

10. Reflection

In this chapter, the research is critically reflected on. The reflection is divided into a theoretical reflection, a reflection on the quality of the methods used, and a personal reflection.

10.1 Theoretical reflection

During this research, a mismatch between theory and practice has been experienced. For example John Kay states no self-respected corporation goes by without strategy (Mintzberg, 2013). Strategy absence is often associated with organizational failure. My case has proven the contrary. Absence of deliberate building-in strategy absence may even promote flexibility in an organization. Organizations with tight controls, high reliance on formalized procedures, and a passion for consistency may lose the ability to experiment and innovate. The Royal Theatre Carré, the single-case study of this research, has proven to be a relatively successful organization. They manage to get by without extra subsidies, next to the hidden subsidy of the rental price of the building, as one of the only theatres in the Netherlands, with limited to no deliberate strategy.

There are many different theories about strategy, stating all kinds of unintended corporate behaviour as being strategy, such as an emergent strategy. By common sense I would say strategy only happens as a deliberate process, otherwise, what is the opposite of strategy? Concerning literature, next to the emergent and prescriptive strategy, strategy is also a plan, a ploy, a pattern, a position and a perspective, many different concepts of which some can be contradicting. Basically, any behaviour an organization shows can be identified as a kind of strategy. This is due to the fact that researchers need to divide any kind of corporate behaviour into a strategy box. Carré is managed in a conservative manner, which can be explained by the roots of a family business and because of the obligation to conserve and maintain the monument. This research proved that prescriptive strategy approaches contributes monumental theatres with out of the box and new inspiration by the use of tools. The conservative and emergent approach of managing a monumental theatre is less effective than managing such an organization in a proactive and prescriptive manner.

I was really interested and I really liked researching existing tools, methods and models in monuments, theatres and real estate strategies. This was challenging as my case did not show any interest in using these tools. I hope the results of this research can show monumental theatres such as Carré that these tools and methods can indeed contribute to a more fruitful future for monumental theatre buildings.

I have read many theories about strategy and strategy design and I have evaluated tools that contribute to writing a strategy. Although I have not been disappointed by the effect and use of the tools that I have used, I did experience a point or moment with all tools, where you have to think beyond the tool. The tools have had their contribution and then personal experience and professionalism of the best decision comes in. Managers then need to decide what is the best strategic step for the organization and the tool should be let go of. When I started this research, I thought the tools would automatically produce the strategic output when the right input was used. That is not how the process works, a continuous critical attitude is needed and constant reflection on which step is best to take next is necessary.

10.2 Methodology reflection

Because the main research method was a single-case study, the case could be thoroughly analysed. This created interesting insights. Because Carré is a very specific one of a kind theatre, conclusions are very difficult to generalize. It would have been interesting to research one or two cases more to be able to validate the conclusions drawn from Carré. The same goes with the tools that have been chosen and tested in practice. One or two cases more would have greatly contributed to the validation of these tools.

The conducted interviews have proven to be of value. Although reflecting back on it, there might have been to

many technical managers as interviewees to identify all current trends in the Dutch theatre landscape. More general managers or facility managers, would have created a wider scope and a broader input to more strongly substantiate real estate specific theatre trends.

Also, one or two more interviews with managers of the Royal Theatre Carré would have provided me with broader input to conduct the case study. Often, I had to find information for the case study of Carré via different channels than managers of Carré which still is unusual. Carré did not share information with me, such as scheduling and programming of the building and financial plans with me, I think because this information is not present. This has made this research more interesting as well as more challenging.

10.3 Personal reflection

In my experience, I was not yet prepared for a graduation research of this extend when I started it and I felt thrown in the deep. How was I going to do this without the appropriate research skills? I still agree to this a little bit to this day. Now I realize that this is the whole point of a university research graduation. One last check, one last time of being thrown into the deep to see if you can do it on your own, before you enter in the work-field. I think this research has confirmed my thoughts that I am not really a researcher, I have the intelligence, but I do not have the right structured and logical train of thought and therefore not the right motivation. I have grown a lot, also in structure, logic and scientific substantiation and I couldn't be prouder of myself that I have persevered.

10.3.1 Before p2

The period from February 2017 until July 2017, the start of my research process until the p2 presentation, was really a joyful and flourishing period during this research. I was so happy with this research topic and enthusiastically started working and making research plans for the Royal Theatre Carré. I found it especially interesting to research the quite turbulent history of the Royal Theatre Carré. Even though I have been working on this report in Carré every Thursday, it was still difficult for me to get in touch with the managing director of Carré, I have failed to do so until this very day. There was always something else that was more important at the moment. I was quite frustrated with the fact that they could not manage to give me a bit of their time for all the work I was doing for them.

