Juxtaposition of Autism and Recruitment

A study of the effects mainstream recruitment processes may have on people with autism in the Danish labour market

Sammenstilling af Rekruttering og Autisme

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Resumé

Hvis man vil konkurrere indenfor en global vidensbaseret markedsøkonomi så skal man være god til innovation og innovation kommer fra kanterne af. De virksomheder som er bedst til at ansætte og lede mennesker som ikke er mainstream, det er dem som har størst chance for at klare sig i en vidensbaseret markedsøkonomi (Sonne i De Skjulte Talenter, 2017: 1:4: min. 31.50).

Dette udsagn fortæller særdeles om forskningsområdet af denne tesis, der foretager en kritisk undersøgelse af hvordan mainstream rekrutteringsprocesser kan have ekskluderende effekt på arbejdsmulighederne for mennesker med autisme. Denne samfundsgruppe er ofte associeret til at kunne performe ekstraordinært på områder, der tit kobles til mere tekniske dele af arbejdsmarkedet, og ofte mangler der talenterne til disse industrier. Imidlertid, bliver mennesker med autisme relativt sjældent ansat igennem normale rekrutteringskanaler og har ofte brug for assistance fra diverse organisationer. Eftersom at studiet forsker et jomfrueligt område, har specialet taget en kvalitativ eksploration af emnet igennem et interviewstudie af relevante aktører og Foucauldian teoretisk undersøgelse af rekruttering som et videnskoncept. Derfor, kom jeg frem til at udforske de mulige ekskluderende elementer, mainstream rekrutteringsprocesser kan indeholde.

Problemfeltet fungerer på to niveauer da tesis undersøger både om *mainstream rekrutteringsmetoder kan have ekskluderende effekt på mennesker med autisme, men også, hvordan.* For det første, er den teoretiske analysedel bygget på Foucauldian macro normaliseringskoncepter, hvor de mekanismer rekrutteringsprocesser ofte er bygget på, kan være ekskluderende. Resultater viste at rekruttering kan analyseres som et videnskoncept der kan være bygget omkring bestemte magtkoncepter der muligvis ikke gælder for mennesker med autisme. Samfundsgruppen har eksempelvis ifølge neuropsykologi ikke mulighed for at adlyde systemer der har diskriminatoriske tendenser der hverken fremmer diversitet i virksomheder eller overvejer forskellige slags talenter. For det andet, er den empiriske analysedel bygget på bestemte micro elementer der blev kodet fra de mest rammende og hyppige interviewciteringer, koblende til hvordan bestemte rekrutteringskoncepter kan påvirke mennesker med autisme. Resultater viste, at samtlige elementer (reading the employer, predictability, frontstage og the whole package) påvirker samfundsgruppen negativt. I konklusion, tesis har påtaget undersøgelse igennem Deweyan

pragmatisme sammen med Foucauldian genealogi. Igennem Foucault har jeg formodet at problematisere rekrutteringsfeltet i relation til autisme og via Dewey har jeg åbnet op for forbedring af forskningsemnet – nemlig at få flere mennesker med autisme på arbejdsmarkedet.

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Chapter 1

1.1 Introduction

Companies must encourage absorption of different talents and skill sets from all spheres of life to promote expansion, globalization and progress. Diversity can help foster a productive and innovative work environment as blending of new ideas, different perspectives, as well as different approaches to work and problem-solving will not only be result-oriented but also rewarding to the employer (Anyim, Ekwoaba & Ideh, 2012).

Studies have shown that diverse workforces may enhance decision-making and problem-solving, and the companies that strive to hire the most diverse talents to match different skill-sets may become the most competitive ones in the market (Dobbin & Kalev, 2016; Austin & Sonne, 2014; French & Rees, 2010 and Teknologisk Institut, 2007). Nevertheless, the corporate world can be argued to be conforming; women still face employment inequalities (Mills et al., 2014) and societal groups such as disabled people and people with autism are underrepresented throughout entire labour markets (Gotham et al., 2015; Taylor, Henninger & Mailick, 2015; Baldwin, Costley & Warren, 2014 and French & Rees, 2010). Seeing as autism is a very complex and underexplored phenomenon, especially within the studies of employment (Gotham et al., 2015), it may be argued that there are legitimate reasons for why the societal group is underrepresented or underemployed in the labour market. This might be because "autism spectrum disorders (ASDs) are complex neurodevelopmental conditions that involve impairments in social interaction, communication and behavioral functioning such as repetitive and stereotyped behaviors" (Payakachat et al., 2012: 485).

Conversely, the impairments linked to autism may also be seen as strengths and as neurodiversity, due to differences in sensing, obtaining, processing and relaying information (Silberman, 2015; Grandin & Panek, 2014; Armstrong, 2010 and Baron-Cohen, 2000). Currently, newspapers and other media sources online are more frequently covering, among others, the skills often associated with people with autism and the possible benefits of hiring the societal group. They have been

associated with performing very well, especially in technically heavy industries. Generally, people with autism are seen as having high work morale and a willingness to perform tasks shunned by other workers, while their flair for detail and work that requires strict routine is remarkable (De Skjulte Talenter, 2017: 1:4; Sæhl, 2017; Beautiful minds, wasted, 2016; Che, 2016 and Wang, 2014). It may therefore be a huge waste of unutilised talent to not consider the societal group for employment (Austin & Sonne, 2014 and Grandin & Panek, 2014). In Denmark, hitherto, autism organisations such as Specialisterne and the National Autism Institute (NAI) are a part of supported employment schemes aimed at helping people with autism obtain and maintain jobs, seeing as people with autism relatively rarely find employment through normal recruitment efforts (Wehman et al., 2012). It needs to be established that autism operates on a spectrum where people with Asperger's syndrome and high-functioning autism have been the group mostly associated with being capable of maintaining competitive employment. The thesis will focus on this societal group – utilising terms such as autism, ASD, HFA, Asperger's syndrome, and AS, while the term neurotypical will be used for people who are not diagnosed with autism.

In light of this information, a paradox revealed itself; relatively few people with autism obtain employment without supported employment efforts, while on the other hand, empirical evidence suggests that companies may gain benefits from hiring a possibly lucrative workforce (Austin & Sonne, 2014 and Grandin & Panek, 2014). Therefore, I have decided to embark on a mission to find out whether some elements of mainstream recruitment processes (MRPs) might be exclusionary for people with ASD – processes that most people undergo to obtain jobs and will be referred to as mainstream recruitment processes (MRPs and MR), general and normal recruitment, and hiring, while the people who hire will be referred to as e.g. recruiters, hiring managers and those who hire.

According to Searle (2003) and Townley (in Storey, 1989), most recruitment methods have risen from the more dominant scientific, technical, rational, and calculated constructs to seek objectivity, maintaining that workers are sought after because of market forces' demands with power of hiring in the hands of the organisations. However, perceptions of objective and rational recruitment constructs have become disputed through meta-analyses of e.g. validity and reliability of interviews and testing, to account for discriminatory, biased and stereotypical processes that may follow suit during these hiring practices. A new paradigm has emerged from meta-analyses, accommodating the traditional construct, to a more relational ways of recruiting. The social-interactionist paradigm

shift has been created to e.g. alleviate diversity issues in MRPs. The shift has also occurred due to rapid and volatile economic shifts in several industries, leading to a more two-dimensional way of hiring, where job candidates also enjoy much power (Garcia-Iszquierdo, Derous & Searle, 2013; Searle, 2003 and Storey, 1989). Nevertheless, the dilemmas people with autism face when obtaining a job have not been improved through the paradigm shift, even though industries often associated with autism-competencies lack the right talents (Talent Shortage Survey, 2015).

Investigated recruitment literature indicates that, dominantly, recruitment still involves strict procedural and subjective methods, filled with bias and discrimination that does not enhance diversity and, therefore, fails to include untapped potential talents (Townley in Storey, 1989; Searle, 2003; Furnham & Chamorro-Premuzic, 2010 and Austin & Sonne, 2014). This will be investigated through a theoretical analysis by tapping into Foucault's theoretical considerations of how knowledge constructs have been built upon certain dominant structures, where people become subjugated. The way that MRPs are built on certain constructs might have exclusionary effects if only aimed at the mainstream population. During the exploration of the uncharted topic, I have conducted a qualitative interview study to investigate how MRPs might affect people with autism, interviewing *four* people with ASD, while also conducting *three* interviews with employees at Specialisterne, and *one* with a leader at the National Autism Institute (NAI). These eight interviews were coded so that themes could emerge from the data, resulting in a thematic framework analysis of four dominant themes that might have specific impacts on the job opportunities of people with autism. Conclusively, the exploration amounted to this research question:

Could mainstream recruitment processes have exclusionary effects on the job opportunities of people with autism in the Danish labour market, if so how?

1.2 Delimitation

Seeing as recruitment processes extend to very broad and diverse methods, I will focus on three methods, namely *job adverts, work-ability, personality and psychometric tests,* and *interviews.* Moreover, even though some clear neuropsychological functions about behavioural patterns of people with autism may be utilised throughout the thesis (theory of mind, central coherence, executive functions and context blindness), it is important to emphasise that people with autism are just as different from each other as any other groups of society. However, in order to be able to answer the research question, I seek to identify the major aspects of the autistic mind and, therefore, these functions will be investigated when exploring the possible exclusionary effects of MRPs. Although, many high-functioning people with autism may lead relatively uncomplicated lives, many struggle and cannot function as well as a neurotypical person in the labour market due to e.g. deficiencies in social and interpersonal communications. Secondary diagnoses such as anxiety or depression and/or the enormous pressure on the social aspects of work places may also present dilemmas. The thesis will not investigate the challenges that might follow when a person with autism has secured a job – I am only concerned with the process of obtaining employment.

1.3   Thesis Structure

Model 1.3 – Structure of the Thesis

Chapter 1
Introduction, Research Question & Delimitation

- Introduction to the field of research with key words: recruitment, autism, talent, discrimination, bias, stereotyping and diversity.
- Justification of the thesis' research area, research question and delimitation.

Chapter 2
Literature Review & Theory

- Presentation of the empirical- and theoretical literature that will be utilised to answer the research question.

Chapter 3
Methodology

- How the research was conducted, condensed and validity of qualitative study.
- The philosophy of science will be explained, while the research approach and focus will be elucidated.
- The analytical frameworks and how data was collected will be described.

Chapter 4
Data Chapter

- The Data Chapter will portray a model on how the four themes utilised in the empirical analysis were conducted.
- Appendix 1 will serve as a comprehensive Data Chapter, where the coding of the interviews are presented that led to the development of the four themes - by illustrating the most repeated, interesting and confounding verbatim of meanings, opinions and perceptions linking recruitment methods, and the labour market in general, to people with autism.

Chapter 5
Analysis & Discussion

- The two-tier analysis will be explored in this chapter. The empirical analysis investigates how MRPs might have exclusionary effects on people with autism through four themes. The theoretical analysis takes on a Foucauldian exploration of the mechanisms that drive MRPs through social objectification.
- The discussion will juxtaposition the two analyses in an attempt to answer the research question, explaining the contributions this project has made on the field of research and present limitations.

Chapter 6
Conclusion & Future Perspective

- The conclusion presents the final findings of the thesis, while future perspective offers possible future research directions.

Chapter 7
Bibliography & Appendices

- Bibliography presents a list of the utilised literature. The appendices are documents that could not be included in the thesis due to lack of space, such as the Appendix 1 - Data Chapter, transcriptions of the most pertinent verbatim of the interviews, and interview guides.

Chapter 2

2.1 Literature Review

The literature review serves as background knowledge for the thesis and its purpose is to elucidate various studies, research papers, and articles that depict the most salient aspects of the complex recruitment and autism field. This is to delimit the vast continuum of recruitment and autism and to juxtaposition two phenomena in an unstudied field of research in order to answer the research question. On one hand, the mainstream recruitment methods will be established. Firstly, by delving briefly into the way recruitment methods have been built upon certain practices, while it will also depict the paradigm shift. Secondly, recruitment definitions will be ascertained in terms of the most common recruitment practices. Thirdly, the attraction- and assessment periods will be explained through job adverts, testing, and interviews. Lastly, diversity issues will be delved into, mostly in terms of discrimination, bias, and stereotyping, while the talent field will be briefly investigated. On the other hand, review of the field of autism will be elucidated. Firstly, the knowledge structure of autism will briefly be established. Secondly, the neuropsychology of autism will be ascertained through four structures. Lastly, how people with ASD usually obtain jobs will be illustrated.

2.1.1 Mainstream Recruitment Processes

Recruitment Paradigms

Recruitment strategies have often been correlated with a "[…] planned rational activity, comprising certain sequentially-linked phases within a process of *employee resourcing* […]" (French & Rees, 2010: 170). These procedures have been built upon psychological constructs to depict the best ways of hiring new personnel (García-Izquierdo, Derous, & Searle, 2013; French & Rees, 2010 and Searle, 2003). This psychometric view of hiring has derived from scientific and rational aspects of Human Resource Management (HRM), in which classification systems through clarification and simplification tools are used to essentially analyse the labour force. These then become the authoritative elements depicting e.g. recruitment practices (Townley, 1993). Searle (2003) relates as

she maintains that the psychometrics paradigm suggests that these approaches may depict the most optimal employee through checklists, while matching the worker to a predetermined job. Therefore, power becomes placed in organisations.

A paradigm shift has occurred and the social-interactionist paradigm operates through relational recruitment built upon social motivations, where hiring becomes a two-way process and power lies with both job applicants and hiring organisations (Searle, 2003 and García-Izquierdo, Derous, & Searle, 2013). Both of the paradigms have become questioned even though the psychometric view can be more comprehensively criticised as these methods are presented as facts. Underlying problems exist, such as distortion, faking, impression management, bias, and stereotyping through discrimination (Searle, 2003). The critical social-interactionist view questions the claim psychometric view has on objectivity and it raises issues around validity on whether scientific positivistic models can ever be appropriately applied in recruiting situations. These models have often been built upon motivational techniques dating back to the early 1900s (Searle, 2003 and Furnham & Chamorro-Premuzic, 2010). The social-interactionist paradigm may also be criticised since the meta-analysis of the outcome measures of the recruitment literature, based on psychometric processes, are inherently weak. The "[…] meta-analyses simply compounds and disguises poor studies" (Searle, 2003: 262). Lastly, meta-analytical studies need to be matriculated about coming forth with test samples and reliability of their studies. However, the psychometric view can be more fundamentally challenged as it "[…] is based on a capitalistic premise of the dominance of profit and the market-place as a regulator" (Searle, 2003: 263). In relation, Furnham & Chamorro-Premuzic (2010) propose a critical up-to-date depiction of the process of selection. Reliable and valid methods are hard to come by as "[…] most have been thoroughly investigated and shown to be both unreliable and invalid" (Furnham & Chamorro-Premuzic, 2010: 3).

Recruitment Definitions

Recruitment can be defined in a myriad of ways. The thesis follows Searle's (2003) definition of recruitment consisting of two core elements: *attraction* and *assessment*. These become the ultimate selection tools – especially attraction through job adverts and assessment through testing and interviewing. The investigated recruitment literatures identify attraction, even though only Furnham & Chamorro-Premuzic (2010), Henriksen (2013), and Searle (2003) explicitly portray job adverts. In relation, they all identify interviewing as one of the definitive assessment tool for choosing a job

candidate (Isson & Harriott, 2016; CIPD, 2015; Furnham & Chamorro-Premuzic, 2010; Henriksen, 2013; French & Rees, 2010 and Searle, 2003), while psychometric- and personality testing are mostly depicted in the literature of Isson & Harriott (2016), French & Rees (2010), Furnham & Chamorro-Premuzic (2010) and Searle (2003).

Attraction

This period becomes salient to portray as the thesis will investigate how job adverts may have deteriorating effects on the job opportunities of people with autism. Attraction is the process where people become applicants, i.e. when the hiring company makes itself as attractive as possible to draw in the best job candidates, including posting job advertisements (Isson & Harriott, 2016: Furnham & Chamorro-Premuzic, 2010; Henriksen, 2013 and Searle, 2003).

Job Adverts

This period includes attracting the most suitable job candidates for a given position through e.g. job adverts. Prior to this, a thorough job analysis might be needed. Searle (2003) states that job analysis is a thorough organisational investigation of "[…] how an organization works, identifying different jobs and how they fit together" (24). According to Furnham & Chamorro-Premuzic (2010), conducting a job analysis can be one of the most optimal ways of deciphering in objective terms what is needed to perform a task. Isson & Harriott (2016) concur and state that when e.g. hiring managers analyse the prerequisite for acquiring talents beforehand, it leads to a more effective and successful talent hiring. Searle (2003) emphasises that not much attention is given to job analysis, even though it is pivotal for a system of selection.

Traditional approaches are becoming obsolete as roles in the job market have changed significantly and these methods are "[…] failing to capture socially oriented skills which are becoming increasingly important in the knowledge area" (Searle, 2003: 23). In relation, Henriksen (2013) stresses that it is important to establish a job profile about what is needed for the job to be done, while also emphasising social skills. Ahmed et al. (2012) stress that job adverts often demand soft skills even in technical positions, these include among others 'people skills', 'team work ability' and/or 'social skills'. On the contrary, The National Autistic Society in the United Kingdom (UK) emphasises that job adverts often include equivocal jargon, while social attributes are often sought after that are not salient for job performances (Recruiting an autistic employee, 2016).

Assessment

Assessment processes include various techniques and tools utilised to assess whether the job candidate is a proper fit. These tools are e.g. personality- and psychometric tests, work-sample methods and interviews. The thesis will mostly delve into the general mental ability (GMA) test seeing as the majority of other tests have been widely criticised for being invalid, while interviews will also be elucidated, seeing as in Denmark, almost 100 % of organisations utilise interviews in hiring processes.

Testing Abilities, Psychometrics and Personality

The positivistic ways of viewing personality tests show that these offer accurate measurements of an individual to be able to choose the most suitable candidate (Townley in Storey, 1989). This paradigm assumes that individuals can be measured in actual terms (Searle, 2003). Although Furnham & Chamorro-Premuzic (2010) agree with Searle (2003) about most tests being unreliable and invalid, they argue that through longitudinal studies, correlations between future job performances and testing of general mental ability (GMA) are relatively high and reliable. It essentially measures the ability to e.g. plan, reason and solve problems, while also depicting the way a job candidate may think abstractly, understand complex notions, and engage in quick and experiential learning. Furnham & Chamorro-Premuzic (2010) built their findings on Schmidt & Hunter's (2004) studies on GMA effects on future job performances as they state that it may be the best indicator for future job performances. Furnham & Chamorro-Premuzic (2010) further state that some tests yield more reliability than others and testing through non verbal and multiple choices is preferable. Most tests that essentially measure intelligence are built upon the Binet-Simon's notion from the early 1900s, depicting that intellect is principally the prerequisite for common sense, practical sense, initiative, and being able to adapt to surroundings. Furnham & Chamorro-Premuzic (2010) further emphasise that logic can be built upon common sense and these methods would be more reliable and valid such as replacing psychometric tests with an intelligence test or a general ability measurement.

Interviews

Searle (2003) argues that through the first era of recruitment, emphasis has been on the objectivity and reliability of interviewing being a valid construct determining which job candidate will be

offered a job. This includes using interviews to establish whether a job candidate has social skills and cognitive abilities to perform a job, while also measuring the fit between the job and the candidate. The second era depicts that job interviews revolve around social processes and the way people interact in conversations when in a hiring process. Extraneous information sharing becomes more important and there is less emphasis on interrogative questioning (Searle, 2003). The second paradigm relates to Henriksen's (2013) narrative recruitment deriving from people creating their identities through narratives or stories and matching job candidates to organisational cultures and values.

Through the social-interactionist perspective, perceptions often play a major role during interviews, in gathering and processing information people generally obtain about the world (Furnham & Chamorro-Premuzic, 2010; French & Rees, 2010 and Searle, 2003). Through meta-analysis, employment interviews have been widely studied and been argued to be highly subjective and unreliable, while not being able to determine a future job performance of the interviewed job candidate (Furnham & Chamorro-Premuzic, 2010; French & Rees, 2010 and Searle, 2003). Certain distortions may occur through perceptions and these include the way human beings have bounded rationalities, i.e. gathered information cannot be objectively processed and becomes filtered. Therefore, it links to a person's identities being moulded by e.g. culture and society (French & Rees, 2010). Despite the aforementioned, most organisations still extensively utilise interviewing as the main decision-maker in MRPs (Furnham & Chamorro-Premuzic, 2010; French & Rees, 2010 and Searle, 2003). Isson & Harriott (2016), CIPD (2015), and French & Rees (2010) all argue that structured interviewing may enhance the reliability of interviewing. Henriksen (2013) emphasises that a question guide should not be used – the interview should be considered a conversation.

