced that it is more risky not to work on topics and to keep things concealed because it will show up and “it will eat you” (interview with H. Tello Mabarak, 2019, March 13, 82) in one way or the other. From his perspective, the decision and risk to face and work on topics therefore means to act long-term.

Lehmann is convinced that “change needs irritation” (interview with D. Lehmann, 2019, July 16, 9) and points out that the impulses which derive from a facilitated event can initially even worsen the perception of the situation. She said that after the event, the perception

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112 original citation in German: „wie kann ich Bewertungsvorgänge und Wahrnehmungsvorgänge verändern, sodass bestimmte Dinge nicht mehr als so belastend wahrgenommen werden oder ich stärker ehm POSITIVE Dinge in meinen Wahrnehmungsfokus rücke“ (translated by the author).
113 original citation in German: „wie eine Pille“ (translated by the author).
114 original citation in Spanish: “el mayor riesgo que lo veo es que NO PASE NADA↑” (translated by the author).
115 original citation in Spanish: “estructuralmente tenemos muchÍSIMO que trabajar↑” (translated by the author).
116 original citation in Spanish: “te va a comer” (translated by the author).
117 original citation in German: „Veränderung braucht ja Irritation“ (translated by the author).
of the situation can still be changing and therefore mean that the results might not be linked. In her opinion, this is particularly the case if a short time frame leads to open questions at the end of the event. Lehmann also states that a short time frame can imply that working on topics only happens superficially because it needs some time until confidence is built.

### 3.3.9 Facilitator’s learning

In this section, I will summarize some points made about the facilitator’s learning and personal balancing. Tello got familiar with characteristics of collective stress and found a space, tools and techniques to deal with personal stress and finds fulfilment after having lived a moment of stress in a different working place where he did not belong. He describes “[t]he relationship (.) in this individual issue with the collective and the collective with the individual” (interview with H. Tello Mabarak, 2019, March 13, 12)\(^{118}\) as influential learning that he gained when working with groups. Moreover he realized “importance of the moments in which he realizes them, the symptoms” (interview with H. Tello Mabarak, 2019, March 13, 12–13)\(^{119}\) which can evolve in different moments on the collective and individual level.

Tello points out he everywhere finds parallels between his work and his own life and that for him working with teams means that “you are working with mirrors <<laughing> no?. Literally> (.) there are times when we are giving ourselves a course, in the moment when we are giving a course” (interview with H. Tello Mabarak, 2019, March 13, 15).\(^{120}\) While Tello is working, what he tries to convey to the teams is coming back to him.

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\(^{118}\) original citation in Spanish: “La relación (.) en este tema individual con el colectivo y el colectivo con el individual” (translated by the author)

\(^{119}\) original citation in Spanish: “importancia de los momentos para reconocerlos, los síntomas” (translated by the author)

\(^{120}\) original citation in Spanish: “estás trabajando con espejos <<laughing> no?. Literalmente> (.) hay veces cuando nos estamos auto dando un curso en el momento en que estamos dando un curso” (translated by the author)
In the talk, Schobert told about a moment in his career where he experienced “what it is like, as a high-flyer so to speak, to be taken down” (interview with G. Schobert, 2019, April 15, 17). He explains that he had been working intensely until one day, he got “strong vegetative reactions↑” (interview with G. Schobert, 2019, April 15, 17) and realized his body was striking and showing his capacity limits. This now also leads him to take more breaks and a closer look at this capacity limits.

During the conversation, Lemm described that since she started facilitating the self-help group, she has a better sense and awareness for burnout indicators which she calls “finer antennas” (interview with D. Lemm and U. Schmidt, 2019, April 15, 6). This that she developed lets her deal with the topic more openly: “by now I am so far that I anyways partly also address it” (interview with D. Lemm and U. Schmidt, 2019, April 15, 6).

Lehmann said in the conversation that her job is “sometimes like solving puzzles” (interview with D. Lehmann, 2019, July 16, 14) and therefore refers to the fascination that has for the complexity of her profession and the excitement that she feels for the “joint going off in search“ (interview with D. Lehmann, 2019, July 16, 14) with her clients in order to find blocking points. Lehmann finds fulfillment in her facilitator role when she feels that her work serves someone, and others feel discharged by her facilitation. As learning on a professional level, she named that it can be helpful to expand the previously created space and gives the example of allowing mobile phones because this decision then lead the participants to be more present with the group.

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121 original citation in German: „wie das ist, als Überflieger sozusagen runtergeholt zu warden“ (translated by the author)
122 original citation in German: „starke vegetative Reaktionen↑“ (translated by the author)
123 original citation in German: „feinere Antennen“ (translated by the author)
124 original citation in German: „mittlerweile bin ich auch so weit, dass ichs dann eh teilweise auch ansprech“ (translated by the author)
125 original citation in German: „manchmal biss wie Rätsel lösen“ (translated by the author)
126 original citation in German: „gemeinsam sich auf die SUCHEN machen“ (translated by the author)
3.3.10 Facilitator’s balance

In order for him to stay balanced on an individual level, Tello creates spaces for which he can deal with personal stress for which he uses “Qigong, meditations, travels (.) one hundred percent personAL” (interview with H. Tello Mabarak, 2019, March 13, 15). Moreover, he creates spaces of personal challenges and development through which, on one hand, he finds inspiration through scientific knowledge and feels useful applying ideas by using his creativity on a daily basis. On the other hand, he needs spaces where he can “integrate it so that the school can grow and for the necessary resources to exist” (interview with H. Tello Mabarak, 2019, March 13, 15).

Moreover, he creates spaces of personal challenges and development through which, on one hand, he finds inspiration through scientific knowledge and feels useful applying ideas by using his creativity on a daily basis. On the other hand, he needs spaces where he can “integrate it so that the school can grow and for the necessary resources to exist” (interview with H. Tello Mabarak, 2019, March 13, 15).

In order to stay balanced as a team, Tello points out that they are “this doctor that takes his medicine” (interview with H. Tello Mabarak, 2019, March 13, 7). On one hand this means to have open spaces of trust and sincerity where dealing with problems becomes possible on an individual as well as on a collective level. On the other hand, he thereby also points towards a third perspective which they can gain through being member of an international association and having the possibility to gain feedback through a board which “is involved with what we DO but is not responsible for::: anything. More than giving this ::: external (.) point of view” (interview with H. Tello Mabarak, 2019, March 13, 15). Through regular meetings they create the possibility to identify and address prevalent mechanisms about things that do not work well while using verbalizing tools or others to induce further follow-ups. Tello said

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127 original citation in Spanish: “Qigong, meditaciones, viajes (.) cien por ciento personALES” (translated by the author)
128 original citation in Spanish: “inteGRARLO para que crezca la escuela y existen los recursos necesarios” (translated by the author)
129 original citation in Spanish: “este doctor que se toma su medicina” (translated by the author)
130 original citation in Spanish: “esté involucrado con lo que hacEMOS pero no está responsabilizado A::: nada. Más que a dar este::: punto de vista (.) externo” (translated by the author)
that having this “open radar towards these needs (.) that we need strategically” (interview with H. Tello Mabarak, 2019, March 13, 7) helps to not fall into a vicious circle.