Even though I identified many challenges for the Royal Theatre Carré and monumental theatre buildings that I felt strongly about that I could contribute to with this research, I had a difficult time finding the right methodology to do so. This has resulted in a retake for my first P2 presentation. After three weeks of improving the methodology and sharpening the problem statement, I knew I had strengthened the research sufficiently, to pass the second P2 presentation. I was really looking forward to continue with this research and to start with the data collection when I had passed the p2.

10.3.2 Towards p3

After my P2 a big break had started for me. It was the summer holidays, which I unintentionally extended for a bit. Although this was not the best idea, I think this distance to my research has also contributed to a certain professional distance, after which I could restart researching with more in-depth and an improved scientific view.

The interviews have taken place during this period and I really found all these different interviews and the input very inspirational. This motivated me to continue with this research with renewed energy. The interviews with theatre organizations throughout the entire country have made me realize that I would really like to work for a theatre organization in a management function, this is a very valuable discovery for me.

10.3.3 Towards the first p4

I have never studied as hard in my life as during this period. Even though I would never be one to give up, there were times that I have become quite worried with myself and my quickly alternating emotional state. I managed to keep it in control the whole time, but I was really impressed by what such a piece of work can do to my state of mind. Research related I was quite happy with what I have achieved although I was disappointed in the amount of data I could obtain through interviews with Carré. The organization of Carré is a very quirky

one and it is really difficult to gain their trust. They also lack self-criticism, because of which I did not know how to communicate improvements to them, as they acted like there was nothing to be improved at times.

In the end, I do feel like I have succeeded to gain their trust. Also, there is currently a new position Carré wants to fill: facility manager with the appropriate monumental and maintenance skills. I hope this is the well-doing of my research, which has opened the eyes of the management team.

10.3.4 Towards the second p4

At first, I found it a bit painful that I had 'failed' my first p4, because I had worked extremely hard. After a while, I made my peace with it. It makes sense that when the problem statement states that monumental theatres such as the Royal Theatre Carré lack strategic performance, graduation is not possible without presenting one. My first p4 did not provide sufficient strategic advice. This was partly due to lack of time, but also partly because I thought I did not have sufficient ground from the management team of Carré to actually write a substantiated strategic advice. Furthermore, after theoretically researching the tools, I was simply too uncertain to write the actual strategic advice yet. The most important reason was that I was scared to present my out of the box findings to the Royal Theatre Carré, because their manner of conducting business is quite traditional and conservative and my ideas are quite out of the box and radical. Their current situation and way of conducting business is critically reviewed in this thesis and implementing my strategic advice would mean a quite extensive change in the mindset of those in the management team of Carré.

The organization and the building of Carré have been around for a long time, as Hans Petter stated; 'I shouldn't think that I can provide an advice with something that hasn't crossed the minds of those in the management team yet'. Inconsequentially, I hope I have succeeded to do so. I think my final strategic advice is a nice mix of more common interventions such as installing sun-panels and insulating the new roof and out of the box strategic advice, such as the floating theatre and the location for the new auditorium. I hope Carré will use my strategic advice and benefit from this.

10.3.5 Over-all

Overall, I am very happy with this graduation topic and with what I have researched. It was not the easiest decision to choose a topic that is off the beaten track, but I have no regrets. When for example a job interviewer will ask me why I chose this topic and how I experienced it, I can tell how much effort I have put in and how passionate I am for the topic, in all honesty. Also, the actual advice for Carré is something I will be able to present and substantiate as it is something I truly believe in.

As the name of my research company, Share Knowledge Now, supports and includes; sharing knowledge is something that is essential 'Now'. I agree with this and I think this should be more common in practice. This includes being strong enough to show your weaknesses and admit you need help from experts or other stakeholders for some specific issues concerning your organization. I think Carré can learn valuable lessons from Share Knowledge Now.

Lastly, this research has made me realise that I have quite an idealistic and naïve view of the world. I had no clue that stakeholders could have so many different interests and ideas concerning one building, in my case monumental theatre buildings. I thought stakeholders would all have the best interest by heart with conserving monuments and maintaining the magic that is part of these buildings and the corresponding organizations. Although this is probably still true, the approaches differ immensely for each stakeholder. Although I might be a bit naïve and idealistic, this research has also taught me that I have a very strong driving force forward. When I put my mind to something, I make it work and I finish it successfully. I am not one to give up. Also, I think idealism is a strength that should be pursued more often.

Monumental buildings need specialized management and maintenance. This maintenance should not be approached as a limitation, but should rather be approached as a challenge with many opportunities.