Diversity Issues

Engaging in diverse hiring may increase organisational effectiveness and competiveness, while contributing to better decision-making, problem-solving, and enhancing innovativeness and creativity (Burrell, 2016 and French & Rees, 2010).. In relation, Isson & Harriott (2016) emphasise that current recruitment processes do not provide any competitive advantages as companies usually engage in very common methods and cannot depict future talent demands, even though Isson & Harriott (2016) do not explicitly illustrate the consequences through e.g. diversity issues. Furthermore, those who organise and plan recruitment need to comprehend the complexities of

recruitment processes, seeing as the world has experienced e.g. swift changes in technology, shifts in demographics, and fiercer global competition (Anyim, Ekwoaba & Ideh, 2012). The critical social-interactionist recruitment model should alleviate diversity dilemmas (Searle, 2003), however, when focus is on hiring being a social process, through emphasis on flexibility and team-work, it may stifle the notions of how tasks should be performed, since there may be several ways to perform various tasks (French & Rees, 2010 and Searle, 2003).

Moreover, those companies who emphasise hiring through 'fit in' processes essentially search for job candidates that share similar traits to the organisation (Cable & Yu, 2014; Björklund, Bäckström & Wolgast, 2012; Cable & Judge, 1997 and Kristof, 1996). These 'fit in' practices through appropriateness may yield concerns as research has indicated that managers essentially choose candidates who are similar to them and not to the whole organisation (Cable & Yu, 2014; Björklund, Bäckström & Wolgast, 2012; French & Rees, 2010 and Cable & Judge, 1997). Cable & Judge (1997) found that recruiters utilise subjective measurements when assessing job candidate's person-organisation (P-O) fit. Most interviewers strive to assess interpersonal skills through measurements of personality traits (Furnham & Chamorro-Premuzic, 2010 and Searle, 2003). Björklund, Bäckström & Wolgast's (2012) study revealed that some organisations engaging in P-O hiring and focus on the right fit, tend to value social competencies more than actual job-related-skills. Congruence between culture, values, goals, and direction of a company and the person being hired might indicate high future performance, loyalty, commitment and dedication (Cable & Judge, 2014). It also yields that recruiters often use their own attributes as a baseline for hiring. This relates to Searle (2003), that "through the recruitment of like-minded individuals, it is likely that the diversity and adaptability of a firm will be reduced" (265). Furthermore, the psychological construct groupthink – the dominant group will stifle innovative processes – should be avoided. However, in organisations with very like-minded individuals, this construct practically becomes unavoidable (French & Rees, 2010).

Some organisations tend to select the job candidates that best fit the culture of the company, while others strategically engage in hiring through neo-normative control mechanisms of requesting attributes such as playfulness, varieties of sexualities or consumerism instead of emphasising e.g. occupational skills or familial roles (Fleming & Sturdy, 2009). These processes or mechanisms derive from e.g. job candidates often choosing companies that relate to their own personal values

and from finding the right personalities that fit with the company. These ways of hiring have also derived from job tasks becoming ever more complex and the labour market emphasising interpersonal attributes, while matching personalities to companies' values (Henriksen, 2013). This presents a dilemma seeing as it is difficult to decipher who may become the most optimal person to decide which job candidates will ultimately fit into an organisation (French & Rees, 2010). Moreover, Kristof (1996) states that meta-analyses are needed to study the different variables of the P-O constructs. This relates to Searle (2003) as she states that current recruitment literature lacks inquiry into the practices to alleviate diversity issues, while Cable & Yu (2014) emphasise that basic information is needed and studies should correlate with current economic, technological and social trends.

Discrimination, Bias and Stereotyping

Both the traditional and the social-interactionist model depict that the most optimal job candidate will be offered a job position, as companies' objectives and targets need to be met. This appropriate decision-making may yield some discriminatory issues since fairness should become one of the appropriateness criteria (French & Rees, 2010). This includes equal opportunities and possible discriminatory practices; the UK has clear laws depicting that a person cannot be discriminated against due to e.g. disability (French & Rees, 2010). This also applies in Denmark, where job applicants should solely be assessed by their competencies and qualifications (Forskelsbehandlingsloven, 2016). In relation, economic models through constructs of capitalism have been criticised for failing to consider social groups such as people with a disability. Through this paradigm, people with a disability, increasingly endure discrimination when accessing the labour market and when being employed (Syed & Ozbilgin, 2014).

In relation to choosing a job candidate, Furnham & Chamorro-Premuzic (2010) state that the choice should ideally be based on logical decision-making, but it is seldom the case in real-life seeing as interviewers often rely on their own algorithms and tend to focus solely on negative information that goes against that algorithm. They often base their decision on superficial data or engage in first impression bias (Furnham & Chamorro-Premuzic, 2010 and Searle, 2003). Information obtained early on in an interview process may determine the way the job candidate will be rated (French & Rees, 2010). In relation, if a person presents an aspect during interviewing that might be perceived as negative, it is more likely the person will be discarded even though all other aspects were

'perfect' (French & Rees, 2010). In relation, Searle (2003) states that people generally have negative schematics and it becomes significantly more difficult to alter a negative rating to a positive one than the other way around. Biased decision-making may also include that those candidates who have a good connection with the recruiters or who e.g. share similar traits, will be more likely to be offered a job (Dobbin & Kalev, 2016 and French & Rees, 2010). These become related to similar-to-me bias where recruiters may hire those who are similar to them in values and attributes. These can bear great weight on decision-making in job interviews and this poses a problem as first impression bias along with other biases can be extremely difficult to disconfirm (Furnham & Chamorro-Premuzic, 2010 and Searle, 2003).

Along with the abovementioned biases, Furnham & Chamorro-Premuzic, 2010 and Searle, 2003 draw a very similar portrait of the existing biases in especially interview situations. These include e.g., on one hand, contrast error – comparing the current candidate to the previous job candidate instead of to the specific job criteria, possibly leading to negative rating of an adequate candidate if following a superior one. On the other hand, non-verbal communication bears weight in an interview seeing as those who do not make eye contact, or have a closed body language and fail to smile are less likely to obtain a job. Dobbin & Kalev (2016) emphasise that in order to alleviate diversity issues, debunking bias might be the most optimal way. It is an extremely difficult process but may be easier when companies tap into their own bias decision-making and embrace the fact that e.g. hiring processes are filled with biased decision-making. Searle (2003) agrees as organisations should accept and even embrace their discriminatory methods to allow for a discussion of improvement and not withhold possible inequitable actions.

Moreover, OECD[1] published a report on inclusiveness in Denmark. Although, Denmark is an egalitarian society offering a myriad of social benefits to various social groups, dilemmas still exists in terms of access to the labour market for many groups considered disabled (Klein & Hansen, 2016). In relation, it becomes salient to depict the way people who are considered disabled are being perceived in Denmark. A study from the Central Disability Council in Denmark, Det Centrale Handicapråd (2014) yielded that employers generally have the perception that productivity will decrease when hiring a person with a disability. That presents an anomaly seeing as people in

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[1] Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development

Denmark generally have the opinion that people with a disability should be included as they might bring much value to the society in form of diversity. However, groups who were associated with mental illnesses became the least desirable groups to work with – i.e. 19.7 % of the respondents answered that they preferred not working with a person with autism (Det Centrale Handicapråd, 2014).

In relation, *ableism* is the discriminatory concept against disabled people. It becomes strengthened through *othering*, as a study showed that body-able co-workers tend to label visibly impaired employees in a group of others when referring to them (Mik-Meyer, 2016). Furthermore, Mik-Meyer (2016) shows that stereotyping and discrimination develops into a subconscious status-quo through discursive methods. Disability becomes an off-topic discussion as nobody dares to address it and hence, nothing changes in the way people talk about disabilities. The discourse of inclusiveness and tolerance makes the topic off-limit and leads to further stereotyping- and discriminatory practices (Mik-Meyer, 2016). Stereotyping can also lead to distorted decision-making since people tend to categorise other people into neat boxes and in those boxes are assumptions that people engage in certain behaviours and have specific attributes that may rarely apply (French & Rees, 2010).

Diversity Issues through Talents

Hiring the wrong candidate can have severe impacts on the business – 80 % of employee turnover is a result of bad hiring decisions, leading to high economical costs. Therefore, companies should engage in wise talent investments both for short-term and long-term success (Isson & Harriott, 2016). "People are principle drivers of organizational success. A talented workforce helps organizations execute and deliver on strategic objectives" (Cable & Judge, 2014: 1). MRPs have become about hiring the most optimal talents that may enhance companies' competitive advantages (Isson & Harriott, 2016; Yu & Cable, 2014; Ariss, Cascio, and Paauwe, 2014; Gallardo-Gallardo, Dries & González-Cruz, 2013; French & Rees, 2010 and Boudreau and Ramstad, 2005).

According to Austin & Sonne (2014), it is neither economically viable nor beneficial to ignore untapped resources. It is more beneficial to open up to the possibility of potentially lucrative talents (Austin & Sonne, 2014). Hartley (2015) explains that odd hires might be the best choice for organisations, seeing as these individuals diversify companies and often show deep dedication.

Grandin & Panek (2014) concur about the world needing different minds to work together and that it is a waste that people, who often possess specialised skills, are not being utilised in a suitable manner. Moreover, even in the recession time of 2008, many UK based companies had difficulty filling opening job positions (French & Rees, 2010). In relation, ManpowerGroup studied lack of talents in a global context and found that companies had difficulty locating the right talents, especially for technical jobs in the knowledge-intense industries (Talent Shortage Survey, 2015).

Additionally, the Dandelion metaphor can help companies realise the potential of hiring people with ASD – the metaphor represents the foundation for the company Specialisterne. Austin & Sonne (2014) emphasise that the dandelion is much like many people with autism. When they are put in the right environment with the right nourishment; they blossom and give great benefits, however when in the wrong context and an unsupported environment, they stick out and do not belong (Austin & Sonne, 2014). HR tends to use checklists to find the right person for a job, which entails matching the person to the job description (Austin & Sonne, 2014 and Boudreau & Ramstad, 2005). Using the Dandelion metaphor, it is not beneficial to exclude people when they do not fit into a neat box (Austin & Sonne, 2014). In relation, Boudreau & Ramstad (2005) maintain that companies should be aware of each department's current needs in terms of tasks and match the talents accordingly. In relation to diversity profiles, Arris, Cascio & Paauwe (2013) "argue for broader inclusion of less-privileged employees […]" (177). Warnier, Weppe & Lecocq (2013) argue moving beyond considering only strategic and ordinary resources, where *resource-based theory* is lacking and *extended resource-based theory* (ERBT) opens up to a third resource, namely, the junk resource. Strategic resources fall under the widely explored talent categorisation, while Warnier, Weppe & Lecocq (2013) argue that junk resources such as people with autism should also be considered for the labour market and for other reasons than just social responsibility.

2.1.2 Autism Spectrum Disorder

The Autism Research Centre at the University of Cambridge labels autism as a spectrum of neurodevelopmental conditions, i.e. difficulty in forming social relations, and impaired communicative abilities. The generalised behavioural patterns of individuals with ASD may include persistent and focused interests, repetitive behaviour, and difficulty in managing volatile changes (What is autism, 2016). Many psychiatrists, paediatricians, people with ASD, scholars, academics, and others strive to understand, categorise, find proper diagnostic tools, and offer prognoses for autism. The subject of autism still remains highly complex and comprehensive, especially, since literature was almost non-existent until after the 1980s (Schopler, Mesibov & Kunce, 1998). Since then, the field has boomed and publications have increased exponentially, although research on autism and the labour market is still relatively scarce, especially in Denmark.

The Knowledge Structures of Autism

Dr. Kanner (1943) was the first to study children with autism in the 1940s in the United States (US) and the diagnosis emerged from some shared characteristics. Many of them had exceptional speech abilities with clear vocalisation and 'excellent rote memory'. Even though the children were outstanding in repetition and echoing, they were not equally as responsive to questions and commands. Changes in routine also presented problems as these tended to be very upsetting for the children. Simultaneously, Dr. Asperger worked with children in Austria. He was the first person to categorise people, now known as individuals with Asperger's syndrome (Wing in Schopler, Mesibov & Kunce, 1998). However, the term Asperger's was not coined until 1981 (Rhodes, 2011). Dr. Asperger came across children that all had different traits than usually seen. These included e.g. social awkwardness, being detached from other human beings, egocentrically unaware of other people's feelings, and excellent vocabulary with fluent speech, while not being able to use that for reciprocal conversations. Lastly, these children oddly seemed to lack common sense (Wing in Schopler, Mesibov & Kunce, 1998).

Grandin, who is considered to be one of the most successful individuals with autism in the world, states that even though, autism is a neurodevelopmental spectrum, it is a vast continuum and everybody is on the spectrum in one way or another (Grandin & Panek, 2014). Grandin & Panek (2014) strive to transform attitudes towards autism and state that when the diagnosis becomes a

rigid part of a person's life, it creates a very stifled view of the person with autism. They argue for a study of the individual brain by holistically examining a person and not just parts of the diagnosis. In relation, studies point to HFA and Asperger's syndrome being considered a condition instead of a disorder, and even as a neurodiversity (Armstrong, 2010 and Baron-Cohen, 2000). The term was coined in the late 1990s, deriving from the want to be considered different and not disabled. Moreover, some people with autism might struggle with forming social relations, being flexible, adapting to sudden changes and working in groups, many of them are also viewed as having exceptional memory, being very loyal, detail-oriented and thorough, while also being able to engage deeply in specialised interests (Hendrickx, 2008; Kyung, 2008; Grandin & Panek, 2014 and Beautiful minds, wasted, 2016).

Neuropsychology of Autism

Neuropsychological functions may be one of the aspects that might affect the job chances of people with autism, and, therefore, the most prominent concepts become depicted. *Theory of mind* constitutes the ability to be able to process that human beings have thoughts, beliefs and desires that differ from other human beings (Fein, 2011 and Baron-Cohen, Cosmides & Tooby, 1997), and it has been referred to as a mind reading capacity where deficits in this capability may be known in people with ASD (Schopler, Mesibov & Kunce, 1998). *Executive function* is the ability to plan, organise and being flexible in a process (Fein, 2011). This relates to the social functions of people with autism as they may have difficulty with planning ahead and knowing which steps to take in a process (Goldstein & Naglieri, 2014). *Central Coherence* (Fein, 2011) or *sense of coherence* (Frith, 1989) depicts that some people with ASD may have difficulty making sense of a whole process but are rather exceptional at locating smaller samples in a large cohesive pattern (Fein, 2011 and Frith, 1989). It relates to the difficulty some people with autism have in engaging in lengthy conversations but are often excellent at grammar (Fein, 2011). Lastly, Vermeulen (2014) maintains that *context blindness* derives from *central coherence* as it relates to sensitivity to contexts, and proposes that "the world is intrinsically ambiguous" (183). Therefore, some people with autism may have difficulty making sense of the world in a contextual term, where some actions and responses are more appropriate in one context than another.

Autism and the Labour Market

Seeing as most people with autism obtain jobs through supported recruitment efforts, it becomes salient to delve briefly into this field. The thesis focuses on two supported employment efforts as these become a part of the analysis through primary data collected. Firstly, Specialisterne has an employment effort department that specifically helps people with ASD obtain jobs. Secondly, the NAI founded an employment programme Project Opportunity, specifically working closely with companies such as Novo Nordisk[2] and PFA[3]. NAI and Specialisterne offer expert advice on ASD and help with matching skills with jobs (Employment Programme Opportunity, 2016 and Che, 2016).

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[2] Global health care company
[3] Pension fund

2.2 Theory

This chapter presents the overall theoretical considerations. Foucault has done extensive work on how societies have been built upon concepts of knowledge and power, essentially structuring systems and/or processes people become subjugated to. Foucault's societal work can be linked to Goffman's analyses about the way individuals play a certain role in society and put on masks in various situations depending on the role of the opposite actors and upon leverage one has in said interaction. Goffman will be utilised in the empirical analysis, while Foucault will be used as the main theoretical framework for the theoretical analysis. In the Discussion Chapter, their notions will be argued in a larger context when linking the micro empirical findings to the macro theoretical results.

2.2.1 Foucault's Normalisation of the Law

The normalisation of the law is a part of a more intricate analytical compound set forth by Foucault. Foucault (1974) emphasises that categorisation can apply to human beings, as they can essentially be analysed deductively to create certain constituent models that operate on levels to establish knowledge about man as a constitution. These models are deducted from 1) biology, 2) economics (social sciences), and 3) the study of language. Firstly, people have certain functions, and in e.g. a biological, social, and cultural sense they receive stimuli, have reactions, adapt, evolve, and succumb to environmental demands, while coming to terms with the new modality and fundamentally "[…] finding average *norms* of adjustment which permits him to perform his functions" (Foucault, 1970: 357). Secondly, people have certain needs and desires. In the pursuit of satisfying them, people have interests, want profits, have conflict with other people, and these conflicts become irreducible, while people tend to either avoid them or dominate them, and essentially finding solutions that may bring about peace in one manner or another. A body of *rule* is established representing both the deduction of the conflicts and the result of them. Thirdly, behavioural patterns of humans indicate that they want to communicate through gestures, and they do so even involuntarily and through failure, and these turn into meanings through e.g. discourses, objects and rites, while everything humans leave behind as a trace, builds up a *system* of signs. Foucault (1974) argues that sciences have been built upon these models when analysing various phenomena in society and these represent functions, conflict and signification leading to *norms*, *rules,* and *systems* of societies.

Foucault utilises historical analyses to investigate e.g. the way societies and cultures have evolved and turned human beings into subjects, occurring with the creation of systematic normalisation of the law during the age of reason (16th to 18th century). Foucault (1982) emphasises the way societies have created a certain concept of social objectification and categorisation – namely the way people as subjects become objectified and categorised through e.g. the symbolisation of the 'sane' versus the 'insane' or the 'employed' versus the 'unemployed' (Foucault, 1982 and Rabinow & Foucault, 1984). His research is mainly concerned with how societies have been built upon specific structures, where certain practices such as division of labour and categorisation of humans have created knowledge systems stemming from discursive practices. His intentions were never to investigate power; however, it becomes inevitable, seeing as power is constantly permeating in society (Foucault, 1982).

The Foucauldian approach to the thesis highlights the way certain knowledge systems have become validated through the discourses of institutions that are able to govern statements, essentially through power – these forms of knowledge often represent the truths of societies (Rabinow & Foucault, 1984). Rabinow & Foucault (1984) further explore the way power, simultaneously, can have a negative impact on the individual, while also becoming a modality inducing happiness in people through e.g. capitalism or sense of belonging in a system. More explicitly, new ways of objectifying individuals emerged in the 'age of reason' where social objectification was not about dominating people in a blunt way but to make them conditioned to an ideal system, producing citizens who could contribute to the wheels of the economic society (Rabinow & Foucault, 1984).

Social Objectification

The three modes of objectification operate on three levels. Firstly, scientific classification embodies the knowledge that exists about various practices, methods and instruments and consequently becomes the 'true' way of operating. Secondly, this knowledge becomes controlled in a manipulative and punitive way through dividing practices as a power structure. Hence, dividing practices are used to differentiate between human beings through classification of whether they belong to one system or another. Lastly, the self becomes moulded and created through subjectification, where people obtain a social identity of how they relate to others and a personal identity comprising the mental structures and knowledge that people accumulate themselves, but always in relation to an authoritative figure.

Scientific Classification

Certain discursive practices created the sciences that are prominently dominant in everyday life of society (Rabinow & Foucault, 1984). "[…] Discourses of life, labour, and language were structured into disciplines; how in this manner they achieved a high degree of internal autonomy and coherence" (Foucault, 1974: 9). More explicitly, through categorisation of humans, people have therefore, become objectified to adhere to certain biological, economical (social sciences), and linguistic structures that subjugate individuals to abide by systems (through linguistics), norms (social sciences), and rules (biology) of society (Foucault, 1974). Moreover, truths about certain disciplines are created and through these, people generally believe that these systems and structures become the truths of society and hence their own truths as knowledge modalities – ultimately representing the episteme of society (Rabinow & Foucault, 1984 and Foucault, 1974).