For Schobert there is no difference in maintaining balance on an individual level, when being member of a working community or when giving input and facilitating teams. He said: “I actually transfer what (.) conditions myself in, in, in my place, into my workspace” (interview with G. Schobert, 2019, April 15, 20).

Lemm explains within the team of facilitators, they exchange their experience within the group after every meeting and that for her personally it is helpful to consciously create a distance between the stories of the participants and her own life which can mean “to say very consciously, that’s THEIRS and I am HERE” (interview with D. Lemm and U. Schmidt, 2019, April 15, 28).

Going on holidays helps Lehmann to find a balance in her job and that it is moreover important for her to also find time for the things that she likes. Furthermore, Lehmann talks about the need to keep track of own shares and contributions which influence the individual experience. She therefore applies the concepts herself which she recommends to her clients: “I’m convinced of them, because I also realize myself that it is good” (interview with D. Lehmann, 2019, July 16, 16).

In relation to her work, Lehmann told that she tries to use the possibilities which are there to focus on the aspects that she likes doing while leaving what is not absolutely necessary:

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131 original citation in Spanish: “radar abierto a esas necesidades (.) que necesitamos de manera estratégica” (translated by the author)
132 original citation in German: „transferiere ich eigentlich so, des was mich (.) selber so bedINGT in, in, an meinem Platz, in meinem Arbeitsbereich“ (translated by the author)
133 original citation in German: „ganz bewusst zu sagen, das ist IHRS und ich bin HIER“ (translated by the author)
134 original citation in German: „Ich bin dann ja überzeugt davon, weil ich auch selber merk, dass es gut ist“ (translated by the author)
“for example, at some point we said that we are not doing incentives anymore- I was not into that” (interview with D. Lehmann, 2019, July 16, 15).135

3.3.11 Implications

Tello also sees the need to make burnout more known within society which he sees also related to the question: “HOW are we treating people, achieving goals etcetera” (interview with H. Tello Mabarak, 2019, March 13, 6).136 He explained that by drawing a comparison between the usage of the term shock and burnout. While the word shock gets used in multiple context, Tello points out that “the characteristics of a shock (.) are not known. I am NOT really talking about a shock. I'm talking about something else” (interview with H. Tello Mabarak, 2019, March 13, 13).137 Making burnout more known for Tello means to raise awareness about “ALL the details, symptoms, considerations that necessarily (.) burnout entails” (interview with H. Tello Mabarak, 2019, March 13, 13).138

Schobert points out that sometimes there are structure that hinder the team to use its full potential and which cannot be changed by working with the team. He thereby draws the example of leaders who give contradicting instructions. In his position, Schobert personally sees the need to report these dynamics back to the leader.

Schmidt sees the need to start rising awareness on the top hierarchical level and Lemm said that it needs to be done more in regional areas. Lemm sees “still a big need to educate and inform” (interview with D. Lemm and U. Schmidt, 2019, April 15, 25)139 managers and

135 original citation in German: „Also wir haben zum Beispiel irgendwann mal gesagt, wir machen keine Incentives mehr-da hab ich keinen Bock drauf gehabt“ (translated by the author)
136 original citation in Spanish: “COMO (.) estamos tratando a la gente, consiguiendo objetivos etcétera” (translated by the author)
137 original citation in Spanish: “REALmente las especificaciones de un shOCK (.) no son conocidas. NO realmente estoy hablando de un shock. Estoy hablando de otra cosa” (translated by the author)
138 original citation in Spanish: “TODOS los detalles, síntomas y consideraciones que necesariamente (.) tiene el burnout“ (translated by the author)
139 original citation in German: „noch viel Aufklärungs- und, und Informationsbedarf“ (translated by the author)
colleagues who expect the consequences of burnout to be just the same as those of a physical illness and therefore think that after a sick leave a person is going to be restored completely. Schmidt makes a plea to generally “maybe ask more closely (...) also really expecting an answer (...) and then also (.) hopes that maybe someone will tell something, who is just not doing so good” (interview with D. Lemm and U. Schmidt, 2019, April 15, 10).

Towards the end of the interview Lehmann considered experimenting with the expression of burnout in team contexts. Lehmann said that in her opinion, optimizing processes in the working world further would leave no more room for manoeuvre and be like a “lemon squeeze” (interview with D. Lehmann, 2019, July 16, 19) on people and quality and lead to a loss of sense. She pointed towards new ideas that rather consider organizations as cell bond and consider organizing work in another form with shared responsibility and flatter hierarchies.

3.4 Summary of empirical findings

After having presented the insights from the conducted interviews (chapter 3.3) and made transparent the background of the interview partners (chapter 3.1) as well as the steps taken for evaluating the talks (chapter 3.2), I will give a short insight into the findings that resulted from the interview analysis. In order to avoid repetition, only those points are mentioned that do not find further explanation in the following discussion.

Initially, the interviews were conceptualized in order to investigate how facilitators encounter teams and burnout, the evaluation of the empirical part then put a focus on concrete

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140 original citation in German: „vielleicht mal genauer nachfragen (...) auch wirklich mit ner Antwort rechnen (...) und dann auch (.) hofft, dass vielleicht auch mal jemand was erzählt, dem es gerade nicht so gut geht“ (translated by the author)

141 original citation in German: „Zitronenpressung“ (translated by the author)
approaches of facilitation that can lead to self-actualization of teams in the face of burnout. While different methods for approaching teams and burnout where used by the consulted facilitators, their approaches overlapped insofar as all of them follow a client-centered course. In the case of Tello (2019, March 13) and Lehmann (2019, July 16) this got particularly apparent to me since, due to the unfamiliarity of teams with the expression of burnout, both facilitators refrained from using the term in their practical work.

While Lemm and Schmidt (2019, April 15) do not work with established teams but with changing groups, Lehmann (2019, July 16), Schobert (2019, April 15) and Tello (interview with H. Tello Mabarak, 2019, March 13) indicated the complexity of teams, particularly in situations of continuous and/or increased stress and when faced with burnout. What stood out for me was the conviction of all five conversation partners that plead for perspectives changes as a way to both unburden the team from its burdening situation and to set free new resources that can lead to an actualization of the team’s culture, self-understanding and structures. While Lehmann (2019, July 16) and Tello (2019, March 13) see a potential to evoke transformation through setting a focus on cooperative experiences, Schobert (2019, April 15) only agrees with both of them while considering communication as additional entry point.

Since a general summary of research results at this point rather leads to a comparison of the statements taken by the conversation partners, I will refrain from going deeper at this point. Comparing answers was not the aim of the empirical findings as the diverse context of the interview partners do not allow for a meaningful comparison. Discussion the empirical findings in combination to the theoretical insights and in regard to the research question, provides a richer and more logical evaluation. This will be done in the discussion in the following chapter.
4 Discussion

In this chapter I combine the theoretical and empirical findings that have been presented in the second and third chapter of this thesis. Hence, the following lines serve to answer the research questions: *how can burnout facilitate self-actualization of teams?* This question that led the research project was asked to find out how facilitation of groups and teams could contribute to use the transformative energy of burnout. While discussing the gained insights in the first part (chapter 4.1), I engage more clearly with my own voice, emotions, thoughts and experiences, making visible what has been creating resonance within myself. In the second part (chapter 4.2), this chapter moreover encompasses the implications that derive from this study. In the last part (chapter 4.3), I will give share personal insights that derived during the process of investigation.