Dividing Practices

Dividing practices can be related to the aforementioned, even though Foucault (1982) never offers an explanation on how to relate the two. It can be argued that through dividing practices people were assigned to scientific classification, where institutionalised individuals were considered mere bodies or things. More explicitly, individuals become subjugated to the way science has classified them in terms of being 'sane' or 'insane' or the way they relate to being subjects of labour. Dividing practices depicts the way people have become excluded in a social sense inasmuch as the way science or pseudo-science has developed. Hence, social groups have become isolated from the 'normal' workings of a society because of 'abnormal' behaviour (Rabinow & Foucault, 1984 and Foucault, 1982). Foucault's division concept has risen from examining power as an entity that permeates in society and derives from punitive processes, ultimately becoming a manipulative way of getting people to adhere to certain practices. Generally through historical analyses, Foucault's work has led to conclusions depicting that power entities in society (e.g. prominent figures, state heads and others with the ability to exercise power during and after the age of reason) ultimately ordered individuals to be divided through measures that seemed most fitting for societies (Rabinow & Foucault, 1984). This resulted in the ordering of people behaving in a certain way and upholding a certain function in society that consequently should lead to greater societal- and economic benefits (Foucault, 1974).

Subjectification

Subjectification is considered one of Foucault's most original works. Subjects are born through concepts of knowledge and power, and are both given social- and personal identities (Rabinow & Foucault, 1984 and Foucault, 1982). These identities are constructed through self-formation of "[…] a process of self-understanding but one which is mediated by an external authority figure […]" (Rabinow & Foucault, 1984: 11). These identities are usually bound to certain ideologies through dominance or dependence and, therefore, human beings do not only become subjugated by systems of knowledge and power, but they also turn themselves into subjects to adhere to certain structures, such as capitalism (Foucault, 1982). Certain ways of how to be an individual have been imputed on people and Foucault suggests that people move beyond the kind of individuality that essentially adheres to certain unyielding systems. Hence, people should move beyond subjectification, which ultimately, may reinforce rigid status-quos and allow for power of authorities to dominate the way individuals construct themselves (Rabinow & Foucault, 1984 and Foucault, 1982).

Critique of Foucault

Even though, the thesis utilises his thinking as the theoretical foundation for the thesis as a whole, it is important to mention that Foucault (1982) refrains from being labelled a certain philosophical thinker and he is very attentive about his work as he does not want to create elaborate theoretical frameworks. Seeing as Foucault's work is extensive and complex, it becomes difficult to critique him in a holistic and reasonable manner as those who criticise derive opinions from own realities and may also misinterpret and even misread Foucault's works. Even though many have attempted to label him as a post-structuralist (Cultural Theory, 2016; Velibeyoglu, 1999 and Choat, 2010), he rejects any such labelling (Carl et al., 2012). Foucault can in another sense be considered a practitioner of 'critical philosophy' (Michel Foucault, 2013). Foucault can be criticised for oversimplifying the way, in his opinion, all human beings serve a specific function, which in turn can explain the way societies and institutions have been created and evolved (Carl et al., 2012).

One can also criticise him for the way he "[…] is critical of all ongoing practices with the help of his theoretical discourse, which, itself, is a 'practice'" (Wuthnow & Hunter, 2010: 136). Despite the criticism, his work has been cited extensively (Carl et al., 2012). Conclusively, Townley (1993) has utilised his work in her analysis of the way HR practices have arisen and Foucault can be used to

depict the way knowledge in HR and, therefore, MRPs have been built upon certain notions. Lastly, Foucault's exclusionary concepts have not only been utilised to investigate minority groups (Anders, 2013), but he has also been analysed extensively in a gender context (Syed & Ozbilgin, 2014).

2.2.2 Goffman's Presentation of Self in Everyday Life

The thesis will use Goffman's (1959) work on 'Presentation of Self in Everyday Life' as to portray how hidden social rules between individuals drive them to behave in certain situations to appear more desirable by the opposite actors – as to a recruiter in a hiring situation. Goffman is mainly concerned with the frameworks people have to work with when interacting and engaging in social situations. Recruitment situations can be referred to as an interaction as he emphasises that all interactions include individuals being together in a given setting as a continuous presence and these can be referred to as encounters. Performance is also a key terminology in Goffman's research as it depicts any activity of a given participant on a given occasion that serves to influence the other participants in any way (Goffman, 1959). One of Goffman's major concepts, dramaturgy, depicts that all life is equal to acting through social interactions, driving individuals to act in a 'proper' manner that is acceptable in any given social situation. People generally have desires to be portrayed in a way that the outside world deems acceptable (Goffman, 1959 and Carl et al., 2012). Individuals, who are not acquainted with the person they meet, use signs and get clues about their behaviour by comparing them to the behaviour of others expressing similar conducts or those who have similar attributes. In order for a person to adjust to a social situation, she needs to tap into her way of acting in a 'proper' manner and portray a certain way of behaviour that is required (Goffman, 1959).

The abovementioned leads to Goffman's terminologies of *frontstage* and *backstage*, depicting that people essentially portray different aspects of their selves in any given social setting (Goffman, 1959). This relates to the way individuals form their social identities. Frontstage is when the performer is in the outside world and has to adjust behaviours to become socially- and contextually accepted – and this can be compared to a recruiting situation. Backstage depicts behaviours where, no norms and/or outside impact, influences individuals' behaviour – the way people truly are,

emerges – even though it is argued that the acting of individuals is always shaped through social interactions. This relates to the way individuals have certain frameworks to work with when engaging in social situations, and through these frameworks they present an appropriate self in given situations, where an opposite actor in the interaction ultimately gets impressions from the performer. This includes gathering information on the performer through signing, clues and comparing her behaviour to another performer, while ultimately stereotyping the behaviour (Goffman, 1959).

Goffman has done extensive work on how individuals e.g. strive to maintain facades, struggle to obtain recognition, have a need to be understood, and the art of presenting an appropriate self. In any given social setting, Goffman emphasises first impressions and getting off on the right foot as it is crucial for the following steps in an interaction. The definition of a situation will be influenced by the actions of the individual that appears before others. Some people can give exact impressions that are expected of him in a given situation and these impressions become calculated without knowing. Goffman (1959) refers specifically to an information game where people in a game-like situation exchange information and are dependent upon the moves of the opposite players.

Critique of Goffman

It is also quite challenging to critique Goffman as he also rejects theoretical labelling and he never intended to bring forth systematic and coherent results. One critique emphasises that he could have been more systematic as that could have enhanced the legitimisation of his work (Psathas, 1996). However, since Goffman strives to find meaning in what others often find meaningless, (Psathas, 1996), his work does not solely extend to one branch of critical thinking but takes on a holistic approach towards the way individuals construct identities when interacting in social spheres.

2.2.3 Goffman Complements Foucault

On the one hand, Goffman, like Foucault, has rejected any label of being a certain philosophical thinker, his work emphasises that knowledge becomes socially constructed. Foucault emphasises that societies are built upon discursive practices and entities of power percolate and depict the way practices evolve and become structures of knowledge in societies. On the other hand, Goffman emphasises discursive practices as being prominent in constructing identities and interacting with others, while Foucault's work also relates to social construction as identities are not created in a

vacuum but in interaction with others. Therefore, Goffman complements Foucault as their thinking converges in a way where compartments of society have been constructed through social interactions and/or discourses. These often rigid compartments need to be deconstructed when trying to unravel how societies and, therefore, individual identities have been shaped in a certain way, i.e. through normalisation of the law (Foucault) or presentation of self (Goffman). While Foucault focuses on e.g. how societies have been constructed and individuals have become subjugated through cultural shaping and power, Goffman's work shifts the focus to the way individuals strive to maintain certain personas related to *frontstage* and *backstage* to interact in the most 'proper' manner. Therefore, Foucault gives the thesis an overall societal perspective, while Goffman takes the perspective to an individual level. Seeing as both scholars are considered very critical towards positivistic thinking and rigid societal norms, they complement each other and can be used in different aspects of the thesis' analytical pillars (Carl et al., 2012 and Psathas, 1996).

Chapter 3

3.1 Methodology

This chapter will clearly formulate the way the research was conducted and condensed. This has, in turn, enabled a clear purpose of the research. Firstly, philosophy of science will be delved into to introduce how the thesis will accumulate and ultimately produce knowledge, i.e. through which epistemological and ontological lenses do I view the world. Secondly, research approach and focus will be elucidated to depict the frame to which the research question will be answered and a critique thereof. Thirdly, the analytical frameworks will be explained as these present the pillars on which the analysis stands. The methodology chapter ultimately operates to portray how the research for the thesis was conducted, reviewed and consolidated to reach a valid and reliable answer to the research question. Lastly, the data collection section will highlight the way the primary and secondary data was collected – through which methods and to serve which purpose to guide the whole research approach and focus in a specific direction.

3.1.1 Research Philosophy

The exploratory qualitative nature of the research pushes it in a subjective ontology, where social actors (interview respondents) give their own meanings, interpretations and opinions (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2009). Townley's (1993) way of utilising Foucault in the study of HRM practices spurred my interest to engage in a Foucauldian analysis of recruitment. Recruitment is, therefore, not thought of in functional terms; the thesis explores the way concepts of MRPs may have been built as knowledge and power instruments, through disciplinary practices. Thus, the thesis' research philosophy is inspired by Foucauldian genealogy. Foucault's historical analyses have e.g. been built upon rejection of an absolute truth and the rational man (Crowley, 2012). The thesis does not study the sole cause behind the reasons why relatively few people are hired through MRPs. However, the processes will be studied that have led to the possible exclusion. Seeing as this exploration of linking MRPs to the effects they may have on people with autism is highly complex and underexplored, I only briefly delve into the history of recruitment and autism. I focus mostly on

depicting the most common processes and how they may affect the societal group in order to open up for a possible melioration of their job opportunities.

Hence, the thesis will not only be driven by the genealogy presented by Foucault, but also in juxtaposition to Dewey's pragmatism (Koopman, 2011). I let the research question drive the thesis through thematic analysis, while Foucauldian exploration steers the theoretical analysis, through Foucault's three modes of social objectification. The way recruitment has been built upon notions that may not apply to people with autism, will be deconstructed. Foucault thinks of knowledge as being fused with power and arises through dominant discourses; whereas Dewey emphasises that "knowledge is the fruit of the undertakings that transform a problematic situation into a resolved one" (Koopman, 2011: 547). Koopman (2011) emphasises that Foucault and Dewey may be highly complementary as Foucault can be used to critique and evaluate certain inherent notions, people seldom question in everyday life, while Dewey may reconstruct these notions through amelioration of practices. Genealogical problematisation "[...] also shows us how that which we took to be inevitable was contingently composed" (Koopman, 2011: 545). Therefore, it does not only depict that these taken for granted notions are in fact contingently constructed instead of necessary, but it also portrays how these contingent practices came about. Dewey may assist Foucault in offering views on the way problematic areas may be reconstructed. However, universal notions through reconstruction must be avoided and when ideas become universally accepted, a problem of contingency emerges (Koopman, 2011). Therefore, the two philosopher and societal critiques complement each other and present the thesis with a philosophy of science that goes beyond exploring a topic in classical philosophical views.

3.1.2 Research Approach and Focus

Seeing as little knowledge can be found on the thesis' research area, it is most valid to conduct an exploratory qualitative study (Silverman, 2010 and Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2009). It is an interview study of whether 'mainstream recruitment processes' (MRPs) might have exclusionary effects on 'people with autism' when applying for a job in the Danish labour market. Even though I am investigating a societal group, people with autism, in a societal context – the labour market –, I am elucidating how a minority group in society might be affected by certain recruitment processes

in a specific context. Therefore, the study addresses the meso-level. In relation, it becomes a study from the perspectives of the societal group – average or above-average intelligent adults diagnosed either with high-functioning autism (HFA) or Asperger's syndrome (AS) – namely people with autism or ASD. It is an abductive study, simultaneously allowing the interpretations of the collected primary data to adjacently be analysed with secondary data and theoretical considerations to explore nearly unstudied topic (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2009).

Validity of Conducting a Qualitative Study

Silverman (2010) emphasises that qualitative studies may yield reliable results when extracting opinions from people and trying to explore certain topics by e.g. using interviews. Nevertheless, the researcher must be self-effacing about transferring data of a small study to a larger context, seeing as interpretations of interview data might not depict the circumstances as a whole and therefore, does only reflect on the specific context the researcher is tapping into (Silverman, 2010). Hence, I have validated the research by utilising 8 separate interviews to explore the field of study. I also acknowledge that the thesis' findings may simultaneously only reflect the realities of the specific interpretations and perceptions of the interviewed individuals. Although, interviewing organisations with specialisation in autism may enhance the likelihood of the findings being able to be transferred to a societal context as these give a more nuanced and wider image of what is actually going on. This will be further elucidated on in the section on data collection.

3.1.3 Data Analysis

The analysis will function as a two-tier exploration of 1) how specific themes related to recruitment and autism might manifest themselves through a thematic analysis, with central themes deriving from the primary data, and 2) MRPs possible exclusionary effects on the job opportunities of people with autism using Foucauldian social objectification. Subsequently, the discussion chapter will serve to juxtaposition the two-tier analysis in an examination of the aforementioned analytical focuses.

Thematic Framework Analysis

The themes chosen for the analysis derive from the primary data by extracting the most prominent codes from the interviews. These are portrayed in the Appendix 1 – Data Chapter through direct

quotes from the interviews that led to the coining of the themes. This analytical approach is inspired by Braun & Clarkes' (2006) work on the way themes and patterns can become the driver of an analysis and have the ability to be driven within many different theoretical frameworks. Although, the themes were empirically extracted from the interviews, these were essentially inspired by probing into the field of recruitment, autism and by the overall theoretical considerations of Foucault and Goffman.

Moreover, structures and meanings are extracted from the broad sets of data through what Clarke & Braun (2006) refer to as latent thematic analysis. Clarke & Braun (2006) emphasise "[…] searching *across* a data set – be that a number of interviews, focus groups, or a range of texts – to find repeated patterns of meaning" (14). More explicitly, through thematic analysis, I strive to find a common thread between what the respondents have answered, "[…] where broader assumptions, structures and/or meanings are theorized as underpinning what is actually articulated in the data" (Clarke & Braun, 2006: 13). This leads to a data-driven analysis. Firstly, scarce research studies can be found on autism and the labour market and none specifically linking exclusionary elements of MRPs to people with autism. Secondly, no studies have been conducted on the impacts of elements of neuropsychology, which may affect many people with autism, to exclusionary elements of MRPs. Therefore, the themes were coined by solely looking at what the primary data depicts and not trying to fit it into a pre-existing theoretical box.

Before I choose the themes for the analysis, I follow Clarke & Braun's (2006) six phases of how to conduct a thematic analysis. Firstly, I become very familiar with the primary data collected by transcribing the most relevant verbatim accounts of the interviews for the study. Secondly, the data becomes coded through approaching it in a data-driven way by letting findings from the data produce the themes. Hence, the most salient, pertinent, and repeated verbatim essentially produce the themes through the subsequent coding phase – see coding model in Data Chapter. Thirdly, the long list of coding patterns becomes potential themes. The overall coded themes are extracted from the most pertinent and repeated quotes relating autism to the labour market and specifically to MRPs. These include: 1) being able to decipher situations during ambiguous and often chaotic situations, while also reading into what is to be expected; 2) navigating through uncertainties, while striving to engage in preparedness since misunderstanding may occur and intrinsic skills may be needed in a MRP; 3) performances and being able to play a role become a part of MRPs, while

facilitation is often needed in especially job interviews and selling one's abilities may be salient, and 4) having the right personality may be demanded, while MRPs might not be inclusive or value autodidactic attributes and playing the social game becomes important. Fourthly, I review the codes and the overall themes to increase validity of the chosen themes by comparing them to the primary data. Fifthly, the themes take on names and become defined – see below mentioned. Lastly, I apply the themes to the analysis and essentially write the report.

The first theme includes being able to read into situations and expectations – the theme of: *Reading the employer*. The second theme includes being able to navigate through uncertainties, while utilising intrinsic skills during MRPs – *predictability*. The third theme includes performances and being able to sell ones abilities. This theme becomes Goffman's *frontstage*. The last theme contains not having the right personality and playing a social game – *the whole package*. The themes unravel, and function on different levels. The thesis refers to these as being the main themes of the research as they guide the empirical analysis and ultimately help answer the research question.

Critique of Thematic Analytical Framework

I am aware that no epistemological vacuum exists and therefore my perceptions, opinions and meanings from reading the primary and secondary data will influence the way I code the data from the interviews to create the themes. Choosing which themes to investigate may yield muddled results that do not reflect the reality of the study as a whole. The themes might also stem from the way I read the literature as a researcher and essentially the themes will be emerging from my own reality and therefore decrease the validity of the study (Braun & Clarke, 2006). However, by systematically viewing and reviewing the collected primary data, themes emerge from the data that may be linked to e.g. neuropsychology of many people with autism, to the recruitment literature, to Goffman's presentation of self, and to the way some companies search for a whole package in job candidates. Hence, it validates the creation of the patterns and essentially the usage of the themes.

Ethical Issues in Data Analysis

Silverman (2015) emphasises that several issues may appear due to ethicalities. These include researching people who are considered a vulnerable societal group – such as people who have difficulty obtaining a job without supported employment efforts. Even though I am researching a societal group that has some difficulties navigating the social spheres of society, the group is highly

intelligent and more than capable of consenting to being a part of the interview study. Furthermore, to avoid any ethical issues I sent the empirical analysis to all participants prior to handing in the thesis as I strive to contribute to this unexplored research field in the most responsible manner.

Foucauldian Analysis

The theoretical analytical pillar of the thesis proposes that MRPs can be seen as a system of knowledge created by institutions of power and essentially representing the "true" way of how to recruit a potential job candidate. Foucault does not emphasise solely criticising the regimes of truths existing in society; he rather wants to put forth the possibility of creating new truth regimes. Therefore, Dewey may complement Foucault in the quest to answer the research question trough improving the field of research (Koopman, 2011). Foucault questions the way reason has arisen and simultaneously emphasises that instead of being too critical of it, it should be tested and questioned as reason can in fact lead mankind to adhere to some eerie ideologies such as Nazism (Rabinow & Foucault, 1984). Therefore, the theoretical analysis will explore the possible exclusionary nature of MRPs through a Foucauldian exploration of the topic. I analyse the way social objectification, through three modes, may turn people into subjects to adhere to systems that possibly only are aimed at the mainstream population. Firstly, scientific classification explains the way MRPs have been built upon certain structures that may not include people with autism. The autism knowledge constructs have e.g. evolved around people with ASD not being able to hold down a job. Secondly, dividing practices can be linked to the way people with autism possibly have become excluded from the normal workings of the society and hence, the normalised recruitment methods may not apply to them. Discrimination through bias and stereotyping in MRPs becomes analysed through this mode. Lastly, subjectification portrays the way people construct their self and social identities through power elements that may depict the way these individuals should behave and act. This mode becomes analysed through the way that people with autism have been viewed in society through e.g. stereotyping.

Critique of Foucauldian Analytical Framework

It can be argued that because Foucault never meant to create elaborated frameworks, it may decrease the validity of utilising him as the main theoretical framework. Furthermore, it can also be argued that the way Foucault criticises many societal practices, becomes a practice of its own. However, his extensive work legitimates using his notions, especially because the thesis embarks on

examining exclusionary terms highly related to Foucauldian thinking to investigate the unstudied field of research.

3.1.4 Data Collection

Secondary Data

The secondary data consists mainly of several books, papers and journals, and articles from well-established newspaper sources about the topic of e.g. MRPs autism, discrimination and diversity. The thesis has also relied on a documentary, which was aired during the thesis writing, produced by the Danish Broadcasting Corporation DR, 'De Skjulte Talenter' – specifically depicting the way people with autism are underrepresented in the Danish labour market even though they may possess skills or talents highly suitable for the job market. Moreover, I have not been concerned with ontological or epistemological views of each source. I have mainly been searching for the most utilised and prominent recruitment processes organisations utilise and critique thereof, while also probing into the autism field of both the neuropsychological profiling of people with autism and sources found that explore the topics of people with autism and employment. It can be seen in the literature review that I have not only used several different sources, but I have also obtained different opinions to further validate the research for building up the most comprehensive and suitable literature for the analysis.

Primary Data

Many different methods can be applied to collect the most suitable data for a research, such as interviewing, questionnaires and observations. All have merit; although it becomes about what the researcher wants to get out of the study (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2009). Silverman (2010) offers a practical guide on how to conduct a qualitative study, through e.g. interviewing participants who directly relate to the research field.