4.1 Interpretation of research findings

In this section, I elaborate on the meaning of the research results. The interpretation is taken in regard to the main research question of this thesis and its respective sub questions. In the following section, I engage with these questions one by one and give answers to the calling that I posed at the beginning of this thesis process. Thereby, I highlight the key insights which I drew from the investigation and accompany those with cross references that allow to return to the parts of the thesis that served as base for the presented interpretation of findings.

4.1.1 How burnout facilitates self-actualization of teams

In the main research question, I asked: *How can burnout facilitate the self-actualization of teams?* Since burnout itself cannot take action, the idea of it already needs to be present within teams in some form (chapter 2.6) for being able to evoke and facilitate something like self-actualization. It is therefore essential to consider how burnout is being perceived. This thesis
started with the idea to see beyond prevalent understandings of burnout. This research
eendeavour showed that burnout can have manifold forms and outcomes which makes it hard
for it to be defined and identified. The underlying conflict might thus express itself through this
person in the form of an episode. Moreover, when considering burnout as consequence of a
dysfunctional system that has gotten out of balance, this allows to see burnout as embedded in
a network of interrelating systems (chapter 2.4.4). Taking this perspective turns the team into
a conflicting actor of the overall system and considers it both, being affected by burnout and
having an influence on its course.

It is thus the potentials of teams (chapter 2.3.4) that need to be accessed in order to
transform the destructive energy which burnout entails. If this energy is set free, the team can
bring itself back into a dynamic equilibrium and self-actualization can occur. On one hand,
Lehmann explained in the interview that burnout is not a common expression in team contexts
which is why teams generally do not refer to burnout. On the other hand, she gives various
examples about how teams name what they perceive as disturbing or burdening. While, naming
the disturbance is an essential precondition for blocked energy to be set free. What matters in
this respect, is not whether the expression burnout is being used. The attitude with the
disbalance is named plays an essential role since it is an invitation for the team to create a
common space in which resonance can arise and an exchange about the current situation can
take place. This invitation is the first step that can get the system into motion and opens up new
possibilities for action.

While the option for the other team members exists to opt for courses of action and
block further resonance, they can also accept the invitation and start creating a space in which
they can meet and thus find new points of contact. If an atmosphere of trust evolves in which
sharing own needs and concerns becomes possible and prevalent tasks, relationships and
structures can be questioned, the team manages to create a common ground and thus, self-actualizes itself.

Before I conclude this part, I want to point out that in practical terms, the current discourse is far from the burnout understanding which I suggest in this thesis. Mostly, burnout is still understood as individual problem. The causes of such stigmatization have been addressed in this thesis through literature and practical findings (chapter 2.4.3, 3.2.2). Sanz (2008) particularly pointed out the stigmatization due to a prevalent consideration of burnout that is focused on the individual. Moreover, Lemm (2019, April 15) explained in the interview how the perception of a person who gets stigmatized through a burnout diagnosis changes and Schmidt (2019, April 15) indicated the adhesive side effect of such stigmatization. I argue that it needs an additional discourse about burnout in which thinking about it as systemic phenomena and as warning signal for teams becomes possible. Raising awareness about the team’s interrelations and potentials in terms of transforming the burnout, could aid for more team members or teams to open up when a calling occurs. This would entail that resonance could flow more freely and devastating effects of burnout could be transformed before they lead to serious health restrictions.

To conclude this part and to finally answer the research question, it is thus the perception of burnout that decides how and whether at all, it facilitates self-actualization of teams. In prevalent research, burnout gets mainly perceived as the problem of an individual, consequence of individual weaknesses or an individual over eagerness for high performance (chapter 2.4.3). When taking these stands, I see no potential in burnout to facilitate self-actualization. Then again, burnout can be understood like a warning signal, calling or impulse that can allow the team to feel resonance with each other and access its potential (chapter 2.4.3). In the interviews, Lehmann (2019, July 16) stressed the need for irritations in order to obtain change and therefore also sees a potential in making use of the expression burnout in team
contexts (chapter 3.2.11). In this way, this means that if the naming of the disturbance is understood as attempt to feed back energy into the system, burnout can facilitate the self-actualization of teams.

4.1.2 Influencing self-actualization

In the first sub question I asked: In what way can working with teams that experience burnout foster self-actualization of individuals and teams? When looking at this question, I inevitably think of facilitation and the influence it can take on self-actualization processes. As I also pointed out at end of the second chapter, self-actualization of teams derives from the ideas of self-actualization of individuals (chapter 2.6). For a team, self-actualization entails to become aware about its own nature, culture and interrelations (chapter 3.3, 2.3.3, 2.3.6). So how can facilitation contribute to this? Due to the complexity of teams, the consequences of interventions are not predictable and no definite assertions about the outcomes of a facilitated team process can be taken (chapter 2.4.3, 3.2.8). Due to the results that stem from this research, I will make those points transparent that provide an idea about the influence facilitators can take on burnout processes within teams. Prior to understand the actions taken out from facilitators, it becomes important to keep in mind the facilitator’s role and self-understanding as well as the approach taken for facilitation (chapter 3.1).

When bringing together theoretical and practical insights, I come to the conclusion that facilitation in relation to teams that experience burnout is focused around two main points: cleaning-out and creating common ground. When facilitating self-actualization in burnout teams, I thus return to the guiding question of conflict transformation (chapter 2.1.2) that asks: how we can end something that is not wished for while building what we desire. When answering both sides of this question, the results from the interviews support the formerly taken assumptions which highlighted the importance of safe spaces for transformation (chapter
2.5.4). Offering a space for the team members to meet and encounter each other is aimed for resonance to arise. In the interview, Tello (2019, March 13) for instance highlighted that physical spaces that are outside of the team’s daily routine, allow more easily to encounter each other in a new light (chapter 3.2.6). Through these spaces, Entstörungen (chapter 2.5.5) become possible that allow for the blocked energy within systems to be twisted and verwunden (chapter 2.1.2).

In dysfunctional systems like burnout teams, the facilitator’s resonance is essential since it gives the energy that invites people to open up because sharing different perspectives, broadens the overall perception of the situation and thereby enables new possibilities for action. Lederach (2003) named the need for a multiplicity of lenses in order to see what presents itself on the surface of conflicts (chapter 2.1.2). Using the own ability to resonate can therefore provide one of these lenses, for the facilitator and team alike. Due to the result of this research, I argue that burnout teams pose particular challenges for facilitation and the creation of safe spaces for conflict transformation. Schobert said in the interview that the communication of stressed teams is often not taken out verbally anymore, while Tello brought up that there are points in which the team’s behaviour gets visible in the form of direct violence. These examples overlap with Dietrich’s (2013) arguments about conflicts complicating the expression of feelings and emotions (chapter 2.2.2) and Fengler (2012e) points out the resistance of burnout teams to reflect (chapter 2.4.6). I therefore, I see a great potential in firstly creating experiences for teams that take place through forms of facilitation that are not necessarily verbal.