Interviews

I interview four people, all diagnosed with ASD. To further validate the thesis' claim that recruitment processes might affect people with autism when applying for a job, I also interview several employees from two of the most prominent autism organisations in Denmark, both, among

others, dedicated to help people with autism obtain employment. Multiple methods can increase the validity of a study, however, one should be aware of not solely dipping in the pool of data but being able to comprehensively study and analyse it to yield the most reliable answer to the research question (Silverman, 2010). I have decided to only utilise interview data seeing as this gives the study the most valid method, since I am searching for experiences, opinions, and perceptions. "Qualitative interviewing is particularly useful as a research method for accessing individuals' attitudes and values – things that cannot necessarily be observed or accommodated in a formal questionnaire" (Silverman, 2015: 167). Silverman (2015) stresses and I am aware, that through my emotionalist approach to the data analysis, I cannot directly access people's experiences. "[…] but instead offer indirect 'representations' of those experiences" (Silverman, 2015: 168). I attempt to access the autism experience with MRPs and the Danish labour market in general and therefore, the interviews are meant to "[…] give an authentic insight into people's experiences" (Silverman, 2015: 169).

The thesis utilises *two* unstructured interviews with two employees at Specialisterne to probe into the autism field in terms of the labour market in general – these are conducted early in the thesis writing process and therefore no interview guide is made. I conduct *two* additional interviews that specifically examine MRPs and people with autism. These are conducted, respectively, at NAI and Specialisterne, and are semi-structured interviews (Appendix 6 – Interview Guide) with few deviations to probe into specific answers. Conversely, Silverman (2015) suggests that unstructured interviews are the most comprehensive when accessing experiences. I choose semi-structured interviewing in this case as I want to enhance validity of interviewing two different organisations by improving the process of comparing answers. In terms of interviewing the *four* people with autism, I interview a societal group that may have difficulty engaging in unstructured conversations. Therefore, I deem fit to construct an interview guide (Appendix 5 – Interview Guide) and deviate from the guide when I want to probe into an issue being elaborated on by the respondents. I argue that open-ended questions present problems for some people with autism and therefore I deviate from what Silverman (2015) suggests about emotionalists accessing experiences in the most comprehensive manner through undistorted conversation.

Conclusively, I am aware of the cultural and social implications of engaging in interviewing as the respondents derive their own experiences from their cultural and societal understandings, and

accessing indirect insights may distort the way I interpret the answers. Model 3.1 shows the interview participants in terms of how the interviews are conducted and model 3.2 demonstrates background information on the four respondents with autism.

Validity of Doing an Interview Study

Seeing as I am striving to understand internal experiences, it becomes valid to utilise interviews. However, one needs to be aware of how the results of the interviews become interpreted (Silverman, 2010). The thesis is not searching for an absolute truth or striving to come forth with a how-to-guide, but merely sets out, through exploratory measures, to investigate a field that has essentially not been probed into. Therefore, it becomes highly valid to utilise interviews to access the narratives the respondents tell about their own and others' experiences with MRPs.

Model 3.1 – The interview respondents and how the interviews were conducted

The Interview Respondents	How the interviews were conducted
Henrik Thomsen - COO of Specialist People Foundation at Specialisterne Charlotte H. Kaufmanas - Head of Business Development at Specialisterne	The interviews were conducted early in the thesis process and were meant to probe into the linkages between autism and the labour market. These unstructured interviews tapped, among others, into these themes: the challenges for people with ASD, how autism is being viewed, the reasons for why they need help from Specialisterne to obtain jobs and the Dandelion metaphor.
Linda Schwartz - Technical Manager at Det Nationale Autismeinstitut (NAI) Lars Budeck and Sebastian Biltz - joint interview with two Competency Developers at Specialisterne	The two interviews, at NAI and Specialisterne, were semi-structured, and aimed to access the experiences people with autism have had with MRPs by asking the respondents about narratives they have ascertained from people with ASD. These interviews were also conducted to access the respondents' professional experiences with helping people with autism obtain jobs.
The four interview respondents, all diagnosed either with AS or HFA	The semi-structured interviews were conducted to access their personal experiences with the Danish labour market and MRPs.

Model 3.2 – Background information on the interviewees diagnosed with autism

Ann
- Laboratory Technician with supplementary training.
- Obtained fulltime employment as a laboratory technician trough a MRP and has not revealed her Asperger´s diagnosis to her employer.

Bjarne
- Landscape Gardener and Landscape Technician.
- Obtained part-time employment trough MRP two decades ago and has revealed his Asperger´s diagnosis to his employer.

Henning
- Cand.Scient. in Biology and Chemistry.
- He was a part of the mainstream labour market for many years, working in his field of study.
- Currently, he works as a Warehouseman. A job he obtained through supportive employment efforts.

Louise
- Bachelor in Computer Science.
- Obtained employment at Novo Nordisk through supportive employment effort - Project opportunity.

I strive to formulate the questions in the most linear manner to avoid misunderstandings and misinterpretations. I find it very straightforward and informative to interview the abovementioned people – no superfluous information is exchanged and therefore, the focus is on directly answering the questions. I did not change my interview technique in any other way. Due to logistics and time constraints – Ann answered per email and Henning answered per telephone. Bjarne and Louise were respectively interviewed at his home, and her work-place.

Chapter 4

4.1 Data Chapter

This chapter presents the coding of the interviews that led to the development of the four themes – by presenting the most repeated, interesting and confounding verbatim of meanings, opinions and perceptions linking recruitment methods and the labour market in general to people with autism. Due to space unavailability, this chapter only portrays a model of the coding process, while Appendix 1 – Data Chapter showcases quotes from the various interviews that led to the coding and subsequent coining of the themes.

Model 4.1 – Themes Mindmap
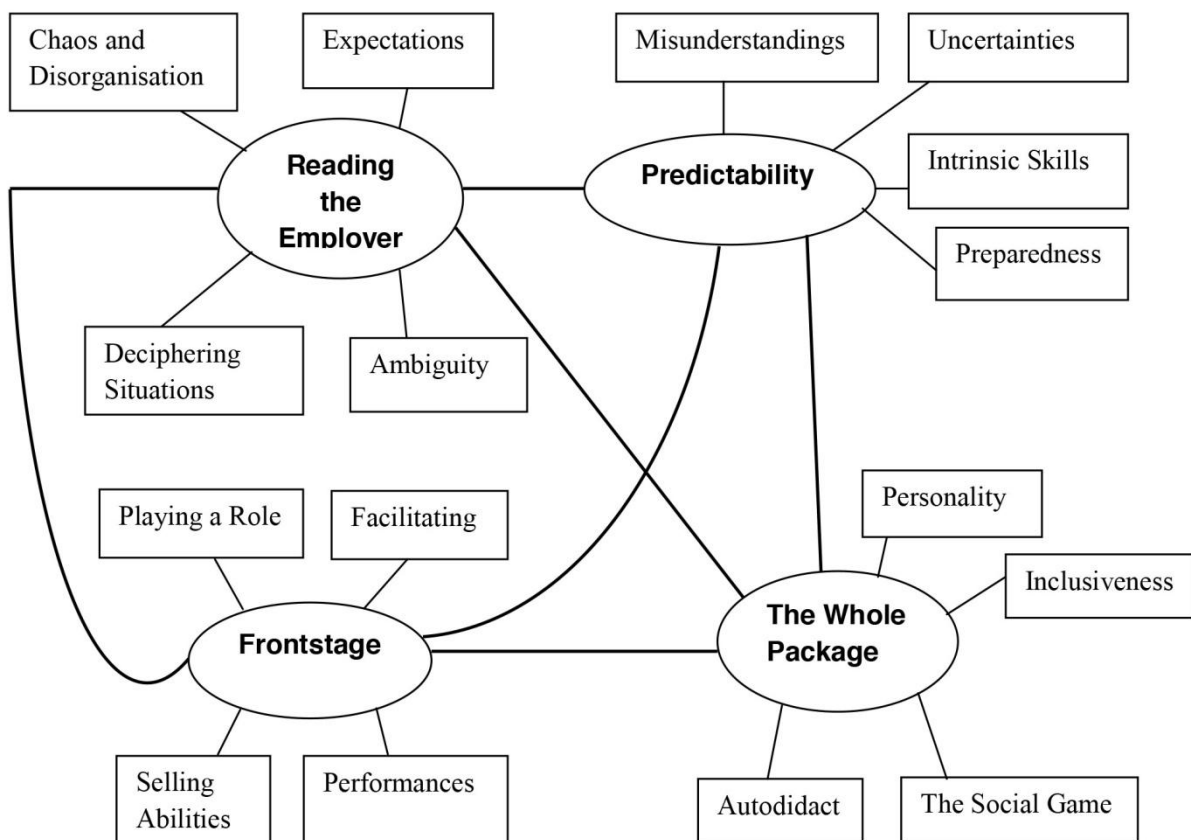
Chapter 5

5.1 Analysis

The literature review and the collected primary data have exhibited indications that MRPs might have some exclusionary effects on people with autism, especially because few obtain jobs through normalised hiring methods, even though industries associated with autism competencies often lack talents. Hence, some elements of recruitment processes might have negative impacts on the societal group's job opportunities, while MRPs could also operate as a macro entity that has exclusionary effects. More explicitly, the research question operates on two levels and therefore the analyses will answer the two-tier question through an empirical and a theoretical analysis. First section will operate on the empirical micro level, through a thematic framework coined from the primary data. This is done by investigating various elements that might affect people with autism when trying to obtain a job through MRPs. The second section will analyse exclusion as a macro phenomenon, through a Foucauldian framework, depicting whether recruitment as a construct operates as a power element of its own, contributing to an exclusion of the societal group.

5.1.1 Empirical Analysis

The empirical analysis will explore how people with ASD might be affected when going through a recruitment process. Four themes (reading the employer, predictability, frontstage, and the whole package) have been identified in the Methodology Chapter and their major findings have been exhibited through a coding model in the Data Chapter and more comprehensively through quotes in the Appendix 1 – Data Chapter. These themes will be analysed, not solely through a theoretical and empirical exploration, but also by investigating whether some neuropsychological aspects of having an autism diagnosis might hinder people from obtaining a job and how the possible exclusion might impact the societal groups' job opportunities.

The Four Themes

The themes can be correlated to some of the recruitment literature as recruitment may include chaotic and distressing situations, while also requiring advanced interpersonal skills, being able to sell ones technical- and personal abilities, being able to adapt to ambiguity, and fitting into certain organisational norms (Isson & Harriott, 2016; Cable & Yu, 2014; Furnham & Chamorro-Premuzic, 2010; Searle, 2003 and Storey, 1989). The coding of the data led to the four themes, and these operate on different levels even though they may overlap on some stages. Firstly, *reading the employer* investigates the ability to decipher situations, comply with expectations, and manage ambiguity and chaos. Secondly, *predictability* explores how people with autism may handle uncertainties, the way misunderstandings may arise in recruitment situations, preparedness is often needed and intrinsic skills may not be met. Thirdly, Goffman's *frontstage* relates to predictability through performances, being able to sell one's abilities, the need for facilitation during interviews, and the difficulty of maintaining a role. Lastly, *the whole package* relates to all of the aforementioned themes as it depicts that MRPs might not only be a social game, but that companies may also demand that personalities be matched to the company, while autodidact attributes may not be sought after, and inclusiveness may be lacking.

Reading the Employer

The actual mainstream recruitment process varies significantly from one organisation to another and according to one interviewee Ann (Appendix 2a), in her experience, companies with HR departments tend to be more structured and organised, while in smaller companies, disorganisation

and uncertainty may accompany a MRP. Isson & Harriott (2016) emphasise that a MRP can be distressing for both employers and candidates, while pressure and chaos often follows suit. In the case of the attraction period, job adverts often include unnecessary jargon and are written in a cryptic language. To be able to include an autistic workforce in MRPs, job adverts should only request essential abilities and experiences, while excluding all other redundant language that does not relate directly to job performance (Recruiting an autistic employee, 2016). One of the ways Specialisterne evaluate the candidates they assess, is their ability to understand equivocal jargon and situations, as ambiguity is often associated with real-life work situations (Appendix 4c).

Two of the interviewees with autism gave similar answers in terms of two aspects of job applications: how 1) social attributes and 2) specific job qualifications affect the chances that they will apply for the advertised job position. One of the two interviewees, Ann (Appendix 2a), states that she reconsiders before applying for positions that value out-going personalities and team-work. However, in terms of specific job qualifications, Ann (Appendix 2a) needs to palpably convince herself to apply for the job when she does not fulfil all of the demanded qualifications. The other interviewee, Louise (Appendix 2d) has a more challenging time reading into situations. The social demands of e.g. being a team-player will blatantly discourage her from applying for a job and furthermore, she will usually not apply if the fulfilment of the entire list of demanded job qualifications cannot be met by her, which correlates with Ann's (Appendix 2a) abovementioned responses. Louise (Appendix 2d) tells that she generally has a difficult time handling a recruitment process and she rarely applies for any opening job positions, as she feels that she does not fulfil the requirements. "I think it is hard to read (into job adverts), and somebody says that you can read between the lines but that is not something I can read" (Appendix 1 – Data Chapter). She compares it to learning a foreign language as she states that she would need a dictionary to decipher job adverts (Appendix 2d). This relates to the neuropsychological term *theory of mind* as some people with autism may struggle with sensing what others are thinking and interpreting situations and people (Haracopos & Isager, 1999). In the cases of Ann and Louise (Appendices 2a & 2d), they both find it challenging, each in their own way, to decipher job adverts and read between the lines of what is actually being demanded of a job candidate. In relation to another interviewee Bjarne (Appendix 2b), he found unemployment to be challenging in terms of writing a job application, as written presentation does not come easy to him. He also tells a narrative about a situation where he misunderstood a job advert and read literally into one of the qualifications. Another interviewee,

Henning (Appendix 2c) compares MRPs to a game and he understands that certain aspects are expected of him, but he has had difficulty deciphering the game and accommodating requirements, such as being able to juggle with several tasks at once and being dynamic.

In relation, the selection period of a MRP practically always includes interviews (Furnham & Chamorro-Premuzic, 2010). Interviewee Linda (Appendix 3) from NAI states that some people with autism may struggle with deciphering a job interview procedure. This relates to the expectations that may be difficult to measure through the neuropsychological term *central coherence*, depicting the ability to be able to understand a whole process and integrating "information at different levels" (Schopler, Mesibov & Kunce, 1998: 169). Specialisterne also assess this during evaluations, i.e. whether candidates can break one large task into smaller assignments, while being able to handle an assignment where the goal is not foreseen (Appendix 4c). The abovementioned relates highly to another neuropsychological term, *executive functions*, as some people with autism might have a difficult time planning, organising, self-regulating, and being flexible. Some of the aspects of *executive functions* and *sense of coherence* depict that impairments exist in communication and social discourses, and it can manifest as not being able to engage in extensive conversations or the person might become too engaged in lengthy and peripheral monologues (Schopler, Mesibov & Kunce, 1998). This might present an obstacle for people with autism since according to the National Autism Society, some people with ASD may struggle with maintaining a conversation from start to finish seeing as they might not sense the whole situation and become fixated on one aspect of the circumstance (Recruiting an autistic employee, 2016). In relation, Lars & Sebastian (Appendix 4c) from Specialisterne highlight that some of the candidates they assess struggle with engaging in idle chatter and in the way conversations are carried out. Linda (Appendix 3) from NAI agrees and states that with an autism diagnosis, communicative challenges often arise during understanding and deciphering communications between people.

Furthermore, Isson & Harriott (2016), Furnham & Chamorro-Premuzic (2010) and Searle (2003) concur about open-ended interview techniques not being the most suitable way to assess job candidates. Conversely, narrative recruitment exists through job candidates' and organisations' story-telling and relies on advanced communicative skills (Henriksen, 2013). Linda (Appendix 3) maintains that in some cases, people with autism have difficulty answering open-ended questions such as "where do you see yourself in five years" (Appendix 1 – Data Chapter). Sebastian

(Appendix 4c) from Specialisterne relates as he tells that a job candidate with autism may not understand questions such as "what are your strengths and weaknesses" (Appendix 1 –Data Chapter). Some people with ASD will not be able to answer questions that are not linear and precisely formulated, and they will furthermore, have a difficult time deciphering what the recruiter actually wants to hear (Appendix 3). Ann (Appendix 2a) thinks an interview process is quite excruciating and includes too many open-ended questions. Louise (Appendix 2d) does not know how to decipher an interview if the results of the conversation are not given to her in writing. Interviewing has, on the other hand, been Bjarne's (Appendix 2b) strong suit, seeing as he states that his dual-diagnosis of Asperger's and ADHD[4] pushes him to be more extroversive, whereas Henning (Appendix 2c) did not know how to respond when asked "who he was" during a job interview (Appendix 1 – Data Chapter) .

Moreover, Silences are often avoided in job interviews since they are perceived to be negative and as a result, job candidates do not reflect on their answers (Searle, 2003). Searle (2003) emphasises further that "intelligence is often attributed to those who possess both rapid thinking and responses, yet successful performance in the real world often depends on taking time to reflect" (160). Ann (Appendix 2a) relates as she will take a while to decode an interview question. This has created awkward silences and in the attempt to downplay the situation, she has come up with an "I don't know" (Appendix 1 – Data Chapter) answer.

Predictability

The preceding section suggests that MRPs include some unforeseen and deciphering elements that might have an impact on the job opportunities of people with autism and being able to adapt to unexpected situations relates to predictability. Linda (Appendix 3) from NAI states that some people with autism experience an inability to evaluate other people's expectations and, therefore, may miss the mark seeing as it can be complicated to decode situations. Neurotypical people usually learn to adapt quickly to unexpected situations, e.g. during job interviews (Appendix 3). People with autism, on the other hand, usually operate best when things are clear and structured, while unpredictable situations should preferably be avoided (De Skjulte Talenter, 2017: 1:4). One interviewee, Bjarne (Appendix 2b) needs structure in his life, and he engages in preparedness in

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[4] Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder

order to be able to function optimally in social interactions. Louise (Appendix 2d) finds it difficult to plan ahead when she enters unforeseen situations since she struggles with elements she cannot decipher. In relation, Ann (Appendix 2a) finds it quite excruciating to navigate new surroundings and unpredictability makes her alert, while she often becomes exhausted after an interviewing process. The content of the interview, the interplay between the different actors, and the open-ended questions all intensify the situation. Ann (Appendix 2a) increases the predictability by preparing diligently. Despite this, the situation is still unfamiliar and she has a difficult time adapting her behaviour.

The abovementioned indicates that interviews might be a process that does not come easy for many people with autism. However, through social justice theory, firstly, most job candidates prefer traditional methods such as interviews, application forms, and work sample testing, while personality test is the least liked (Chamarro-Premuzic & Furnham, 2014). Ann (Appendix 2a) tells that she does not mind tests and that she usually scores quite high on work sample tests. Secondly, social justice theory depicts that reactions to tests depend on whether the person is being introduced to the test or whether the person is in the actual test situation (Chamarro-Premuzic & Furnham, 2014). People with autism often have a difficult time coping with uncertain situations (De Skjulte Talenter, 2017: 1:4; Haracopos & Isager, 1999 and Appendices 2a & 2d) and therefore they might not react well when being told that they have to be tested. This might trigger insecurities when in the test situation. Conversely, Ann (Appendix 2a) does not mind being tested. Even though Louise (Appendix 2d) has never been tested during a recruitment process, she states that she would not mind solving tasks, if she is informed beforehand.

Lastly, social justice theory emphasises that in most Western countries, sensitive issues such as disability and marital status should not be addressed in a job interview (Chamarro-Premuzic & Furnham, 2014). This might present challenges for people with autism, as according to Linda (Appendix 3), most employers refrain from asking about any sensitive issues. Linda (Appendix 3) further states that one of the reasons for why some people with autism do not obtain jobs, is because those who reveal the diagnosis in the job application, will not be offered a job interview. On the other hand, if the person does not disclose his autism diagnosis, he might come off as being strange or odd during the job interview and therefore be discarded even though he possesses the right skills and technical attributes (Appendix 3). Austin & Sonne (2014), Charlotte, and Lars (Appendices 4b

& 4c) all relate to Linda (Appendix 3) about people with autism having difficulties during job interviews seeing as they may lack intrinsic social competencies, e.g. engaging in extraneous information sharing. The often chaotic and unplanned process of MR (Isson & Harriott, 2016) assumes that, in terms of interviews, there are some tacit interview rules that candidates should follow, "[…] applicants have implicit assumptions of how an interview should work" (Searle, 2003: 119). In relation to neuropsychology, people with autism may often struggle with planning a whole process through *executive functions*, while deficiency in *central coherence* may result in difficulties predicting what is going to happen in a process (Haracopos & Isager, 1999 and Schopler, Mesibov & Kunce, 1998). Seeing as one of the definitions of autism diagnosis includes impairments in social communications, some people with autism may not possess the ability to decipher the tacit rules of interviewing, while through *theory of mind* – people with ASD might not be able to read into an unpredictable situation (Schopler, Mesibov & Kunce, 1998). Another aspect linked to predictability is the neuropsychological term *context blindness* (Vermeulen, 2014) depicting that some people with autism may think in absolute terms instead of contextual terms and therefore have a difficult time deciphering e.g. what responses are appropriate in a specific context.

The abovementioned relates to the candidness and honesty that is known in many people with autism. Charlotte (Appendix 4b) lists the positive qualities of many people with ASD, such as loyalty, ability to focus, concentrate and lastly, they are often honest. Honesty can be a great quality when a person with autism proclaims that a task that was meant to last for six months can be reduced to three months work; however, sometimes it can be the kind of honesty that people do not care for (Appendix 4b). Sebastian (Appendix 4c) relates to this as he tells, in relation to some of the reasons why the candidates he assesses seek help from Specialisterne to obtain jobs, that "some (people) may communicate very directly and therefore become misunderstood, something that can be perceived as an accusation or negative criticism" (Appendix 1 – Data Chapter).

> *"With autism comes raw honesty. If somebody asks, whether a person with autism is an expert in a certain area, the person will answer no and a neurotypical person will answer – yes of course I am – I am extremely skilled"* (Henrik, Appendix 4a; Appendix 1 – Data Chapter).

Frontstage

The previous section explores how predictability may hinder people with autism when obtaining a job. Decoding situations and being able to navigate through chaotic circumstances might not come easy for many people with autism, while engaging in honesty and candidness may decrease the chances of obtaining a job. This relates to the way job candidates may have to engage in stage-performance-like behaviour to navigate through MRPs to increase the chances of obtaining a job. More explicitly, this section will explore the way job applicants present themselves in a MRP through Goffman's (1959) *frontstage* and *backstage* dramaturgical concepts, depicting the way individuals conduct themselves in social settings to ultimately express behaviour that is deemed acceptable by the outside. In relation to recruitment, "[…] selection is overtly based on the grounds of attitudes, motivation and behavioural criteria" (Townley in Storey, 1989: 97).

Ultimately, interactions amount to performances through modes of behaviour (Cole, 2016). When relating this to autism, the behavioural patterns of people with autism often diverge from neurotypical behaviour in a way that e.g. engaging in frontstage does not come natural to them. Hendrickx (2008) states that the neurodevelopmental condition makes it nearly impossible for many people with autism to engage in behaviours the thesis relates to as being dramaturgical (Goffman, 1959) – such as interviewing. Social clues, reading facial expressions and body language, and all kinds of linguistic non-literal meanings, including humour and sarcasm, can be difficult to decipher for a person with autism, while honesty and candidness also follow suit (Hendrickx, 2008).

In relation to MRPs, interviews often include normative and ritualistic patterns that assume impressionistic methods such as self-promoting statements, aggression and friendliness, while ultimately engaging in forced and/or voluntary behaviours (Searle, 2003). Goffman (1959) emphasises the salience of first impressions, linking to Isson & Harriott's (2016) and Austin & Sonne's (2014) claims that first impressions bear a significant weight on interviews. Due to negative cognitive schematics, it takes considerable more effort to revert a negative outcome to a positive one than vice versa (Searle, 2003). Moreover, Lars & Sebastian (Appendix 4c) state that one of the reasons for why the job seekers Specialisterne assess are seldom offered a job during a MRP is because the individual is not familiar with the recruiters. Therefore supported assistance for job obtainment is needed for their job seekers, e.g. as interview facilitators. Linda (Appendix 3) relates to that as she tells that she functions as a mediator during supported recruitment processes.

She participates in interviews as an observer but also as a familiar person who can help if the interview becomes challenging. In relation, impression management depicts that – "[…] attributes […] are required of a performer for the work of successfully staging a character" (Goffman, 1959: 203). Furthermore, Goffman (1959) draws upon an etiquette manual that states that "the first requisite for successful conversation is to know your company well" (204).

This relates to disruptions that can occur in interactions, presenting "[…] sources of embarrassment and dissonance which are typically unintended by the person responsible for making them […]" (Goffman, 1959: 205). Unmeant gestures are one of these disruptions, and these are acts that inadvertently are inappropriate in a given situation (Goffman, 1959). This may relate to *context blindness* (Vermeulen, 2014), as some people with ASD might not have the capacity to decipher what the appropriate response is to e.g. an interview question. *Theory of mind* might also come in play as unmeant gestures may arise from not knowing how to interpret people or situations. Henrik (Appendix 4a) tells that traditional interview schemes may yield challenges for people with autism. Examples include if a recruiter talks about an after-work Friday bar, the person with autism may answer, "that does not interest me" (Appendix 1 – Data Chapter), or if the interviewer states that it would be great if the job candidate was flexible and had a sense of humour, the candidate with ASD might answer, "I do not have a sense of humour" (Appendix 1 – Data Chapter). In relation to MRPs, "skills often involve understanding the real goal of the interview, being perceptive, understand what is and what is not being said and empathy" (Chamarro-Premuzic & Furnham, 2014: 49). More explicitly, through neuropsychology of *executive function* and *sense of coherence*, people often need to be able to plan a whole process and decipher what is to be expected. This may not come as easy for a person with autism in a recruiting situation.

In regards to Goffman's (1959) various ways of engaging in dramaturgy, those who carefully engage in interactions and keep close to the facts will not be able to stage an extravagant performance. MRPs include intricate performances – it is often not about who *is* the best suited for the job, it may become about the *perception* of who is the most suitable (Furnham & Chamorro-Premuzic, 2010). Those who e.g. engage in extraneous information-sharing in interviews will be rated higher than those who stick to the facts (Searle, 2003). The interviewee Ann (Appendix 2a) relates to this seeing as she has to be extremely vigilant during interviews. During job interviews, Ann (Appendix 2a) may be challenged in her weaker competencies such as during the conversation

and the interplay between the different actors, while also having to showcase her strong suits. In another interviewee's opinion, Henning (Appendix 2c) adds that he has a difficult time performing. He says that he has not been very good at selling himself. Lars & Sebastian (Appendix 4c) from Specialisterne relate to this since their work revolves around supporting the person with autism by e.g. giving them the opportunity to perform a specific task, so that they do not need to sell themselves or use persuasion to obtain a job. In their opinion, interviewing often revolves around the aforementioned behaviours. Sebastian (Appendix 4c) adds that some of the candidates realise that they have been playing a role for their whole lives and when they are diagnosed late in life and/or encounter assistance from Specialisterne, it becomes apparent that the role-playing behaviour has induced stress.

Furthermore, Henrik (Appendix 4a) from Specialisterne tells that few of the reasons for why, some of the people with autism he has met and worked with, do not obtain a job is specifically because they do not boast and the eloquence can be lacking. On the other hand, another interviewee, Bjarne (Appendix 2b), maintains that job interviews are his stronger suit, and he adds that the ADHD diagnosis ameliorates the process. He manages to sell himself and can be quite convincing, while possessing eloquence.

The Whole Package

> *Selection by definition, involves a process of discrimination, and the opportunity for management to emphasize employee 'acceptability', or the 'good bloke syndrome', rather than 'suitability' residing in task-based criteria has been well documented in the discussion of recruitment and selection decisions* (Townley in Storey, 1989: 97).

More explicitly, recruiters tend to rely more on fitting the job candidate to the organisation rather than matching skills with the task at hand. The trend in recruitment shows that organisations start valuing generic attributes (Searle, 2003). These demands might combine technical skills with personal attributes, neatly defined by utilising checklists (Austin & Sonne, 2014 and Boudreau & Ramstad, 2005). The characteristics often include being able to work in teams, having excellent interpersonal skills, while also being able to adapt to quickly changing environments and being flexible (Burrell, 2016; Austin & Sonne, 2014; Ahmed et al., 2012 and French & Rees, 2010). Some organisations engage in demanding that the right personalities fit the organisation and this

can be showcased through the concept of Person-Organisation (P-O) fit (Yu & Cable, 2014; Björklund, Bäckström & Wolgast, 2012 and Cable & Judge, 1997). Cable & Judge (1997) found that perceptions appear to be salient in a recruiter's decision making when selecting the job candidate who has the most organisational compatibility through P-O. Some organisations engaging in hiring through P-O, that specifically focus on the right fit, tend to value social competencies more than actual job-related-skills (Björklund, Bäckström & Wolgast's, 2012). In relation, when job candidates become compared, it goes beyond evaluating the technical abilities to perform a task at hand, often companies look for personalities to match the department and/or the whole organisation (Isson & Harriott, 2016; CIPD, 2015; Furnham & Chamorro-Premuzic, 2010; Yu & Cable, 2014 and Searle, 2003). In addition, Lars (Appendix 4c) tells that the one of the reasons why many of the Specialisterne's candidates are never offered a job interview is because the labour market is controlled by illusions of the job candidates' abilities. One person at the unemployment office stuttered and his caseworker told him to not stutter if offered a job interview (Appendix 4c).

The perfect organisational fit may predict high future performance, loyalty, commitment, and dedication. However, recruiters may also utilise their own values and norms as the baseline for hiring (Yu & Cable, 2014 and Björklund, Bäckström & Wolgast, 2012). Engaging in normative 'fit-in' processes has yielded that incongruity may occur between the employees' original selves and organisational norms and therefore lax hiring methods have emerged (Fleming & Sturdy, 2009). Fleming & Sturdy (2009) refer to these as neo-normative control measures, where companies do not emphasise certain personalities; however the ability to e.g. 'have fun' becomes a sought after behaviour. This might not alleviate any diversity issues, as recruiters may tend to hire those who are similar to themselves (Appendix 3), and therefore engage in similar-to-me bias (Furnham & Chamorro-Premuzic, 2010 and Searle, 2003). In Japan, while also in the UK and the US, emphasis has been on hiring through accessing the right attitude and therefore '"brilliant but awkward people would not fit in' – […] whilst training could provide those with ability to requisite skills, little could be done by the company in the important area of engineering the right attitudes" (Townley in Storey, 1989: 96). Linda (Appendix 3) relates to this as she tells that in her experience, companies that value extroversion, cooperation, teamwork, and project-oriented cultures automatically refrain from choosing a majority of people with autism.

In Ann's (Appendix 2a) experience with the labour market, certain personality types are being demanded in job adverts, such as being able to juggle several tasks at once, extroversive behaviour, flexibility, and engaging in comprehensive view. This creates frustration for her (Appendix 2a) seeing as the Asperger's diagnosis essentially makes her the opposite of the aforementioned attributes. It can be related to *executive functions* seeing as self-regulation, flexibility, and organising may become challenging for a person with autism (Haracopos & Isager, 1999; Schopler, Mesibov & Kunce, 1998; Appendix 3 and Appendices 4a & 4b). Louise (Appendix 2d) steers away from job adverts demanding the abovementioned personality attributes, especially teamwork as she thinks she is not equipped for performing jobs demanding that skill. Henning (Appendix 2c) states that it becomes nearly impossible for him to overcome personality deviations as it is rooted within his Asperger's diagnosis. Bjarne (Appendix 2b) tells that he is very well aware of the fact that he has to perform in social situations. In those contexts, he switches his ASD off and turns his ADHD on, it becomes about utilising some aspects of his personal attributes, while downplaying other aspects. However, this is a learnt performance and it does not come natural to him on every interpersonal and communicative level (Appendix 2b). Henning (Appendix 2c) believes that one of the reasons he has been discarded as a job applicant is because he did not possess the right personality.

Moreover, Searle (2003) states that when companies emphasise that job candidates should fit a specific 'personality profile', it may have a negative impact on the diversity profiles in organisations. Tasks may e.g. be performed in a myriad of ways, while solely few indicators can predict the way the personalities of individuals will correlate with co-workers. Currently, more organisations in the knowledge-intense industries are struggling to fill positions that often correlate with the abilities of people with autism such as IT staff, engineers, and technicians (Talent Shortage Survey, 2015). These are positions linked to being highly suitable for some people with autism (Grandin & Panek, 2014). This can be related to Austin & Sonne's (2014) emphasis that "[…] talented tech workers can be behaviourally atypical in many ways" (para. 14) and these are often not considered in the pool of talents or human resources (Austin & Sonne, 2014 and Warnier, Weppe & Lecocq, 2013). Henning (Appendix 2c) tells about a recruitment experience where he knew that the pool of candidates was scarce and although he fulfilled all the technical requirements, he was still discarded. Austin & Sonne (2014) pertain to this as they exemplify a brilliant tech worker who became nervous during a job interview and was not offered a second chance even

though he was an expert in the job area. In relation to talent, redefinition of talent needs to be incorporated to include a more diverse workforce that may in turn, enhance the competitive advantages of organisations (Aris, Cascio & Paawe, 2014 and Boudreau & Ramstad, 2005).

In relation to task performance, even though people with autism may have a difficult time showcasing their talents and selling their work, some evidence indicates that the societal group, when high-functioning and average or above-average intelligent, often possess some kind of abilities that may be considered as talents (De Skjulte Talenter, 2017: 1:4; Grandin & Panek, 2014; Appendices 4b & 4c). Some have excellent rote memory capacities being able to memorise information that often becomes challenging for neurotypical people (Schopler, Mesibov & Kunce, 1998; Grandin & Panek, 2014 and Appendix 4b). De Skjulte Talenter (2017: 2:4 & 3:4) depicts talents of people with autism and in the documentary Louise showcases her ability to find patterns within numbers. Another person with autism in the documentary, Trine, shows her remarkable skills with complex Rubik's Cubes, while also being able to solve puzzles exceptionally quick. This indicates that at least some people with autism are extremely talented at solving problems, memorisation, and finding patterns within complex contexts (De Skjulte Talenter, 2017: 2:4 & 3:4). Furthermore, Linda from NAI (Appendix 3) tells a narrative about a young man who never fit into the traditional school system, and therefore, has no secondary or other higher education. He obtained a job at Novo Nordisk through Project Opportunity and is performing tasks at the same level as engineers and physicists since he memorises the task instructions without using a notepad and can afterwards perform them quite exceptionally. Linda (Appendix 3) further tells that he would never have been offered a job through a MRP. Firstly, he does not possess the educational qualifications. Lars (Appendix 4c) relates to this as he tells that many of the candidates Specialisterne assesses lack the educational backgrounds needed for the job positions, although many of them can perform tasks without comprehensive formal training. Secondly, he would not have been able to perform in a job interview setting. Thirdly, his interpersonal skills are not advanced enough. Lastly, he is a person who needs a strong support system during work hours. His executive manager would never have hired him through MRPs as hiring is often based on a good chemistry between the job candidate and those who recruit (Appendix 3).

In terms of business outcomes, technical positions often require the abovementioned skills. In terms of engineering and internal tech-support, hiring managers should consider the job candidates'

ability to fix bugs, release codes, and solve cases (Isson & Harriott, 2016). Nevertheless, Isson & Harriot (2016) also emphasise employing candidates who are a cultural fit. Skills such as being a team-player or having excellent communicative skills are often a requirement set in job adverts and these are usually not pertinent to the technical skills needed to perform the job (Recruiting an autistic employee, 2016). Linda (Appendix 3) relates to this by telling that the task itself seldom yields obstacles for job performances, it is the social aspects that come with the job, often creating difficulties for a person with autism. Sebastian (Appendix 4c) tells in relation that competencies often exist for the candidates Specialisterne assesses, although the right support should also be accommodated. Solely requiring technical skills may not be the most optimal way of hiring either, seeing as companies often undergo rapid changes and have to engage in team-based decision-making (Searle, 2003). Ann (Appendix 2a) states that in her case, she finds the job market to be quite accommodating for people who are cognitively different. Therefore, she wonders why so many job adverts require attributes such as excellent communicative skills and the ability to work in teams.

The Dandelion metaphor utilised by the Specialisterne depicts that job descriptions should be tailored for the individual since the skills and talents of the person should be assessed before employment. The traditional recruitment processes utilise reverse methods, "[…] starting with fixed strategies, deriving job requirements, refining these into descriptions, then hiring and developing people to fit the roles" (Austin & Sonne, 2014: para. 25). Searle (2003) emphasises that generic assessment tools for recruitment might decrease in validity and fairness as these may exclude certain job candidates. It may be more comprehensive to contextualise the recruitment situation in terms of what is need for the job to be done. "The emphasis becomes the total behaviour of the individual rather than specifically 'productive' behaviour, and it is that facet that selection and appraisal mechanisms are designed to identify and mould" (Townley in Storey, 1989: 106).

Sub-Conclusion

The empirical analysis addresses the way that certain aspects of recruitment may affect people with autism through the four themes. Firstly, *reading the employer* presented that chaotic and disorganised recruitment situations may impact people with autism in a negative way, since ambiguity, and deciphering circumstances and expectations may not come easy for them. Secondly, *predictability* showcased that MRPs may demand intrinsic skills and being able to handle

uncertainties. This may present issues as the need to engage in preparedness, and misunderstandings may correlate negatively between a MRP and some people with autism. Thirdly, engaging in *frontstage* could have deteriorating effects on the job opportunities of people with ASD, especially when MRPs demand selling abilities and engaging in extravagant performances. Playing a role might be challenging for a person with autism and therefore, facilitating efforts can be needed for the job candidate. Lastly, *the whole package* assumes that some organisations value the right personalities and jobs become acquired through playing a social game. Autodidactic attributes are often not desirable and in sum, inclusiveness of the job market decreases, further impacting people with autism in a negative way. The subsequent analysis will explore MRPs and autism in a Foucauldian context.

5.1.2 Theoretical Analysis

The previous section revealed some concrete elements that might have negative effects on the job opportunities of people with autism. The subsequent section will analyse the exclusionary effects in a societal Foucauldian context seeing as the preceding chapter indicates that a larger issue is at stake. Namely that the way in which MRPs have been built upon certain notions might have contributed to organisations not considering the underlying aspects of hiring processes such as discrimination against minority groups through e.g. bias and stereotyping. The analysis will investigate, through a Foucauldian framework of social objectification, MRPs' possible exclusionary effects on the job opportunities of people with autism, along with empirical- and theoretical elements presented in the literature review.

MRPs will initially be analysed in a Foucauldian context. Subsequently, the three modes of social objectification will be elaborated on. Firstly, *scientific classification* operates as knowledge of an era and in this section, it will depict 1) how recruitment methods operate as a knowledge modality built upon certain techniques that may be exclusionary for those who are classified as being outside the mainstream, and 2) the way people with autism have been classified. Secondly, *dividing practices* illustrate the way people with autism have been divided into belonging to a group that only relatively recently has been considered for the labour market. The way some recruitment methods make use of division of job candidates and measurement between them can be linked to discriminatory methods related to bias and stereotyping. Thirdly, *subjectification* showcases e.g. how people's identities become subconsciously moulded by practices such as stereotyping.

The Foucauldian Context

This section analyses both Foucault in a MRP perspective drawing upon how hiring techniques have been created in a knowledge sphere as power elements that might not apply to the recruitment of diverse workforces. It also raises specific questions about MRPs' possible exclusionary effects on people with autism. Townley (1993) emphasises that the field can be linked to Foucault's power and knowledge concepts and can be analysed not in terms of its functionality, but in the way MRPs within HRM context "[…] fix individuals in conceptual and geographical space, and they order or articulate the labor process" (Townley, 1993: 541). Rational techniques emerge that may depict the most optimal worker through knowledge about him linked to governmentality. However

information is never created in a vacuum as "[…] procedures for the formation and accumulation of knowledge, including the scientific method, are not, therefore, neutral instruments for the presentation of the real" (Townley, 1993: 521). Searle (2003) stresses that the traditional and instrumental recruitment paradigm lacks taking into account shifting markets and the subjective social-interactionist measures of hiring. The traditional paradigm essentially employs the most optimal employees through objective measures of e.g. job adverts, tests and interviews. On the other hand, the social-interactionist paradigm emphasises social interactions and communicative means of recruitment. Through meta-analysis it raises the questions of subjectivity and possible discriminatory methods of the traditional view. This view should ameliorate the process of e.g. hiring more diverse workforces, and promote fairness (García-Izquierdo, Derous, & Searle, 2013 and Searle, 2003).

Moreover, recruitment may systematically differentiate between job candidates (Isson & Harriott, 2016; Furnham & Chamorro-Premuzic, 2010; Henriksen, 2013; Cable & Yu, 2014 and Searle, 2003) to ultimately select the candidate who may be perceived to be the most suitable, while discarding the rest (Furnham & Chamorro-Premuzic, 2010 and Cable & Judge, 1997). Syed & Ozbilgin (2014) emphasise that people considered to be disabled do not have a chance of competing on absolute terms with a body-able candidate. Views about those who are disabled often revolve around them not being considered valued assets to labour markets (Det Centrale Handicapråd, 2014 and Syed & Ozbilgin, 2014). Anders (2013) states that through Foucauldian normalisation, it demands that people with disabilities overcome their infirmities to become included in normal workings of a society – this is often impossible and not even desirable by various societal groups.