In the interviews, Tello (2019, March 13) and Lehmann (2019, July 16) gave examples for such experiences: while stating that cooperation in teams decreases in the face of stress, Lehmann (2019, July 16), on the one hand, explained that she therefore tries to provide counter experiences for teams through which success can be felt and the formerly primed perception can be extended (chapter 3.2.6). Tello (2019, March 13), on the other hand, pointed to his
conviction that playing games and having fun together, creates unconscious experiences that often bring people in an unfamiliar or/and vulnerable position which leads them to open up and show emotions more easily (chapter 3.2.5, 3.2.6). Through this approach Tello creates a space where getting to know each other newly becomes possible and where former convictions, that separated the self from the other, resolve. I thus see such endeavours as first step in creating common ground which it is essential for trust to arise, for letting the masks fall which hinder resonance and to identify collective as well as individual needs along the process. Since self-actualization describes a circular process, from the point of this first base the team can go further and tackle more concrete topics that constitute its nature and structure like communication and cooperation (see chapter 2.4.6, 2.3.3, 2.3.4).

Besides creating new common ground, another way to find relief of strain is to differentiate between the aspects that can be changed and those which cannot. I found this idea repeatedly within the research. Within the theoretical part (chapter 2.5.5), I for instance explained Lederach’s (1995) idea to empower the conflicting parties through context awareness and the distinction of Ludewig (2000) between problem alleviation and problem handling. Within the theoretical part Lehmann (2019, July 16) used a distinction between problems and restrictions (chapter 3.2.5). Schobert’s (2019, April 15) idea to unburden the team while addressing the conflict actors at different levels (chapter 3.2.11) is also shared by Lederach (1997) who calls for conflict transformation on the top, middle and grassroots level (chapter 2.2.2). Further, designing regular occasions of reflection (chapter 3.2.10), appreciation and mutual recognition (chapter 3.2.7) can be a way to influence self-actualization on a long-term perspective.

When working with teams that experience burnout this also have effects on the individual. If a balance can be found between different needs, the individual re-defines its own role and position in the team. Self-actualization on an individual level can also mean to realize
that the team’s culture and/or outer framework are not compatible with one’s own needs which might lead this person to leave the team. Tello (2019, March 13) pointed towards this option as a possible result of facilitation that can be disburdening for the individual (chapter 3.2.8).

I conclude that theoretical and practical findings of this research are in tune with each other in regard to the potential of external facilitation and as a way that can evoke perspective changes and release blocked resources.

4.1.3 Encountering burnout and teams

In the second sub question I asked: How can burnout and teams be encountered? In my understanding, this question has a twofold meaning. On the one hand, the question asks for how burnout and teams present themselves. One the other hand, it asks for the way how burnout and teams can be confronted. In the following lines, I will answer each of these questions consecutively.

1) In these lines, I will point out how burnout in teams presents itself. Through the writing process of the thesis it became clear that burnout indicators can have multiple faces. Seeing burnout as a staged-based phenomenon (chapter 2.4.5) complicates to identify its symptoms. Tello (2019, March 13) pointed out that the team’s performance will be reflected on the outside (chapter 3.2.7) which is what Dietrich (2014) describes through the principle of correspondence (chapter 2.1.2). Tello (2019, March 13) thereby makes use of Galtung’s triangle of violence (chapter 3.2.3) to describe the point when disturbances in teams become visible in the form of direct violence.

Correspondence also means that, due the interrelatedness of systems, burnout is not detached from single parts. Thus, the effects of burnout can be felt in different forms and places, including the team’s interrelating network. Thus, burnout can also be expressed through the
way in which relationships are lived and perceived. If the resonance in relation to the team is blocked and boundaries are unclear because they are being felt either to lose or to rigid (chapter 2.3.6), this can also indicate that the team is out of balance. How can something like burnout be encountered if a variety of authors came to conclude, that burnout plays out differently for every individual and group (chapter 2.4.5).

Freudenberger (1975) named this difference on the individual level (chapter 2.4.5) and Tello (2019, March 13) on the collective level (chapter 3.2.3). Therefore, there is no, what Tello (2019, March 13) called, clear formula that could be followed (chapter 3.2.4) in that process. So how can burnout be encountered if the symptoms are not known? Among the indicators of stress and burnout in relation to teams that have repeatedly been mentioned in the interviews and consulted literature, I count a team’s unclear self-understanding (chapter 2.3.5, 3.2.3), low cooperative behaviour (chapter 3.2.6) and a restricted form of communication (chapter 3.2.6). I particularly want to highlight that Schobert (2019, April 15) and Lehmann (2019, July 16) both mentioned that the team’s capacity to cooperate decreases with a rising stress perception.

Moreover, getting familiar with Burisch’s (2014) and Sanz’s (2008, 2012b) listing of indicators (chapter 2.4.5, appendix V) can be helpful to read signs for disbalanced systems. In the interview, Lemm (2019, April 15) stated that since she started to facilitate the self-help group, she more easily recognizes indicator in people that could be connected to overstrain and burnout. The familiarity with the topic helps her to also address these perceived signs more frequently. While Dietrich (2017) stressed facilitators’ necessity for being able to resonate (chapter 2.5.4) I suggest that using one’s own capacity to resonate is an essential resource in regard to perceive disturbances in systems – whether understanding oneself as facilitator or not.
2) In these lines I elaborate on how burnout and teams can be confronted. To see burnout as a warning signal firstly means to see it as a helpful indicator and episode of a conflict that points to a deeper lying disturbance. This allows to see the potentials that an awareness about the phenomena can trigger in its surroundings. If burnout occurs in teams, this means that the team is highly stressed and burdened and a person with physical burnout symptoms is only the symptom carrier of this conflict. This further implies that I, as facilitator, also have to look out for other people’s needs and signs of burnout. At the same time, as being part of the system myself, I will not be able to perceive the conflict in its entirety.

When working with stressed teams, Lehmann pointed out that it can be of aid to expand the rules that constitute the space and make exceptions that allow for the team member to be more present (chapter 3.2.9). Schobert further named the potentials that can arise from working with single team member that might open up more easily in a setting where the whole group is not involved (chapter 3.2.4). In the interviews Tello (2019, March 13) and Lehmann (2019, July 16) stated that they do not consider burnout a concept that is commonly used within teams. Both of the interviewees therefore refer from making use of the expression burnout in their work with teams (chapter 3.2.2). Lehmann (2019, July 16) additionally pointed out that teams mostly use a different wording to describe the perceived imbalance and questioned if the application of the word burnout in relation to teams would be useful. She therefore pointed out that this could also lead to the team feeling queried and have weakening effect. (chapter 3.2.2.).

I conclude this section with a question that arose in my head. Being able to recognize and identify burnout signs is only one aspect that can be helpful to locate the disturbance in teams and help to facilitate its processes. The way how I perceive burnout and how I as facilitator confront it and how I confront teams, can aid to open up a wider range of perspectives and consider the system in its entirety which increases complexity and allows for more options of resonance to arise and for transformation to happen. On the other hand, I started questioning
if the usage of the word burnout can contribute to this way of facilitation as I return to the point where the stigmatizing effect of prevalent burnout understandings, creates blockages.

4.2 Theoretical and practical implications

In the third sub question I asked: *How can related processes to burnout and teams be approached and facilitated?* In the following lines, I will expand this question and also explain what makes the results of this thesis relevant for the theoretical field. I will therefore relate the findings back to the scholarly work surveyed, point out correlations and new insights. Besides the results from the theoretical and empirical part, own thoughts also serve as base for the following considerations.