Social Objectification

Foucault's three modes of social objectification can be used to address the issues of exclusion and categorisation, which in turn might contribute to MRPs being constructed through power mechanisms. As a result, they may contribute to excluding certain societal groups from normal workings of a society (Rabinow & Foucault, 1984 and Foucault, 1982) since these instruments possibly only apply to the mainstream population.

Scientific Classification

Traditional MRPs have been constructed through scientific rationalities, namely methods dating back to the 1900s depicting that a worker can be objectively hired through recruitment structures, measuring differences in people and rating them to ultimately discard or hire them (Isson & Harriott, 2016; Furnham & Chamorro-Premuzic, 2010; French & Rees, 2010; Searle, 2003 and Storey, 1989). Through meta-analysis, recruitment methods such as interviews, and psychometric and personality tests have been criticised and examined extensively (Furnham & Chamorro-Premuzic, 2010; Hunter & Schmidt, 2004 and Searle, 2003), while scarce information has been found on the impacts of job adverts on societal groups. The questioned methods of testing and interviewing have been examined in longitudinal studies where a new paradigm of recruitment has emerged depicting the social-interactionist model (Furnham & Chamorro-Premuzic, 2010; French & Rees, 2010 and Searle, 2003). It is both divergent and complementary to the traditional model as methods within the newer paradigm are often built upon the prerequisite processes (García-Izquierdo, Derous, & Searle, 2013 and Searle, 2003).

Even though, the social-interactionist paradigm through meta-analysis utilises critical inquiry to expand various hiring methods, especially by including diverse minority groups in society (Searle, 2003), the way the model is built upon interactions between people suggests that it per definition becomes exclusionary for people with autism. This may especially be true when companies engage in narrative recruitment (Henriksen, 2013). Furthermore, overemphasising matching the personality of a worker to an organisation might become exclusionary as well (Cable & Judge, 2014 and Searle, 2003). Some organisations engage in requiring specific soft skills from workers through e.g. interpersonal skills or team-work abilities, even in technical positions (Isson & Harriott, 2016 and Ahmed et al., 2012). Studies on P-O fit have yielded that dedication, loyalty and job performance may increase through matching workers' personalities to organisational values and cultures, although this approach may not enhance diversity (Cable & Yu, 2014; Björklund, Bäckström & Wolgast, 2012; Searle, 2003; Cable & Judge, 1997 and Kristof, 1996).

MRPs' Knowledge Structures

The knowledge modality of *job adverts* is difficult to decipher, even though Isson & Harriott (2016); Furnham & Chamorro-Premuzic (2010) and Searle (2003) all concur about the salience of a thorough investigation of the functionalities of various job positions and their relations through job

analysis before posting a job advert. Searle (2003) states that companies should be aware of standardisation of job analytical approaches as traditional job analyses assume a singular way to job performance. This, in turn, might create a contingency problem as generic approaches might not be the most comprehensive. On the other hand, the social-interactionist model may also assume that a job can only be performed in a stifled way, if companies request specific personal attributes to fit organisational cultures and values (Searle, 2003). The model may also demand social skills from various employees (Furnham & Chamorro-Premuzic, 2010; Henriksen, 2013 and Searle, 2003), even in technical positions (Isson & Harriott, 2016 and Ahmed et al., 2012). Moreover, Henriksen (2013) highlights that Foucauldian counter-power percolates in hiring situations. Companies utilise several methods to attract the best candidates, while job candidates may choose to decline a job offer or even refrain from applying for it.

Various *tests* through e.g. psychometrics, work ability, and personality have been built upon psychological constructs. Furnham & Chamorro-Premuzic (2010) and Hunter & Schmidt (2004) maintain that general mental ability (GMA) is one of the best indicators for future performances and these tests have derived from 1900s intelligence tests maintaining that common sense is one of the preconditions for intelligence. Conversely, if an intelligence test relies on vocabulary, it may yield unreliable results seeing as vocabulary may be culturally bound (French & Rees, 2010 and Searle, 2003). Searle (2003) concurs with French & Rees (2010) about testing in itself indicating discriminatory processes as these may have different impacts on different people, e.g. because the exact measurement constructs might not be clear. French and Rees (2010) further state that tests may not be prognostic measures as predictive measurements should preferably be tested after a person has been hired and recruiters should be aware of measurements that do not correlate with real-life job performances.

Moreover, Grandin & Panek (2014) found that when measuring intelligence in people with autism, results differ in terms of whether the tests e.g. rely on social abilities or are purely visual. Furthermore, Searle (2003) states that testing people at one moment in time may be inadequate since e.g. people's attributes gestate, although Hunter & Schmidt (2004) maintain that longitudinal studies on testing yield consistent results that GMA is the best predictor for future job performances. In relation, Isson & Harriott (2016) state that tests for mental abilities and personalities can be predictive, valid, and reliable if companies utilise the most comprehensive and

suitable tests. Although they do emphasise that comparison techniques may not be the most optimal and it is better to e.g. measure performances over time and through individual performances. Others refrain from suggesting that personality tests may predict future job performances (Furnham & Chamorro-Premuzic, 2010; Hunter & Schmidt, 2004 and Searle, 2003).

Furnham & Chamorro-Premuzic (2010) are highly critical towards all other forms of testing, while also showcasing that *interviews* are extremely subjective forms of hiring. Furnham & Chamorro-Premuzic (2010) state that structured interviewing may be valid when companies engage in comprehensive job analysis. Although, they do agree with Searle (2003) about being careful relying on interviewing as a valid method because prior information should be ignored and candidates should be rated before and after, while biases should be tapped into to avoid them (Furnham & Chamorro-Premuzic, 2010 and Searle, 2003). Isson & Harriott (2016), on the other hand, emphasise that a comprehensive job analysis and structured interviews with clear objectives might yield the most suitable results in selection of job candidates, even though they acknowledge that interviewing includes interpretations of answers. Moreover, Henriksen (2013) states that although interviews should have a coherent flow, he refrains from suggesting utilising a question guide. The Foucauldian knowledge system of MRPs may explain the way the processes have been built as a tool to hire the mainstream population, possibly excluding people with autism.

Classification of Autism

Autism has been a classification since the 1940s and significant changes have occurred. Autism is now being researched extensively, but relatively disperse knowledge still exists about causes and constructs of the condition (De Skjulte Talenter, 2017: 1:4, and Panek & Grandin, 2014). It is quite an anomaly from other conditions; some even argue that people with autism have a neurodiverse brain (Armstrong, 2010 and Baron-Cohen, 2000). Their way of observing, processing, and acting are usually different from neurotypical people (Silberman, 2015; Grandin & Panek, 2014; Schopler, Mesibov & Kunce, 1998 and Kanner, 1943). Silberman (2015), Armstrong (2010), and Baron-Cohen (2000) stress that high-functioning autism and Asperger's syndrome should be labelled as a condition and even neurodiversity, since the brain solely functions differently. Therefore, HFA and AS should not be labelled a disorder as that label has negative connotations and suggests that measures should be made to 'fix' or 'cure' autism. The Danish Health Departments' classification system still labels autism as a mental disturbance or as a disorder (Galster, 2016).

Moreover, the societal group has often not been considered to be able to hold an optimal function in society and, therefore, has not been considered for the mainstream labour market (De Skjulte Talenter, 2017: 1:4; Seeing the Spectrum, 2016 and Schopler, Mesibov & Kunce, 1998). In relation to recruitment, Austin & Sonne (2014) state that people with ASD are often associated with having impaired communicative abilities, while engaging in repetitive behaviour and restricted focus towards one specific area. "Companies don't typically seek out these characteristics in new hires. In fact, the social struggles and behavioral patterns that accompany autism often make individuals on the spectrum unemployable" (Austin & Sonne, 2014: para. 1).

Dividing Practices

In terms of division, people have become located according to e.g. either being employed or unemployed (Townley, 1993). Searle (2003) questions the way the traditional recruitment paradigm overly relies on depicting individual differences in people (Isson & Harriott, 2016; Furnham & Chamorro-Premuzic, 2010; Henriksen, 2013 and Cable & Yu, 2014). The paradigm further assumes that differences are stable between individuals and models are based on division of labour (French & Rees, 2010 and Searle, 2003). Moreover, Searle (2003) emphasises that recruitment studies rely on over-represented groups of society, especially military subjects and college students (Furnham & Chamorro-Premuzic, 2010). Therefore, e.g. test constructs may not been built to include all groups of society. Testing is also by default a measurement of differentiating between people (Searle, 2003). It can be deduced that the social-interactionist paradigm also demands that people should be measured through individual differences through e.g. interviewing (Furnham & Chamorro-Premuzic, 2010 and Henriksen, 2013). The studied recruitment literature stresses that forms of comparison techniques often exist, ultimately differentiating between the various job candidates to either discard or hire them (Isson & Harriott, 2016; Furnham & Chamorro-Premuzic, 2010; Henriksen, 2013 and Cable & Yu, 2014).

Testing as a division measure may have negative consequences for people with autism in hiring situations (Grandin & Panek, 2014). In terms of measuring personalities in job candidates, Searle (2003) maintains that it often becomes a question of "[…] simplistic fit/misfit screening device, instead of enabling applicants to reveal their full potential" (225). In relation, Isson & Harriott (2016) stress that comparison techniques might not induce the best hiring results. Job candidates

often become divided into groups and e.g. according to Isson & Harriott (2016), precise rating systems should take place and candidates' applications should be placed in three piles depicting highly qualified, semi qualified, and unqualified for the job before being offered a job interview. This relates to interviewing as a rating technique since studies show that hiring through interviewing may become about who is *perceived* to be the most optimal hire and not about who *is* the most qualified (Furnham & Chamorro-Premuzic, 2010; French & Rees, 2010; Searle, 2003 and Cable & Judge, 1997). This links directly to Danish discriminatory laws that forbid companies to differentiate between job candidates because of e.g. race, disability or other aspects (Forskelsbehandlingsloven, 2016).

Diversity issues through Bias and Stereotyping

Recruiters seldom rely on logical algorithms when choosing the most suitable job candidate as they often base their decision on their own calculations of who is the most optimal applicant (Furnham & Chamorro-Premuzic, 2010 and Searle, 2003). Consequently, similar-to-me bias occurs and recruiters tend to hire those who share their attributes and values, while good connections and first impressions become salient aspects (Dobbin & Kalev, 2016; Furnham & Chamorro-Premuzic, 2010; French & Rees, 2010; Searle, 2003 and Goffman, 1959). More explicitly, biases come into play, while ultimately operating as a guiding system to whether a job candidate is the right match (Burrell, 2016). Other biases such as contrast error and non-verbal communication may also become exclusionary for people with autism. Elevating the current recruitment field by engaging in improved hiring methods of diverse workforces may occur through e.g. minimising bias by tapping into the possible discriminatory decision-making of organisations (Dobbin & Kalev, 2016 and Searle, 2003)

Moreover, Cable & Yu (2014), Björklund, Bäckström & Wolgast, (2012), Cable & Judge (1997), and Kristof (1996) all concur about organisations becoming homogenous when engaging in 'fit in' hiring methods. This method already indicates discrimination as hiring organisations are given much power to ultimately choose the candidate who is perceived to stand out from other candidates (Furnham & Chamorro-Premuzic, 2010). This is done through "[…] measurement of individual differences and their relationship with performance" (Searle, 2003: 3). It is through the measurement of differences that power, bias, and discrimination permeates. This kind of rating system is very common and includes using e.g. psychometric testing, situational judgement tests or

interviews to ultimately measure differences in people (Isson & Harriott, 2016; Furnham & Chamorro-Premuzic, 2010 and Searle, 2003). In some cases, basic stereotyping measures individual differences when recruiters have doubts about who to hire (Burrell, 2016). Björklund, Bäckström & Wolgast (2012) relate to this as their study revealed that some organisations might engage in subconscious discrimination when minority groups become compared with mainstream groups in recruitment situations.

Diversity Issues through Exclusion of Potential Talents

Many people with autism face either unemployment or underemployment in society (Mavranezouli et al., 2013 and Wilczynsky, Trammel & Clarke, 2013). Even though much has changed in terms of job obtainment for people with autism, relatively few obtain jobs through MRPs when compared to supported recruitment efforts (Wehman et al., 2012). Sonne (in De Skjulte Talenter, 2017: 1:4) argues that companies should hire outside the conventional and, therefore, indicates that people with autism are not a part of the mainstream. Hartley (2015) concurs and states that less optimal hires, namely those who are not part of the hiring mainstream, often show deep dedication, are loyal, and through their obstacles in society have developed characteristics that can have substantial benefits in the job market.

When companies do not engage in comprehensive and holistic talent conceptualisation when assessing what is needed for an available job position, it may not enhance organisational diversity profiles (Cable & Yu, 2014; Ariss, Cascio, and Paauwe, 2014; Gallardo-Gallardo, Dries & González-Cruz, 2013; French & Rees, 2010, and Boudreau & Ramstad, 2005). Another dilemma may emerge in terms of filling available job positions seeing as talents are often needed, especially in technically driven industries (Talent Shortage Survey, 2015). Current talent literature fails to consider all possible talents since overemphasis exists on talent conceptualisation being built through normative measures of who actually is considered talented (Ariss, Cascio, and Paauwe, 2014; Gallardo-Gallardo, Dries & González-Cruz, 2013; French & Rees, 2010 and Boudreau and Ramstad, 2005). Burrell (2016) stresses that people tend to recognise talent when they see it, but it is farther from the truth, given that objective measures of people rarely exist. The aforementioned can be related to ERBT seeing as Warnier, Weppe & Lecocq (2013) emphasise that ignoring 'junk resources' may not be viable as e.g. people with autism may bring great value to companies. In conclusion, the Foucauldian division concept helps elucidate the way MRPs may have been

constructed as a power entity dividing people with autism into a societal group that has not been considered as viable job candidates.

Subjectification

Fleming & Spicer (2014) identify subjectification as a form for organisational power, permeating not only in society, but also within individuals as they become subjugated to adhere to systems in a subconscious way, ultimately relating to their sense of belonging and sense of self-formation. People's genuine selves become produced through concepts of power. In relation to recruitment, it becomes a quasi-logical decision-making made by people. However, decisions are not made in a vacuum and recruiters respond unconsciously to powerful people indicators (Furnham & Chamorro-Premuzic, 2010). The identities of people with autism become socially moulded through concepts such as stereotyping (Burrell, 2016; Det Centrale Handicapråd, 2014 and Syed and Ozbilgin, 2014). In relation, *ableism* and *othering* are discriminatory constructs (Mik-Meyer, 2016) that can be related to people with autism, as the societal group may become stereotyped and labelled as 'others' and therefore will not be considered a viable workforce (Austin & Sonne, 2014 and French & Rees, 2010). Additionally, the societal group's identities also become shaped by stifled diagnostics, namely autism being labelled a disorder instead of a condition or even neurodiversity (Armstrong, 2010 and Baron-Cohen, 2000).

Moreover, it can be deduced that the some people with autism will not be able to fully adhere to current MRPs. Attributes such as missing social clues, having difficulty deciphering situations and conversations, while tackling social situations, makes it extremely hard to engage in a situation that often requires intricate and innate abilities to communicate and perform (Austin & Sonne, 2014 and Hendrickx, 2008). Thus, structures of MRPs may not apply to them seeing as they are often linked to not assimilating to normalisation (Kyung, 2008, Grandin & Panek, 2014 and Schopler, Mesibov & Kunce, 1998).

Sub-Conclusion

The abovementioned indicates that people with autism might not be considered for the labour market as the macro mechanisms of MRPs indicate that the societal group, through subjectification are succumbed to normalisation that barely applies to them. This will be discussed in the following chapter through together with the micro elements from the empirical analysis.

5.1.3 Discussion

The empirical analysis presented four themes constructed from the primary data that might have an impact on the job opportunities of people with autism. The theoretical analysis examined, through Foucault, how MRPs function as a knowledge construct, operating as a power entity leading people into subjectification. The philosophy of science lens of the thesis explored an unstudied topic by critically delving into the recruitment constructs. These constructs have often been built upon tools usually stemming from the early 1900s and are sporadically still being utilised, often habitually without any inquiry. Foucault has helped problematise the exclusionary issues the various recruitment tools may exhibit for several societal groups, hereunder people with autism. Dewey has, on the other hand, let the research question drive the thesis when exploring how certain empirical elements affect the job opportunities of people with autism, in an attempt to expand the unexplored field for melioration. More practically formulated, the Discussion Chapter will discuss all the relevant findings from the analyses through levels, while also considering the research implications and limitations. Firstly, elements from the Foucauldian analysis will discuss the exclusionary elements of MRPs. Secondly, the thematic analysis, in an exploration of the effects the themes might have on people with autism will be discussed. Lastly, the macro and micro elements of the exclusionary effects will be explored through various paradoxical elements that emerged in the analyses.

The Exclusionary Construct of MRPs

"Recruitment and selection does not operate in a vacuum, insulated from wider social trends, so it is very important to keep abreast of current research" (French & Rees, 2010: 171). Through *classification*, it can be argued that the traditional paradigm has been built upon rational and instrumental recruitment notions. The paradigm depicts that the most optimal employee can in fact be hired objectively through measures of e.g. testing and interviewing, already indicating exclusion for certain societal groups. When recruitment is built upon rational best-practice instruments, the methods are rarely questioned. Meta-analysis of said practices have stressed that many studies on objective recruitment measures indeed include some validity and reliability issues. The enquiry has yielded that objective judgement cannot be made in a MRP seeing as decision-making often involves e.g. discriminatory, biased, and stereotypical methods. The social-interactionist paradigm stems from meta-analysis and has arisen to account for shifting markets, emergence of knowledge-

industries, and for the amelioration of e.g. minority groups. The shift has not improved all societal groups' job chances as e.g. the tools within the newer paradigm are often built upon traditional constructs that may not apply to sundry others. In the case of autism, when companies overemphasise the social aspects of recruitment, the societal group may become excluded. The way autism has been labelled might even contribute further to the exclusion since autism is still being categorised as a mental disorder or a disturbance, connected to negative connotations. To ameliorate this, some progressive people in the autism field are striving to change the label for people with HFA and AS from a disorder to a condition. Some even want to go further and label it a neurodiversity.

The thesis could have explored the differences between the supported recruitment and MRPs, or depicted specific ways the traditional paradigm differs from the social-interactionist paradigm, while studying how meta-analysis may enhance or even stifle the recruitment literature. This would have changed the whole dynamic of the thesis and shifted towards a macro comparative study instead of a meso critical inquiry – the main quest was to explore the MRPs' possible exclusionary effects on a specific societal group. The thesis has contributed to the research field of both autism and recruitment, especially through elevation of knowledge by combining two phenomena that have previously not been collectively studied. The combination of the theoretical and the empirical analysis has enhanced the thesis' validation, even though one of the major limitations becomes presented in an exploration of an unexplored topic. More explicitly, by solely relying on interviewing as primary data may yield skewed and biased results as these results stem from my own interpretations of the collected data. It may also be difficult to apply the gathered interview data to a societal context. However, through a thorough investigation into several fields of recruitment linked to exclusion, and into the autism field, the thesis' results reflect the primary data gathered and uncovers meanings, perceptions, and opinions in an interpretivist study. I am though aware of my role as a researcher, seeing as the way that I interpret the data has contributed to the results of the thesis, as acquiring knowledge does not occur in a vacuum. Hence, my own culturally and socially bounded mental constructs influence the knowledge obtainment and the way that the thesis has been constructed – the methods to which data has been collected has influenced the methodology and thus the research question and is essentially bounded by my own subjectivist philosophy of science lens.

Through *dividing practices*, people with autism have not been considered for the labour market until relatively recently. Studies found varied from 2008 to 2015 and mostly evolve around supported employment efforts. The theoretical analysis showed that often job candidates are rated, measured, and eventually differentiated. Through these processes, discrimination permeates due to e.g. biased and stereotypical decision-making. Still today, relatively few people with autism obtain jobs through MRPs. It can be argued that recruiters often automatically objectify people with autism and may even group them into categories. This can be related to Goffman as essentially people gather information about each other through impressions, and essentially behaviours linked to impressions become categorised and compared to other performances leading to stereotyping. This might not apply to all interactions. However it can be argued that impression management follows suit during MRPs. Moreover, rating systems can be identified as an exclusionary element if recruiters do not consider bias, stereotyping, and discrimination. If rating is based on subjective perceptions and not on actual qualifications, it becomes exclusionary. This can be related to the two analyses indicating that perceptions are salient concepts within recruitment since *perceptions* of who is the most suitable job candidate outweighs who *is* the most qualified. Danish discriminatory laws explicitly forbid any such subjective selection methods. More explicitly, the often subconscious way of hiring through perceptions instead of actual qualifications contradicts the Danish discriminatory laws and may, therefore, contribute to the exclusion.