4.2.1 Giving impulses

This research showed that facilitation can be a helpful way to make use of the transformative energy of burnout. While Dietrich (2017) and Forsyth (2019) argued the necessity of external facilitation for groups in case of a team’s dysfunctionality (chapter 2.3.7), Fengler (2012) pointed towards the blindness that can occur in teams in the face of burnout (chapter 1.2.3). Due to the understanding taken in this thesis, the facilitator becomes part of the system and therefore adds additional energy that can lead to movement and transformation of dysfunctions (chapter 2.5.7). If, however these impulses that derive from facilitation will lead to a self-actualization of teams, cannot be assured. Due to the complexity of both, teams and burnout, interventions do not lead to specific results (chapter 2.5.6). Besides the approach of facilitation that has been described in the theoretical part (chapter 2.5) and the approaches taken to influence self-actualization (chapter 4.1.2), I want to highlight some points that I find particular in order to design interventions which are more prone to transformation when working with stressed and burnout-related teams.
Both, Lehmann (2019, July 16) and Tello (2019, March 13) stressed the need to disburden stressed, burned out teams and to aid them clearing out and prioritizing their tasks (chapter 3.2.5) which requires the ability to perceive their restrictive situation through different lenses. Lehmann (2019, July 16) described this aspect more closely by explaining that each situation can be understood as a stress invitation which can be accepted or rejected (chapter 3.2.5). Allowing perspective changes to arise becomes easier if the team discovers common ground through getting to know the other team members newly (chapter 3.2.6) and through experiences that allow a feeling of success (chapter 3.2.6) to arise. Like already mentioned (chapter 4.1.2), I particularly count non-verbal methods that leave aside already established forms of communication and cooperation, as a promising form of intervention. While the following chapter will provide a more comprehensive overview about methods and tools, whatever impulse is given by facilitators, I suggest making use of one’s own resonance in every step, engaging empathically with the conflicting parties, their concerns and rhythm (chapter 2.5.6).

4.2.2 Practical tools, techniques and methods

As results from the interviews derive a number of methods, techniques and tools that are being used by practitioners when facilitating teams in the face of burnout. In the following lines, I will list these findings that can serve as inspiration and be of use for facilitators and teams when facilitating internal processes. Due to the nature of teams, processes of teams are diverse and cannot be generalized. The same counts for burnout processes that play out differently every time. What is presented here can therefore not be seen as magical formula or recipe that would help to facilitate burnout processes in teams. The application of these tools needs to be taken in awareness of the own situation, allowing for own serendipity, resonance and selective authenticity to arise.
Identifying burnout signs:
- Tuckman Model of team development (chapter 3.2.1, 3.2.5)
- Galtung’s triangle of violence (chapter 3.2.3, 3.2.4)

Creating a new base for encounter:
- Games, nature, adventure (chapter 3.2.5)
- Experiencing fun (chapter 3.2.6)
- Outdoor activities (chapter 3.1)
- Experiential learning (chapter 3.1, 3.2.5)
- Contrasting experiences of success (chapter 3.2.6)

Identifying needs:
- Theme Centered Interaction (chapter 2.3.6)
- Comfort zone model (chapter 2.2.4)
- Sense of coherence (chapter 2.2.4)

Identifying team culture:
- Square of values (chapter 3.2.5)
- Conflict styles, personality types, management styles, finding common objectives (chapter 3.2.5)

Disburdening:
- Distinguish between restrictions and room for manoeuvre (chapter 3.2.5)
- Series of compromises (chapter 3.2.5)
- Design rituals for mutual appreciation and recognition (chapter 3.2.7)
- Regular spaces for reflection: individually, collectively, externally level (chapter 3.2.10)
- Enable exchange, mutual support (chapter 3.2.5)

### 4.2.3 Expanding perspectives

A view on burnout as warning signal, systemic and process-based phenomenon firstly disburdens individuals. The stigmatization that can occur due to the prevalent perspective that is taken on burnout within society and scientific discussion and generally attached to the individual therefore is being diluted. Perceiving burnout systemically means that the whole system takes a share in the evolved disturbance, feels its consequences and bears the potential for transformation of the dysfunctionality. Since teams were taken as an example for social systems within this research, this view enabled to take a closer look on how burnout can become visible systemically.

What moreover became apparent through this thesis, is that naming disturbances feeds back energy into the system. Since facilitation can only start with a calling and an invitation into the conflicting system (chapter 2.5.2), there is no way to go around this call. Taking this step can require courage, it can mean to take risks and to leave the own comfort zone (chapter 2.2.4). Tello (2019, March 13) highlighted that everyone, no matter the position, can point out perceived changes within the team (chapter 3.2.7) and that this decision has to be taken in the long-term (chapter 3.2.8).

### 4.3 Personal insights

Since this work started with the elaboration of my personal relation to the research topic, I will return to a personal account before I conclude this research process. This subchapter therefore encompasses personal learnings that derived during the investigation. Through the course of my research, it became clear to me that I was working on paradoxes that continuously posed challenges in the research process. Experiencing these paradoxes
contained important learnings for myself. Since these gains might as well be inspirational for you as a reader, I wish to make these insights available at in the following lines.

### 4.3.1 Writing about teams

As much as I am in love and feel at home when working in teams, as contradictory has it been to write this thesis all by myself. All too often, I felt stuck, twisting my words around ever and ever again, not getting to an end, losing purpose, sight and patience. Not being able to relate my working purpose and outcome, my mood, my insights and confusions to anyone and engage in interaction, discussion and feedback was challenging. Writing this thesis has been a rather lonely endeavour, even more as it turned into a long and life-engaging project. As absurd as this might seem, going through this process also entailed learnings that elicited and highlighted the beauty of teamwork.

Lacking resonance during my research process, led me to understand how important it is for me to create spaces within my private as well as within my working life that allow and invite for exchange and interaction. I now more clearly see my share in the emergence and maintenance of a cooperative and supportive team culture and am grateful for having found an approach and tools which can give impulses that aid to transform blockages and facilitate self-actualization. On a personal level, I can be, what Tello called (2019, March 13), the doctor who takes his own medicine. At the same time, I came to understand that teams can serve as more than a simple body for resonance and a supportive factor that releases strain. Since teams bear the potential for synergy effects, they can as well allow me to perceive and experience things that go beyond my imagination.

### 4.3.2 Talking about burnout and going beyond

Going beyond the prevalent usage of burnout has not been an easy endeavour. I came back to realize how deeply rooted burnout understandings focus on the individual. On one hand, while
trying to move beyond seeing burnout as an individual process this led me to continue talking about it and drawing from comparisons to individuals as base for my argumentation. I therefore continuously returned to the question whether defining and making use of the concept would be helpful at all. Moreover, in my research, I have constantly been making use of the word burnout and even turned it into the central element of my investigation. The paradox that I am talking about concerns the usage of the expression burnout as diagnosis while trying to apply a systemic stand when looking at burnout and teams. As expressed earlier, systemic approaches generally do not fancy working with diagnoses due to its limited contextualization, their solidifying character and its consequential attachment to a person (and its social system) (chapter 2.4.3, 2.4.4). While idealistically, weather calling it burnout or not, openly talking about own needs and emotions is desirable and can lead to self-actualization, the current working world does not make this an easy endeavour. Lemm’s and Schmidt’s (2019, April 15) examples from the self-help group show, that missing support and understanding from colleagues and management rather poses an additional burden (chapter 3.2.6).