Through *subjectification*, people with autism may be subjugated to being labelled as an unviable and not suitable workforce. The analyses exhibited that people generally want to ameliorate the lives of those with a disability; however, those who are associated with mental disorders may be regarded as not being desirable to work with. Furthermore, in a subconscious manner, people may engage in *ableism* by labelling people with a disability in an *othering* category. It can therefore be argued that when job candidates are compared, the group considered disabled becomes compared to a mainstream group. This may result in deteriorating job opportunities for people with autism. Hence, analytical evidence indicates that recruitment systems may subjugate the societal group through Foucauldian normalisation that currently fails in general to consider them as viable and productive employees. In an attempt to meliorate this situation, I argue that the underlying assumptions of recruitment meanings need to be addressed. Biased, stereotypical, and discriminatory processes that may accompany MRPs must be articulated and processed seeing as it may be the most advantageous and inclusive way to become emerged in the search for diverse

talents. Redefinition of talented workforces might become necessary to enhance diversity. The process may even lead to effectuation of organisational decision-making, and enhancement of innovation and creativity, while increasing competitive advantages of companies.

Exclusionary Elements

Through social objectification, people with autism may have become subjugated to adhere to mainstream recruitment system that may not apply to them and, therefore, their best chance is to seek jobs through supported employment efforts, such as through Specialisterne and NAI. Due to the thesis' partly pragmatic approach, limitations present themselves. The thesis could have explored the way supported recruitment processes utilise specific methods to help people with autism obtain a job. However, this would have led to a pragmatic best-practice study of how companies could engage in better hiring methods and would not have shed light on any exclusionary effects. In order to be able to address what can be done to ameliorate the societal groups' job chances, one must first investigate the underlying constructs of e.g. how certain practices may have led to deteriorating employment opportunities. The empirical analysis suggests that people with autism are aware, to some extent, of the abating effects MRPs have on their job opportunities. Other societal groups may change their behavioural attributes to fit into a recruitment situation. This, however, becomes almost impossible for many people with autism, further indicating that they adhere to recruitment systems that they currently are not integrated into. Hence, the subsequent section will explore how specific elements may affect people with autism in recruitment situations.

Reading the Employer

This becomes an element that depicts that job applicants need to be able to decipher situations and handle ambiguity, chaos, and disorganisation, while reading into expectations from especially job adverts and interviews. This operates on a personal awareness level where often hiring organisations enjoy much power, especially when attracting potential job candidates. The empirical analysis showed that deciphering job adverts may be quite difficult, and *theory of mind* reveals that reading into situations may be challenging for people with autism. It can be argued, through the responses of two interviewees, that they might refrain from applying for a job if 1) they do not fulfil all of the qualifications and 2) if the demands include teamwork and/or interpersonal skills. Studies have shown that job analyses may be important before posting a job opening. However, if engaging

in traditional stifled categorisation of the way a job should be performed, it may have a negative impact on people with autism. It may also decrease the chances of them applying for a job when overemphasising interpersonal and teamwork skills, while they will most likely not be offered a job if the interview revolves around possession of said skills.

Results from the analysis also indicate that being able to have an overview over whole processes may present exigencies, while questions may be misunderstood and the whole recruitment process could become confusing – relating to *central coherence*. This becomes linked to *executive functions* since engaging in a recruitment process may require skills such as flexibility, organisation, and planning. It may also manifest in the way some people with autism are not able to engage in lengthy conversations or they may engage in monologues through *context blindness*. Some people with ASD have a difficulty reading into situations of what might be appropriate in different contexts. It can be assumed that reading the employer presents obstacles for some people with autism.

Predictability

The MR processes may often be unpredictable and that might impact people with autism. This element also operates on a personal awareness level, where the societal group may not be able to engage in a process that does not reduce uncertainties. Simultaneously, having to engage in preparedness, misunderstandings, and the demand of intrinsic skills might influence the job opportunities of the societal group in a negative way. Results from the analysis found that testing abilities might not present a dilemma for people with autism, especially if they learn about the test beforehand. However, testing with constructs built in the early 1900s might present a problem given that the GMA test is e.g. built upon the notion that common sense is an indicator for intelligence. Conversely with *sense of coherence*, *context blindness*, and *theory of mind*, common sense does not compute with some people with autism as they often think in absolute terms and not in contextual terms. Furthermore, if testing is done through verbalisation, then people with ASD may not test well. On the other hand, the test might yield very positive results when conducted visually.

In terms of interviewing, results showed that it is a process that may require innate abilities to evaluate other people's expectations and it has also been compared to a verbal test for job candidates. Negative impacts may occur for people with autism through impairments in *executive functions*. This especially becomes true if recruiters engage in unstructured interviewing. It can be

argued that preparatory needs are often a part of the lives of people with autism and the more chaotic and equivocal a recruiting situation is, the less likely it is for the job candidate with autism to be offered a job, or even that the person will want to accept a job offer.

Frontstage

The neuropsychology of the autism diagnosis and the empirical analysis suggest that it may be impossible for many people with autism to engage in behavioural attributes linked to *frontstage*. This element becomes a level of normative manipulation seeing as performances are often demanded of people when in a recruiting situation. It can be argued that people with autism have a more difficult time staging performances and, therefore, when companies value extraneous information sharing, social values, and excellent performances, the chances for the societal group to obtain a job will diminish. Impression management becomes salient and through first impressions, recruiters may draw conclusions about the job candidate, especially through interviewing. Meta-analyses of recruitment questions the way recruiters often ask open-ended questions, engage in superfluous conversation forms, while they often value extravagant performances more than keeping close to the facts when answering questions. It can be argued that not many people with autism have the ability or the need to engage in impression management since it may become excruciating and exhausting to apply frontstage behaviour. I argue that this normative manipulation can become interlinked with Foucauldian subjectification as the way that some people can easily engage in frontstage behaviour could be considered an innate and subconscious ability to react to stimuli. Moreover, recruiters might not be able to assess a person holistically in a MRP as it is a situation that requires quick judgment. This is a situation that does not come easy for many with autism seeing as the best way to engage in successful conversations is through knowing one's opposing actor. This is seldom the case with recruiters in MRPs. Therefore, it can be assumed that often in recruitment situations hiring managers will not witness extravagant performances from people with autism. Firstly, they may have a difficulty engaging in such behaviour. Secondly, it is because they do not know the opposing actor and often need a facilitator during job interviews. Seeing as people with autism may have a more difficult time engaging in such behaviour, the likelihood that they will be offered a job will decrease.

The Whole Package

Extravagant performances may be needed in a recruiting situation and these may not come easy for people with autism. Underlying dilemma supports the claim that frontstage is very salient in MRPs seeing as normative control mechanisms become even more important through matching workers' personalities with the organisation through e.g. P-O. These mechanisms have become complemented by yet another way of hiring, namely the neo-normative way of engaging in lax hiring methods to essentially depict the most ideal worker. It may be argued that the societal groups' ability to be themselves may ameliorate their job opportunities when companies engage in neo-normative hiring methods. However, if companies essentially hire those who are similar to them and furthermore, hire through choosing candidates who know 'how to have fun', it may have deteriorating effects. The whole package, therefore, operates on a labour market level, delineating the superlative job candidate. Through P-O, more loyal and dedicated workers will be hired. Nevertheless, the company will most likely become more homogenous. This element per definition has negative effects on people with autism. Firstly, if organisations overemphasise the social aspects of not only recruitment, but also the job itself, recruiters will automatically refrain from hiring people with autism as the diagnosis per definition includes impairments in social skills.

Through the social-interactionist model it is established that hiring solely by matching skills with tasks may be lacking since little can be done about fitting attitudes after hiring. However, people with autism become negatively affected through the whole package. They often do possess the skills needed, but may not have the official qualifications and will seldom be able to fit their personalities to some specific corporate structures. Implications for the thesis present themselves as it may be argued that most jobs in the current labour market require intricate social skills and most jobs, especially in the technical industries, require some official education. However, firstly, many people with autism have excellent rote memory and are often autodidact. Secondly, the Dandelion metaphor and the empirical analysis showcases that when companies extract all of the non pertinent tasks related to social skills, the company obtains an employee that may enhance problem-solving, effectuate processes, and ultimately lead to the company's improvement of competitive advantages. In sum, through a Foucauldian exploration, this kind of universalisation of certain practices should be avoided since it is not inclusive and may contribute further to exclusionary measures.

The Paradoxes

Various paradoxes became apparent through writing, reading, re-writing, and re-reading the analyses and the discussion. **Paradox one** became obvious seeing as a survey conducted on the lack of talent in several industries yielded that the technical industries worldwide lack the suitable talents (Talent Shortage Survey, 2015). Isson & Harriot (2016) maintain that to perform jobs in IT and engineering industries, emphasis should be on problem-solving, fixing bugs, and releasing codes. However, companies should also take cultural fit into account. If companies engage in the overemphasis on cultural fit and personalities instead of what task is needed to be done, they will miss out on potentially highly lucrative talents. This leads to **paradox two** about the increased interest in P-O fit. Studies have shown that those job candidates who match P-O often show greater loyalty, dedication and perform better. However, firstly, empirical evidence and the primary data show that people with autism have already been praised for being loyal, dedicated, and performing excellently at the task at hand. Secondly, engaging in P-O may in fact increase the likelihood of homogenous work environments, which will not enhance better decision-making and problem-solving. Conversely, it may lead to deteriorate organisational practices linked to group-think. Companies usually do not search for the behavioural attributes typically associated with people with autism, and when they do not consider all kinds of minds, a paradox emerges as people with ASD will not only be negatively affected and become excluded, but companies will also miss out on untapped prospective talents.

Paradox three became revealed as Linda from NAI tells that people with autism face a problem with diagnosis disclosure in the job application. Those who disclose the diagnosis may not be offered a job interview. However, those who refrain from revealing it could come off as odd or strange in the job interview and, consequently, become discarded. There are no studies that may confirm this and, therefore, future studies could address this possible issue. This may be linked to discriminatory methods of bias and stereotyping that often follow suit when companies hire, and the study on *ableism* and *othering*, depicting that people in a subconscious way may engage in *ableism* as they put people with disabilities in an *othering* category. This leads to **paradox four** about the underlying dilemmas that may permeate in Danish society. Inclusionary efforts are being conducted in e.g. schools and the labour market. Det Centrale Handicapråd (2014) study showed that people generally want to improve the lives of people with a disability and to include them in everyday part of society. Many will, furthermore, be glad to work with people who have physical disabilities. On

the other hand, those perceived to be mentally ill, such as people with autism, become a less desirable group to work with. The Mik-Meyer (2015) study's results yielded that disabilities should not be addressed, but it becomes approached in a deteriorated way. Just as debunking bias and minimising stereotypical hiring methods may only happen through addressing issues, I argue that engaging in a holistic view of the individual with autism, including acceptance and personal familiarisation, may be the only way to de-myth the condition.

Lastly, a Foucauldian paradox is revealed through **paradox five** of counter-power. The newer social-interactionist recruitment paradigm depicts that counter-power exists, where job candidates possess the power to decline a job offer or accept it, while they may also choose to apply for the job positions that often are posted through various job sites. Two of the interview respondents are reluctant to apply for a job when they do not match all qualifications. Furthermore, they will be reticent to apply if teamwork and interpersonal skills are demanded. This indicates that some people with autism utilise their power to not apply when companies demand skills often not pertinent to the job. On the other hand, the power is still very much in the hands of the hiring organisations, especially if they engage in 'fit-in' practices and overemphasis on the social aspects of hiring. Therefore, it can be deduced that the new paradigm that was constructed to among others ameliorate the job opportunities for various social groups may become exclusionary for people with autism. I argue that some components of the traditional model may even be less exclusionary, especially if companies remove all social aspects of the job, engage in P-J analyses and utilise structured questioning. This could be an interesting area to investigate in a future study. The abovementioned further supports the claim that people with ASD are not included in MRPs and, therefore, they are expected to undergo a Foucauldian normalisation and adhere to a system that barely applies to them.

Sub-Conclusion

This has been an exploration of unstudied field of research. Therefore, my induction about certain themes having deteriorating effects on the job chances of people with autism may have universal implications since I suggest that all of the themes have in their own unique way exclusionary effects. On a personal awareness level people with autism may be negatively affected by *reading the employer* and *predictability.* Intricate skills may be needed to read into recruitment situations, and the often equivocal processes of MRPs might be challenging for the societal group. People with

ASD might be aware to some extent of the demands required to navigate the recruitment sphere. However, through neuropsychology, it can be argued that their job opportunities become deteriorated as misunderstandings may emerge, deciphering situations and expectations might be challenging, while preparedness is often be needed. Through the normative manipulations of *frontstage*, it can be argued that extravagant performances become more valued and being able to engage in boasting and showcasing. This does not come natural to many people with ASD and it may even become excruciating and exhausting. *The whole package* operates on a labour market level in the search for the most ideal worker. When companies engage in lax hiring methods or matching job candidates' personalities to the organisational structure, it affects the job opportunities of people with autism in a negative way.

The deduction through the Foucauldian view established that both the traditional and the social-interactionist recruitment paradigms are exclusionary, together with the way autism has been categorised. The dividing practices that occur during MRPs present that through discrimination, bias, and stereotyping, the processes often become exclusionary. A more underlying dilemma reveals itself through subjectification as recruitment processes may be innately adhered to, solely with some inquiry into the practices. The thesis' findings establish that MRPs have deteriorating structures that do not apply to people with autism. Hence, Foucauldian normalisation fails since these systems need to radically change and be re-thought before the societal group can ever become fully subjugated to abide by them. In sum, the paradoxes operate as pragmatic ways these dilemmas may be addressed given that the thesis claims that opening up to untapped potentially lucrative workforces is the answer.

Chapter 6

6.1 Conclusion

The companies that realise that innovation derives from embodying the ability to tackle various issues and problems in different ways will be the ones that possess the most competitive advantages in a knowledge-intense labour market (Sonne in De Skjulte Talenter, 2017: 1:4). The thesis has mainly been conducting inquiry into recruitment methods that may have exclusionary effects on people with autism. Seeing as this research area has been unexplored, my exploratory qualitative study has given insights into the mechanisms that operate within the fields of MRPs and autism. The investigated literature and the primary data collected led to this research question:

> *Could mainstream recruitment processes have exclusionary effects on the job opportunities of people with autism in the Danish labour market, if so how?*

The themes in the empirical analysis all presented obstacles for people with autism when obtaining jobs. Firstly, MRPs' often chaotic and unpredictable elements, especially in terms of deciphering situations, become a barrier. Secondly, the way that people with autism may have preparatory needs to engage in such a process is rarely an option in a recruitment process. Thirdly, presentation of self and being able to sell ones abilities through extravagant performances might be quite salient in MRPs and this often does not come easy for a person with autism. Lastly, the way that some companies demand that personalities correlate with organisational values and cultures may not only present dilemmas for the job opportunities for people with autism, but may also present obstacles for other societal groups. Supplementary macro elements may follow a recruitment process. These were presented in a Foucauldian exploration, showing that discriminatory elements often follow suit in a MRP and these may result in decision-making filled with biases and stereotyping towards groups that are not perceived to be the most optimal employees.

Hence, I study the way MRPs' instruments through job adverts, testing, and interviews have been built upon notions emerging from bureaucratic and capitalistic instruments that may per definition

exclude certain groups from societies. This becomes apparent, especially when organisations engage in these methods without enquiry, since the instruments might solely be aimed at the mainstream. The paradigm shift should through critical inquiry and meta-analyses be ameliorating the job opportunities for minority groups such as for disabled people. However, in the case of people with autism, overemphasis on social aspects of hiring may in fact be more deteriorating than when companies engage in best-practice recruitment processes. The thesis may exhibit contingency issues, since being critical of practices could become a practice of its own. It displays Deweyan universalisation notions of how four specific themes may have deteriorating effects on the job opportunities of people with autism resulting in the various paradoxes. However, seeing as e.g. Goffman and the field of neuropsychology have supported Foucault when problematising the issues, it creates equilibrium between the two philosophical lenses. I am aware that MRPs solely exhibit some signs of exclusionary effects in this exploratory study and therefore, other elements might follow suit if the investigation of the topic would be conducted through other ontological and epistemological lenses.

Conclusively, the thesis has shown that studies need to be aware of any technological, social, and cultural changes in society. The elevated knowledge about the abilities people with autism may contribute with, in the labour market, may lead to companies realising the inevitability of including the societal group, especially in technological industries that lack talents. Inclusion of untapped potential talents may open up to a whole new world of improved hiring methods and the consequent management of people. These hiring methods will not rely solely on division and categorisation of individuals but examine the holistic side of people – what they may contribute with in terms of e.g. skills, mind-sets, innovation, creativity, problem-solving, critical thinking and essentially increased diversity.

6.2 Future Perspective

Seeing as the thesis has explored a highly uncharted research area, a myriad of possible research directions have emerged during the thesis writing. Despite this, I only list a few of these. Given that the technical industries are lacking the most optimal talents, it may be relevant and worthwhile to pursue investigation into the conceptualisation of various talent definitions in terms of how one can even define talent. It could be jointly studied with the possible deteriorating economic effects companies may experience when not considering alternative job candidates. This might even become a research paper exploring the way the Dandelion metaphor may improve MRPs through elevated conceptualisation of what is needed to perform a specific job or task. Furthermore, a comparative study of the two recruitment paradigms could be pertinent to investigate seeing as it can be argued that the social-interactionist construct is partly built upon traditional methods. Hence, the two paradigms may not be so distinct. Thus, a study of the way these two complementary constructs diverge and converge might yield some interesting results.

Moreover, Dobbin & Kalev (2016) emphasise that diversity management often fails due to e.g. the inability to address the possible discriminatory processes companies often engage in. Searle (2003) agrees that the ability to discuss e.g. bias and stereotypical recruitment methods may ameliorate the process and enhance the likelihood of a company hiring and retaining more diverse talents. Therefore, a pragmatic study might be relevant to investigate the way in which companies could engage in successful strategic diversity hiring through the aforementioned practices. Change management literature might also be relevant for said study through e.g. firstly, Blomme's (2012) study of managers' reduction of equivocality in emergent change situations to be able to guide the emergent change process of diversity hiring. Secondly, Bass' (1990) transformational versus transactional leadership could lead the study in investigation of the most optimal leadership style for companies wanting to engage in successful diversity management. Lastly, Cooperrider's (2012) appreciative inquiry concept, could illustrate how the most successful change programmes may occur through involving several stakeholders in the change efforts. In addition, a study of the way companies may engage in normative and neo-normative hiring methods could be interesting to study through a Foucauldian comparative study as both processes may lead to exclusionary effects on several minority groups. Despite the research area, it is certain that any of these topics would be interesting for future research studies.

Chapter 7

7.1 Bibliography

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7.2 Appendices

Appendix 1 – Data Chapter

This chapter presents the coding of the interviews that led to the development of the four themes. It presents the most repeated, interesting and confounding verbatim of meanings, opinions and perceptions, linking recruitment methods and the labour market in general to people with autism. I decided to translate the quotes to English as I deem it better for the thesis as it is written in English and because I believe it enhances validity of the coding, seeing as I had to be diligent when reviewing the interviews before translations.

Reading the Employer

Reading the employer became a theme as interviews showcased that people with autism may have difficulty deciphering situations and expectations, while chaos, disorganisation and ambiguity during MRPs may present dilemmas for the societal group.