It might be for this reason that Lehmann (2019, July 16) and Tello (2019, March 13) have not been using the expression burnout when working with teams (chapter 3.2.2). When facilitating, using the language of the people can mean to find common ground and a language that helps to connect with the realities and living worlds of the experts who we are working with as facilitators. Using concepts like burnout in this regard, might feel imposing and create irritations that hinder further resonance to arise. Since Lehmann (2019, July 16) mentioned that she considers experimenting with the term burnout in relation to teams (chapter 3.2.11), I assume that it is through selective authenticity and close attention to the prevalent context, that aid us to decide every time anew if the usage of the term burnout in team settings can evoke resonance within the system. I neither see a need to refrain from using the term burnout, nor do I see a need to compulsively make use of the expression in relation to teams. I see a potential
in burnout to serve as a warning signal of the system that helps to see disturbances within the system. Talking about burnout moreover can serve as a basis for a dialogue with other psychological schools, therapeutic approaches, other disciplines and for society in general. Being aware that the way how we communicate, creates our realities and shapes how we see and experience life, I see the usage of the term burnout as a bridge that aims to connect different life worlds.
5 Conclusion

What I came to understand through doing research on burnout and teams thus is that every tear and bead of sweat that this tree on the front-page sheds, is an attempt to find resonance and to relate to its surroundings. Melting these tears can be a long and burdensome process, at the same time, it can enable something new to arise. Just because the roots seem to rot in the water does not seem that the three is going to drown. Who knows what happens if the whole ice cube is melted? A weather change might lead the sun to dry out the river bed. Just because the blinds are closed and nobody seems to care and see, does not mean that the people who are living inside the house are never going to open the windows. Just because we cannot see further roots and trees does not mean that there are no connections to other living beings below the surface.

The results of this thesis lead to understand burnout systemically and not as an individual concern. The symptom carrier only resembles the episode of a bigger, deeper rooting conflict which turns the whole team into an influential factor that can both intensify and reduce the stress perception and the potential for burnout. Through this thesis it has thus become apparent, that burnout can also convey a learning for teams that can lead as far as self-actualization.

In teams in which burnout occurs and high stress is perceived, the ability to cooperate and to communicate congruently is limited. This can lead the team to be blind for its own situation, blocking its willingness to reflect while making it more complicated to access own potentials. At this point, external facilitation can feed energy into the system that sets impulses and movement within the team. At the same time, due to their characteristics and their ability of teams to create synergy effects, they can be particularly powerful to transform burnout. Through the creation and facilitation of collective spaces, self-actualization in teams becomes possible. This thesis gives impressions how this might look like in practice.
References


Appendix

I. Call for participants

Open Call for interview partners working with teams and burnout – willing to share their personal experiences

In the course of my Master Thesis in Peace and Conflict Studies at the University of Innsbruck, I am researching about burnout and teams and the interrelatedness of these two aspects. I am interested in experiences, questions and learnings that arise from working with burnout and teams. I wonder what can be learned about burnout when looking at it from the angle of teams.

Therefore, my research circles around the following questions:

- What can teams learn from burnout? What does burnout imply for the team setting, its dynamics and vice versa?
- What can we learn from teams that experience burnout?
- How can teams that experience burnout be supported in their process?

My aim in this study is to obtain information about how people work with different teams that experience burnout. What learnings can derive from such kind of work? How can these insights open new possibilities of interventions for individuals, their surroundings, teams, employees, employers or within society and the working structures at hand? The research therefore aims for a greater understanding of the approaches, objectives and strategies in the work with teams and burnout.

If you’re currently or formerly working with teams and burnout
- and would like more information about the study or if you
- want to participate in this research and share your experiences
  please send an email to Mirijam.Endres@gmail.com

If you’re eligible for the study, we will discuss and agree on a suitable time and interview form (in person, telephone, skype). A duration of 1 ½ to 2 hours for the interview is to be expected. Your name and other identifying information can be changed to protect your identity.

Please feel free to pass this onto anyone who might be interested.

Thank you.

Mirijam Endres
Master Student in Peace, Security, Development and International Conflict Transformation
University of Innsbruck, Austria

MA Program for Peace Studies
UNESCO Chair for Peace Studies
II. Information guide

Information Guide for Interviews

You have shown interest in a study which aims to explore the interrelatedness of teams and burnout. You consider sharing your personal experience when working with these two topics? In the following paragraphs, you will find information about the research project and your role as participant. Please read the lines carefully and do not hesitate to clarify concerns and questions.

WHY CARRYING OUT RESEARCH OF THIS KIND? Burnout is a topic that is widely discussed academically, present among public discussions and within daily speech. The focus is often put on the individual and so is treatment that is aimed to address the symptoms. Through this research, I aim to look at experiences that are made in the work with groups and burnout and to look at the learnings that this kind of work can entail.

WHAT ARE THE PROPOSED OBJECTIVES? The aim of this study is to obtain an insight into the work that is done with teams and burnout. The primarily interest lies in the approach you take in your work, your experiences, learnings and what meanings you attach to them. A second interest is put on the influence that this kind of work implies for you on a personal level.

HOW WILL THIS RESEARCH BE CONDUCTED? Information will be collected based of narrative in-depth interviews with people that are working with teams and burnout. The talks will approximately take between 1 ½ and 2 hours.

HOW WILL YOU PARTICIPATE IN THE PROJECT? Your participation in this study is COMPLETELY VOLUNTARY. You can withdraw your participation at any time you like, without having to give explanations.

DATA CONFIDENTIALITY You are free to decide if you would like to be mentioned by name in the study or if you would like your personal and contact details to be confidential and remain anonymous. In the second case, your responses in the interview and the other information will be dissociated before use, so that your data or your responses to the questions cannot be linked to any information which might identify you in person. If you wish to keep it confidential, all written, printed and electronic data will be coded and will only be available in full to the interviewer.

WHO CAN I CONTACT IF I NEED MORE INFORMATION? If you have any questions or you need more information about this study, please send an email to:

Mirijam.Endres@gmail.com
III. Collection of questions for interviews

WHAT ARE LESSONS LEARNED – FOR YOURSELF AND FOR THE GROUP

Asking in a way that requires contextualization – asking for examples, exceptions, particular cases rather than generalizations

1. I’m doing a study about how burnout and teamwork are connected. I’d like to talk to you about the interrelatedness of these aspects in your life.
2. I am interested about your personal experiences, questions and learnings that arise from working with burnout teams. This might require putting me into context and draw from concrete situation and experiences so I can follow you better.

WHO ARE YOU AND WHAT DO YOU DO?

• Tell me a little about yourself: name, where you live…

• For someone that would not know what **kind of work you do**, how would you describe it?

• How did you **end up doing the job** that you are doing?

BUNROUT – what, why, how - TEAMS – characteristics, dynamics

• Please tell me about the **first time** that you have been in **contact with burnout**. How did you get in contact with **teams and burnout**?

• What comes to your mind when you **think about burnout**? I would like to know how you would personally explain it because this will help me to understand your experiences better

• **Why would you say that burnout appears?**
  Drives, desires, satisfaction
  Belonging, recognition
  Who contributes?

• What is your **motivation to work with teams and burnout**? How would you describe the relationship that you have to this kind of work?

• Can you give an example of a **process** that you have experienced when working with teams and burnout? Please start with the first contact you had

• Is it a concern that clients already **address prior to the session**? Do you recognize it in the course of action? How do you recognize burnout?
• Is the topic mostly **talked about openly** or does the expression burnout not get mentioned? Can you give an example of **how you encounter** burnout? (**who brings up** this topic? Is it a taboo?)

• Is there a fear to talk about burnout and admit that the team experiences it?

• **Iceberg Model**
  
  what gets talked about
  
  what is actually below the surface

• Can you tell me **how** you are getting **prepared** when working with burnout teams?

• **What do you do when you recognize** burnout?

WORKING STYLE, APPROACH, AIM, STRATEGY, METHODS, ROLE

• How is your **working style**, your **approach**, what are your **aims**?

• Do you also work with individual clients that are experiencing burnout or only with groups? In which sense are they alike in which ways do they differ from each other?

• How big are the groups that you’re working with? **How long** the programs?

• Whom do you work with? (colleagues, alone? who takes the lead? how do you communicate?)

• **How** can I imagine the **dynamics that are present within a team** that is experiencing burnout?

• Can you tell me an example of a **situation or dynamic** that you consider **typical for burnout** teams and that you would/have not encountered in the same way in other team settings?

• How can you position yourself or describe **the role you take** in the work with burnout teams?

• **What methods** do you use?

• **How important would you say is it to work with teams beyond rational thought and verbal speech?** What methods do you use? Can you give examples?

POTENTIALS FOR TEAMS

I’m researching what people and teams can learn from burnout.
• **How do teams profit** from working with you? What can they gain? What are **risks** that they take when letting some external person enter their group?

• Is uncovering or **mobilizing resources** in burnout teams different? In how far?

• Would you say that **burnout can awaken something in teams** that has not been there before? What would that be? How can you describe it?

• **Why** do you consider it **important** for teams to have some sort of **external facilitation**? What happens if teams do not ask for external help? What other form do you know?

**WORK-RELATED LEARNINGS AND CHALLENGES**

Tell me about most **important insights related to burnout that you had**. How did these come into being and how did they make you into the person that you are today?

• Can you tell me about:
  a **surprising** situation relation to burnout and teams?
  a case that was **easy** to handle and one that was **challenging**?

• Do you know how the teams that you work with **proceeded after** you have been working with them?

• **When** do you know that your work is done?

• From your experience, **what** do you consider **necessary in order to work** with burnout and teams?

• What would you say makes your work particularly **valuable**?

**PERSONAL LEARNINGS AND CHALLENGES**

• How would you describe your **personal goal** that you’re aiming for when working with teams and burnout?

• Can **burnout be prevented**? Is this your aim?

• To what extend does your clients **process resonate with your own**?

• What do you/did you find **difficult about doing such kind of work**? Can you tell me about a situation?

• What are the **learnings that you have personally gained** from the work with burnout teams? How did these insights contribute to making you into the person that you are today?

  For your well-being
Work with groups
Personal relations

- Can you tell me about a situation that led to a turning point/shift in attitude/approach/behaviour or that made you change your strategy?

- Did your job ever make you feel disconnected from other parts of your life?

- Has the work with burnout teams concerned you beyond your professional life? Did the experiences made touch or influence you on a more profound personal level?

- Can you tell me about what you do or where you go when you feel challenged in your work? How do you make sure that you are balanced and what does that imply for you?

- Do you get support for what you do? What kind of support do you get? Network

- Are there aspects in your work that you never talk about or that you often feel unsure to talk about?

How has talking to me like this been for you?
IV.  Transcription rules

[ ] overlap and simultaneous talk

= fast, immediate continuation with a new turn or segment (latching)

(.) pause

becau- abrupt cut-off or self-interruption

SYLlable louder or accentuated

°quieter° quieter than surrounding speech

((coughs)) description non-verbal vocal events, transcriber’s comment

<<laughing>> laughter particles accompanying speech with indication of scope

<< creaky >> glottalized

<<whispery >> change in voice quality as stated

↑ pitch up step

↓ pitch down step

::: lengthening of sound

°h / h° in- / outbreaths

<<f>> fast

<<s>> slow

em, hm, uhm, etc. hesitation markers, so-called "filled pauses"

( ) unintelligible passage

(XXX), (XXX XXX) one or two unintelligible syllables

(may i) assumed wording

(may i say) possible alternatives

((...)) omission in transcript
V. Collection of individual burnout symptoms

On the basis of Burisch’s collection, comparison and summary of burnout-symptoms\textsuperscript{142}, I present the following list that might help to estimate a present burnout-symptomatology. I choose this listing of symptoms that Burisch himself calls “synopsis” (Burisch 2014, 25) because it resembles a rather comprehensive gathering of estimations, classifications and theories of burnout that can be found in publications to this date. While examining the list, some aspects need to be taken into consideration. Burisch (2014) points out that

- the expressions used are linguistically diffuse and differ in its abstractness
- not all of the mentioned symptoms have to occur
- the existence of one symptom increases the occurrence of another symptom
- some symptoms automatically exclude the concomitance of other symptoms
- the order of the list \textit{roughly} describes a chronology of symptoms
- not every individual concerned reaches the final stages
- the process can be stopped at any time through internal or external interventions

(Burisch 2014, 30)

\textbf{Burnout-Symptomatik} \hspace{2cm} \textbf{Burnout symptomatology}

\begin{tabular}{ll}
\textbf{1. Warnsymptome der Anfangsphase} & \textbf{1. Warning symptoms of the initial phase} \\
\textit{a)} Überhöhter Energieeinsatz & \textit{a)} excessive use of energy \\
\hspace{0.5cm} o Hyperaktivität & \hspace{0.5cm} o hyperactivity \\
\hspace{0.5cm} o Freiwillige unbezahlte Mehrarbeit & \hspace{0.5cm} o voluntary unpaid overtime work \\
\hspace{0.5cm} o Gefühl der Unentbehrlichkeit & \hspace{0.5cm} o feeling of indispensability \\
\hspace{0.5cm} o Gefühl, nie Zeit zu haben & \hspace{0.5cm} o feeling to never have time \\
\hspace{0.5cm} o Nicht Abschalten können & \hspace{0.5cm} o cannot disconnect \\
\hspace{0.5cm} o Verleugnung eigener Bedürfnisse & \hspace{0.5cm} o denial of own needs \\
\hspace{0.5cm} o Verdrängung von Misserfolgen und & \hspace{0.5cm} o repression of failures and \\
\hspace{0.5cm} Enttäuschungen & \hspace{0.5cm} disappointments \\
\hspace{0.5cm} o Konzentration sozialer Kontakte auf & \\
\hspace{0.5cm} Klienten & \\
\end{tabular}

\textsuperscript{142} For a more extended explication, see Burisch (Burisch 2014, 25–35).
b) Erschöpfung und deren unmittelbare Folgen
   - Energiemangel
   - Unausgeschlafenheit
   - Erhöhte Unfallgefahr

2. Reduziertes Engagement
a) Für Klienten, Patienten, Schüler etc.
   - Menschliche Enttäuschung
   - Verlust positiver Gefühle gegenüber Klienten
   - Größere innere Distanz zu Klienten
   - Meidung von Kontakt mit Klienten und/oder Kollegen
   - Aufmerksamkeitsstörungen in der Interaktion mit Klienten
   - Verschiebung des Schwerpunkts von Hilfe auf Beaufsichtigung
   - Schuldzuweisung für Probleme an Klienten
   - Höhere Akzeptanz von Kontrollmitteln wie Strafen oder Tranquilizern - Stereotypisierung von Klienten, Kunden, Schülern etc.
   - Betonung von Fachjargon
   - Dehumanisierung

b) Für andere allgemein
   - Unfähigkeit zu geben
   - Kälte
   - Verlust von Empathie
   - Verständnislöslichkeit
   - Schwierigkeiten, anderen zuzuhören
   - Zynismus

c) Für die Arbeit
   - Verlust von Idealismus
   - Desillusionierung
   - Negative Einstellung zur Arbeit
   - Widerwillen und Überdruss
   - Ständiges Auf-die-Uhr-sehen
   - Fluchtphantasien
   - Tagträumen
   - Überziehen von Arbeitspausen
   - Verspäteter Arbeitsbeginn
   - Vorverlegter Arbeitsschluss
   - Fehlzeiten
   - Verlagerung des Schwerpunkts auf die Freizeit, Aufblühen am Wochenende - Höheres Gewicht

2. Reduced commitment
a) towards clients, patients, students etc.
   - human disappointment
   - loss of positive feelings towards clients
   - greater inner distance to clients
   - avoiding contact with clients and/or colleagues
   - attention disorders in interaction with clients
   - shifting the burden from aid to supervision
   - blame clients for problems
   - greater acceptance of control means such as punishment or tranquillizers - Stereotyping of clients, customers, students etc.
   - emphasis on jargon
   - dehumanization

b) towards others in general
   - inability to give
   - cold
   - loss of empathy
   - incomprehension
   - difficulty to listen to others
   - cynicism

c) on work
   - loss of idealism
   - disillusionment
   - negative attitude towards work
   - aversion and weariness
   - constantly checking the time
   - escape fantasies
   - daydreams
   - overrunning work breaks
   - delayed work-start
   - early end of work
   - absenteeism
   - shifting the weight to leisure time, blooming at the weekend - increasing weight of material conditions for job satisfaction
materieller Bedingungen für die Arbeitszufriedenheit
d) Erhöhte Ansprüche
   o Konzentration auf die eigenen Ansprüche
   o Gefühl mangelnder Anerkennung
   o Gefühl, ausgebeutet zu werden
   o Eifersucht
   o Konflikte in der Familie

3. Emotionale Reaktionen; Schuldzuweisung
a) Depression
   o Schuldgefühle
   o Reduzierte Selbstachtung
   o Insuffizienzgefühle
   o Gedankenverlorenheit
   o Selbstmitleid
   o Humorlosigkeit
   o Unbestimmte Angst und Nervosität
   o Abrupte Stimmungsschwankungen
   o Verringerde emotionale Belastbarkeit
   o Bitterkeit
   o Gefühl von Abgestorbensein und Leere
   o Schwächegefühl
   o Neigung zum Weinen
   o Ruhelosigkeit
   o Gefühl des Festgefahrenseins
   o Hilflosigkeits-, Ohnmachtsgefühle
   o Pessimismus, Fatalismus
   o Apathie
   o Erste Suizidgefährden
b) Aggression
   o Schuldzuweisung an Andere oder »das System«
   o Vorwürfe an Andere
   o Verleugnung der Eigenbeteiligung
   o Ungeduld
   o Launenhaftigkeit
   o Intoleranz
   o Kompromissunfähigkeit
   o Nörgeleien
   o Negativismus
   o Reizbarkeit
   o Ärger und Ressentiments
   o Defensive/paranoide Einstellungen
   o Misstrauen
   o Häufige Konflikte mit Anderen

d) increased demands
   o focus on your own claims
   o feeling of lack of appreciation
   o feeling of being exploited
   o jealousy
   o conflicts in the family

3. Emotional reactions; blame
a) depression
   o guilt
   o reduced self-esteem
   o feelings of insufficiency
   o absorbed in thought
   o self-pity
   o humourlessness
   o undefined anxiety and nervousness
   o abrupt mood swings
   o reduced emotional resilience
   o bitterness
   o feeling of numbness and emptiness
   o feeling weak
   o tendency to cry
   o restlessness
   o feeling deadlocked
   o helplessness, powerlessness
   o pessimism, fatalism
   o apathy
   o first suicidal thoughts
b) aggression
   o blame others or "the system"
   o accusations of others
   o denial of personal contribution
   o impatience
   o moodiness
   o intolerance
   o inability to make compromises
   o nagging
   o negativism
   o irritability
   o anger and resentment
   o defensive/paranoid attitudes
   o mistrust
   o frequent conflicts with others
4. Reduction
a) of cognitive capacity
   - Concentration and memory weakness
   - Inability to handle complex tasks
   - Inaccuracy
   - Disorganization, misplacement of things
   - Decisiveness
   - Inability to clear instructions
b) of motivation
   - Reduced initiative
   - Reduced productivity
   - Call of duty
c) of creativity
   - Reduced imagination
   - Reduced flexibility
d) dedifferentiated
   - rigid black-and-white-mindset
   - resistance to changes of all kinds

5. Flattening
a) of emotional life
   - flattening of emotional reactions
   - indifference
b) of social life
   - less personal condolence for others
     or excessive attachment to individuals - avoiding informal contacts
   - searching for more interesting contacts
   - avoiding conversations about one's own work
   - oddball
   - being busy with oneself
   - loneliness
   - giving up hobbies
   - lack of interest
   - boredom

6. Psychosomatic reactions
   - weakening of immune reaction
   - sleep disorders
   - nightmares
   - sexual problems
   - reddened face
o Herzklopfen
o Engegefühl in der Brust
o Atembeschwerden
o Beschleunigter Puls
o Erhöhter Blutdruck
o Muskelverspannungen
o Rückenschmerzen
o Kopfschmerzen
o Nervöse Ticks
o Verdauungsstörungen
o Übelkeit
o Magen-Darm-Geschwüre
o Gewichtsveränderungen
o Veränderte Essgewohnheiten
o Mehr Alkohol/Kaffee/Tabak/andere Drogen

7. Verzweifung
o Negative Einstellung zum Leben
o Hoffnungslosigkeit
o Gefühl der Sinnlosigkeit
o Suizidabsichten
o Existenzielle Verzweiflung

o heart palpitations
o tightness in the chest
o breathing difficulties
o accelerated pulse
o increased blood pressure
o muscle tension
o back pain
o headache
o nervous tics
o indigestion
o nausea
o gastrointestinal ulcers
o weight changes
o changed eating habits
o more alcohol/coffee/tobacco /other drugs

7. Despair
o negative attitude towards life
o hopelessness
o Feeling of futility
o Suicide intentions
o Existential despair
Affidavit

I hereby declare that this master thesis has been written only by the undersigned and without assistance from third parties.

Furthermore, I conform that no sources have been used in the preparation of this thesis other than those indicated in the thesis itself.

This master thesis has heretofore not been submitted or published elsewhere, neither in its present form, nor in a similar version.

Bamberg, 24 October 2019

Place, Date

Signature