Deciphering Situations

Louise (Appendix 2d):

> *I think it is hard to read (into job adverts), and somebody says that you can read between the lines but that is not something I can read.*

Ann (Appendix 2a):

> *I find it difficult to think outside the box – that qualifications, that I have achieved in one context, may also have value in another context is not always obvious for me.*

Sebastian from Specialisterne (Appendix 4c):

> *[…] (Candidate) may not understand small talk and the way you act in a conversation.*

Linda from NAI (Appendix 3):

> *In my experience, and the narratives I hear from people with autism evolve around them having difficulty deciphering what is being asked about.*

> *[…] in our target group, it becomes about understanding and deciphering communication between people as the verbal communication is often advanced.*

Expectations

Ann (Appendix 2a):

> *When the technical qualifications are exemplified (in job adverts), I interpret them literally – as a list, that I need to fulfil completely. I need to be really careful about not writing off the job advert beforehand, because I "only" fulfil e.g. 80 % of the technical qualifications.*

> *Job adverts' description of personal skills makes me think a lot about the way the company views people, my own role in the company and among the employees.*

Louise (Appendix 2d):

> *I came very close to not applying (for her current job through Project Opportunity) as I did not believe that I fulfilled all the qualifications. It was only because my friend and my internship manager told me that I should try because then I would figure it out in the job interview. At interviews for student jobs, I have been told that I was overqualified because I only applied for jobs, where I could fulfil all of the demands. Those were the minimum demands that were written in the job adverts and I cannot understand that you can apply without fulfilling all of them.*

> *If the (job advert) demands team-work, I will not apply for the job. If they write that down, then it must mean that it is what you do in the job and then I do not apply – it will go wrong and I know it.*

> *When it is not in writing, I have no idea how it goes.*

Bjarne (Appendix 2b):

> *I think the written presentation is the hardest, how I should present myself in writing.*

> *I thought they (the hiring company) sought after somebody who could look into space, to see capaciously – to work with three-dimensional boxes – but I though it meant looking into space.*

Henning (Appendix 2c):

> *I have had insecurities but I know how to apply for different job positions and that you should be dynamic and juggling with several tasks simultaneously.*

Lars from Specialisterne (Appendix 4c):

> *It is also about whether the person can cope with an assignment, where the goal is not necessarily visible. Do they have the ability to automatically break an assignment into small assignments? Should tools be provided or should they be shown that they can solve the assignment, or have it broken down into smaller objectives.*

Ambiguity

Ann (Appendix 2a):

The interview is the hardest part of a recruitment process. The content can be unpredictable, the interactions between the others in the interview can be difficult, too many open-ended questions are being asked.

Henning (Appendix 2c):

[...] They asked who I was. I had a difficult time coming up with an appropriate answer to that question.

Linda from NAI (Appendix 3):

A typical interview could start in a direction of elaborate on the motivations behind the reason for why you have applied for the job, whether you can tell about your personal competencies, and when you have autism then these questions become quite difficult to answer. Another example is where you see yourself in 5-10 years.

Sebastian from Specialisterne (Appendix 4c):

When you are in a job interview, you have to e.g. be able to tell about your qualifications: what you excel at and what are your challenges. These are questions he (candidate) would not be able to understand and not be able to explain, then the interview grinds to a halt.

Chaos and Disorganisation

Ann (Appendix 2a):

In the (often) smaller companies, I have applied for jobs at, that do not have an HR, the recruitment process has been more "random" and unstructured.

I applied myself for the job I have now. The job advert was incomplete in terms of actual tasks, the interview was unstructured, expectations were unclear, and in all, there was not much structure over the whole process.

When asked unforeseen questions, I first need time to decode the content, afterwards to think about the options of replies and sort out (from 1000 possibilities) of irrelevant details, and afterwards think about the formulation. Before I even make it that far, there has been a long unnatural break in the conversation. Awkward! I am very well aware of this aspect, and it ends often with an inadequate answer or a simple "I don't know" for not thinking too long.

Lars from Specialisterne (Appendix 4c):

When it comes to this exact diagnosis, it becomes a question about how concretely you interpret things. In the ordinary labour market, you have to be able to understand ambiguous things, and how do you react to those things. It is important to know how comfortable they are with ambiguity.

Predictability

Predictability became a theme as navigating through uncertainties may be challenging. Misunderstandings may arise and MRPs might require intrinsic skills that do not come easy for some people with autism. Lastly, societal group often needs to engage in preparedness.

Uncertainties

Ann (Appendix 2a):

> *The surroundings are new (the ability to navigate through new surroundings can almost be overwhelming). I have all my feelers out and am extremely vigilant during job interviews.*
>
> *I find it mostly positive to be tested during a recruitment process. I regard it as a concrete tool that can be used in interviews, and it makes the process easier to be structured and concrete.*
>
> *Personality test confirmed what I already knew. I am detail oriented, structured, have high work ethics [...] I am an introvert (but can function as a learned extrovert [...].*

Bjarne (Appendix 2b):

> *It has not to do with that I have no social skills, but it becomes about feeling secure and when you are in an environment with like-minded people, security comes.*

Louise (Appendix 2d):

> *I think it is hard when I don't know what I am walking into – then it becomes an exam in something whether I get question that I need to solve or if it is just a composed conversation.*

Misunderstandings

Henrik from Specialisterne (Appendix 4a):

> *There come a lot of misunderstandings. E.g. pointing out an error in a polite way that may be misunderstood.*

Sebastian from Specialisterne (Appendix 4c):

> *Other examples (about why the candidates are referred to Specialisterne) that I often hear about are that they have misunderstood in the work place.*

Linda (Appendix 3):

> *We become quick to decipher (what is going on) but those with autism cannot necessarily decode it as the conversation moves along. They miss the point.*

Preparedness

Ann (Appendix 2a):
> *I have always prepared myself extensively as an attempt to decrease the unpredictability.*
>
> *In my experience the interview-form is not very autism-friendly. Regardless of how well I prepare myself, questions always arise that I have not prepared answers to.*

Bjarne (Appendix 2b):
> *I would not be able to handle direct confrontation (when applying for a job) as I would be ill-prepared [...] I can perform better if I am better prepared.*

Louise (Appendix 2c):
> *If I come in (job interview) and have to solve some concrete tasks then I have to know what I am walking into but if they all of a sudden are presented to me, the I have not prepared for them and then I can end up shutting off and not being able to solve anything even though I know I could solve the tasks at the work place.*

Intrinsic Skills

Linda from NAI (Appendix 3):
> *Then there is the big dilemma this target group has. On one side, they want to be open about their autism diagnosis but then they will not be considered, but if they do not inform about it, they will be discarded. Therefore it requires some special efforts.*

Charlotte from Specialisterne (Appendix 4b)
> *It is the worst when you step into a job interview where you do not solely have to perform and be evaluated for your technical competencies, but also for the social competencies – the communicative skills represent the core-essence of the diagnosis.*

Lars from Specialisterne (Appendix 4c):
> *[...] he communicates in a very concrete and direct way and does not understand small talk and the way you act in a conversation.*

Sebastian from Specialisterne (Appendix 4c):
> *Some (people) may communicate very directly and therefore become misunderstood, something that can be perceived as an accusation or negative criticism*

Henrik from Specialisterne (Appendix 4a):
> *With autism comes raw honesty.*

Charlotte from Specialisterne (Appendix 4b):
> *All the strengths include being very loyal, being able to focus and concentrate. They are honest – sometimes it is not the honesty that you do not care for.*

Frontstage

Frontstage became coined as MRPs may require the ability to sell ones abilities, perform and play a role when striving to obtain a job. People with autism may struggle with these elements as facilitation may be needed, especially during job interviews. The element is placed in a context of Goffman's Frontstage.

Selling Abilities

Henrik from Specialisterne (Appendix 4a):
> *They never obtain the job because of many reasons, but they are not good at selling themselves.*

Sebastian from Specialisterne (Appendix 4c):
> *We give them the opportunity to prove that they can perform the concrete tasks instead of selling themselves or talking their way into obtaining a job. That can be hard.*

Lars from Specialisterne (Appendix 4c):
> *This is also the labour market that we witness that you have to prove that you can do one thing or another […].*

Bjarne (Appendix 2b):
> *I have over-sold myself and I can be very convincing. I do not tell about things that are not relevant.*

Henning (Appendix 2c):
> *I have had a difficult time selling myself and performing.*

Performances

Bjarne (Appendix 2b):
> *[…] I have been able to show my abilities through oral presentations. During interviews I have an easier time showing who I am and performing.*

Linda from NAI (Appendix 3):
> *Barrier number two is that those who have completed an education get discarded in the job interview. The big dilemma is that if you write that you have autism or Asperger's syndrome you are not offered a job interview and if you do not write it, you may appear weird in the eyes of the recruiters, or something seems odd for the recruiter because you might handle a conversations in a different way. If the hiring companies do not have the knowledge about why a job candidate may handle an interview differently, they get discarded. Another dilemma, the target group has, is that on one hand, they want to be open about their autism but then they will not be*

considered as viable job candidates and if they do not inform about it, they get discarded. Therefore supported efforts are needed.

Henrik from Specialisterne (Appendix 4a):
They often do not obtain the job as they are not good at engaging in job interviews, but it is also because those who are interviewing do it traditionally. E.g. that they have a Friday after-work bar, where the person with autism may answer: "that does not interest me".

Ann (Appendix 2a)
I think it is an art as a person with Asperger's syndrome to both navigate through an interview, where I get challenged on my challenging abilities such as during the conversation and the interplay between the different actors, and simultaneously having to showcase my technical- and stronger abilities. I usually become completely exhausted afterwards.

Facilitating

Henrik from Specialisterne (Appendix 4a):
They need an advocate that can attend to document because we have e.g. engineers employed here and they say that they were always nr. 2 (during interviews), there was always somebody else that won (the job) because of better communicative skills.

Lars from Specialisterne (Appendix 4c):
He would not be able to go through this conversation. He cannot converse the way that we do before he knows you.

Linda from NAI (Appendix 3):
The company is the one conducting the interview and it is our job to facilitate the conversation, if it gets difficult. I have an unobtrusive role and I attend (the interview) because the candidate will have a person he or she already knows.

Playing a Role

Henning (Appendix 2c):
In a way it (recruitment) is a game. I have had difficulty performing with power and enthusiasm.

Sebastian from Specialisterne (Appendix 4c):
I have heard several reasons. 1) e.g. it can be that some get diagnosed late in live, their twenties or thirties. Their world falls apart, where they suddenly realise that they have been playing a role their whole lives.

The Whole Package

The whole package was coined as companies could be searching for characteristics that may not compute with people with autism. These include having the right personality, and being able to play a social game. This might not be very inclusive for people with autism as they often possess the technical skills and not the social skills, and autodidact attributes might not be sought after in the labour market.

Personality

Ann (Appendix 2a):
> *I think there is a general tendency to demand certain personal abilities.*

Henning (Appendix 2c):
> *I think that I have been too...the reason why I have been discarded is because I have been too insecure and slow, and not possessed the right personality for the job.*
>
> *I performed a test at the unemployment insurance fund in the 90s, the woman who tested told me to overcome my insecurities. It was a test to find out which abilities I had. She thought that I could perform various jobs even though I did not have a typical personality.*
>
> *There was also another place and where they did not have many job applicants and I fulfilled all the formal qualifications, but still I was discarded.*

Linda from NAI (Appendix 3):
> *I meet a lot of people that think that they have been discarded because they have informed about the autism or that they have not possessed the right personalities.*

The Social Game

Linda from NAI (Appendix 3):
> *[...] work places want to hire somebody who looks like themselves, so if the work place has a very open, extroversive, collaborative, project-oriented culture then you hire a person who reflects that – and not many with autism do that.*

Lars from Specialisterne (Appendix 4c):
> *[...] but it is not so important whether you actually can do it – it is the illusion that you can prove that you can. They are never invited for a job interview.*

Ann (Appendix 2a):
> *Extraversion, very social, high flexibility, overview and the ability to juggle with many things simultaneously, e.g. as an Asperger I am almost per definition the opposite of these things, and therefore it is frustrating to see it mentioned in so many job adverts.*

Louise (Appendix 2d):

> *If the words collaboration or team-work are included, then I think the job includes a lot of it and I cannot do it.*

Henning (Appendix 2c):

> *It is more about my Asperger's personality, my cognitive disorder. [...] that is the type of difficulties, I do not just overcome, it remains.*

Bjarne (Appendix 2b):

> *When I have a lecture or need to reach out to people, the ADHD comes forth. It is about having an introvert personality with extrovert attitude. I have figured out how to perform socially in many contexts and that is why I have turned the autism off. It is something that I have taught myself, to utilise one aspect and downplay another. Today it is mostly the introvert, reflective side that is prevalent.*

Autodidact

Linda from NAI (Appendix 3):

> *What we know about autism is that many can perform these jobs (technical) even though they are not educated within the area. This is because we have a target group that does not thrive in our education system but they have the competencies and many of them are completely autodidactic. […] One of the biggest obstacles is that they often have not completed an education, and then they will never be considered as a viable job candidate.*

Lars from Specialisterne (Appendix 4c):

> *It can be autodidactic what you can do. You do not necessarily have any papers that prove what you can do. My opinion is, is that even though you write a nice CV and send an application, you will not be considered as you do not have the formal education needed to perform the job.*

> *There are a lot of abilities that do not fall under the competitive parameter anymore. These are fantastic candidates that we have, they have some limitations but they have on the other hand some amazing abilities in other contexts.*

Charlotte from Specialisterne (Appendix 4b):

> *They all have the same talents as everyone else and it may be that they have other talents because they have some special abilities. They have an eye for detail, the ability to delve into tasks, think logically and rationally, memorise.*

Inclusiveness

Ann (Appendix 2a):

> *It astonishes me that the other aspects that always is "saluted", and simultaneously it is in my opinion a sign of limited view on human beings that some personalities are more correct than others. In the companies that I have worked for, has the view on people been more nuanced and it has (for the most part) been room for*

differences. Therefore I wonder why this openness to differences does not become reflected in the job adverts.

Linda from NAI (Appendix 3):

The task usually does not present a challenge. What may be challenging is e.g. having contact with the clients or engaging in collaboration with others in the company, tasks that demand collaborations or that have an extroversive function.

Sebastian from Specialisterne (Appendix 4c):

What I want to say, yes the competencies can exist for these people but the right support needs to be available.

Appendix 2 – Interview Transcription

Appendix 2a – Ann

1. **Me:** Når det kommer til at søge jobs, hvad er din general erfaring med det danske arbejdsmarked?
   a. Hvilke positive erfaringer kan du dele og negative erfaringer?

Ann: Generelt er min erfaring med jobsøgning, at der har været størst styr på ansættelsesprocessen i de virksomheder, der har haft en HR-afdeling. I de (tit mindre) virksomheder jeg har ansøgt, som ikke har haft HR, har ansættelsesprocessen været mere "tilfældig" og ustruktureret. Mht. arbejdsmarkedet synes jeg, der er en tendens til at efterspørge bestemte personlige kvaliteter (uddybet i punkt 5). Jeg arbejder selv på normale vilkår, og fortæller ikke om min Asperger. Mit indtryk er, at det er svært for autister med skånehensyn at søge/få job.

2. **Me:** Søgte du selv det job du har nu?
   a. Hvis ja, hvordan var din erfaring med hele ansættelsesprocessen, fra at du søgte jobbet indtil at du fik stillingen?
   b. Hvis nej, hvordan fik du jobbet?

Ann: Jeg søgte selv det job, jeg har nu. Stillingsopslaget var ufuldstændigt i forhold til egentlige opgaver, samtalen var ustruktureret, forventningerne var uklare og der var ikke specielt godt styr på processen overordnet set fx mht. tilbagemelding, udarbejdelse af kontrakt m.m.

3. **Me:** Er det noget ved en ansættelsesproces du har svært eller nemt ved, i forhold til jobsøgning?
   a. Hvis svært, uddyb
   b. Hvis nemt, uddyb

Ann: Se pkt. 4,6 og 7.

4. **Me:** Efter din mening, når du har læst jobopslag, du er interesseret i, hvorvidt er du blevet påvirket eller ikke påvirket af kravene til de faglige kvalifikationer, i forhold til om du ville søge jobbet?
   a. Hvis ja, bliver påvirket, så uddyb

Ann: Når de faglige kvalifikationer beskrives, opfatter jeg dem konkret. Som en liste, jeg skal opfylde alle punkter på. Jeg skal være rigtig opmærksom på ikke at afskrive et stillingsopslag på forhånd, fordi jeg "kun" opfylder fx 80% af de faglige kvalifikationer. Samtidig finder jeg det svært at tænke ud af boksen. At kvalifikationer, jeg har opnået i én sammenhæng, også kan have værdi i en anden sammenhæng er ikke altid indlysende for mig. Så risikoen er, at disse ting begrænser mængden af jobs, jeg føler mig i stand til at søge/bestride.

Men ellers har jeg en god tiltro til mine faglige kvalifikationer og min evne til at lære og sætte mig grundigt ind i nye områder. Så hvis et jobopslag fx indeholder formuleringer, der åbner op for at man ikke behøver at kunne alt, men skal være villig til at lære nyt, så søger jeg gerne jobbet uden at

kunne alt. Og sådan er det måske i virkeligheden tit – at virksomheden ikke forventer, at man kan alt?

5. **Me:** Efter din mening, hvorvidt er du blevet påvirket eller ikke påvirket af de personlige kvalifikationer jobopslaget kræver?
    a. Hvis ja, bliver påvirket så uddyb

Ann: Jeg synes, der er en generel tendens til at efterspørge bestemte personlige egenskaber. Udadvendthed, meget social, høj fleksibilitet, overblik og evnen til at have mange bolde i luften fx som Asperger er jeg næsten pr definition det modsatte af disse ting, og derfor er det frustrerende at se det nævnt i så mange jobopslag. Sat på spidsen: Hvem søger en indadvendt, detaljeorienteret "nørd"? Men jeg ser jo, at der i virkeligheden er masser af den slags stillinger i virksomhederne, fx indenfor mange tekniske områder. Så det undrer mig, at det er det andet der altid "hyldes", og samtidig står det for mig som et noget begrænset menneskesyn, at nogle personlige egenskaber er mere rigtige end andre. I de virksomheder, jeg har arbejdet, har menneskesynet også været langt mere nuanceret, og der har (for det meste) været plads til forskellighed. Så det undrer mig, at den rummelighed tit ikke afspejles i stillingsannoncerne.

Og på det personlige plan, som højt fungerende Asperger, er problemet i virkeligheden også, at jeg godt *kan* disse ting, der i høj grad efterspørges. Jeg arbejder på normale vilkår, og har altid gjort det. Jeg er i høj grad i stand til at tilpasse mig og tilsidesætte mig selv blandt andre og på arbejdspladsen. Være udadvendt, social, fleksibel osv. Men de personlige omkostninger er så store, at jeg har måttet indse, at det ikke er en langsigtet strategi for mig. Jeg er nødt til at være mig selv tro.

Så en jobannonces beskrivelse af personlige kvalifikationer får mig til at tænke en masse over virksomhedens menneskesyn, min egen rolle i virksomheden og blandt medarbejderne.

6. **Me:** Er du gået igennem en testproces i forbindelse med en ansættelsesproces, såsom personlighedstest eller andet?
    a. Efter din mening, hvordan forløb det og hvordan gik det?
    b. Og kan du uddybe om du blev positiv eller negativ påvirket af at blive testet?

Ann: Jeg har både været igennem personlighedstest og test af færdigheder i forbindelse med ansættelse.

Test af færdigheder: Står for mig som noget af det nemmeste i forbindelse med ansættelse. Opgaverne var konkrete, krævede ikke socialt samspil og jeg kunne bruge min evne til hyper-fokus. Tilbagemeldingen var dengang, at jeg klarede mig langt over middel. Både løsningens kvalitet (fagligheden) og kvantitet/mængden af opgaver indenfor tidsrammen.

Personlighedstest:
Personlighedstests har altid bekræftet det, jeg selv har vidst. At jeg er detaljeorienteret, struktureret, har høj (arbejds)moral, høj retfærdighedssans, er god til at overholde deadlines og at afslutte opgaver, at jeg er introvert (men kan fungere tillært ekstrovert), at jeg er mere specialist end generalist, trives med højt fagligt ansvar, lærer bedst på bestemte måder osv.
Generelt har tilbagemeldingerne været, at testenes resultater har stemt overens med min egen opfattelse af mig selv og mine styrker/svagheder som medarbejder, og at jeg i kraft af min

bevidsthed omkring disse ting også er realistisk omkring fx svagheder (som alle jo har) og strategier til at mindske disse.

At blive testet i forbindelse med ansættelse ser jeg overvejende som noget positivt. Jeg opfatter det som konkrete værktøjer, som kan bruges til videre samtale, og synes at det letter processen netop ved at være meget konkret og struktureret i sit udgangspunkt.

7. **Me:** Er du gået igennem en interviewproces?

Ann: Jeg har været uddannet i 13 år, og har i den periode haft 3 forskellige jobs(alle på normale vilkår). Alle 3 stillinger har været med jobinterview forud for ansættelse.

a. **Me:** Efter din mening, kan du forklare om du blev negativt eller positivt påvirket af at blive interviewet?

Ann: Selve interviewet er for mig den sværeste del af en ansættelsesproces. Indholdet kan være uforudsigeligt, samspillet med de andre i samtalen kan være svært, der bliver stillet mange åbne spørgsmål og omgivelserne er nye(bare det at finde vej i nye omgivelser kan være en næsten uoverkommelig udfordring). Jeg har alle antenner ude og er ekstremt meget "på" under sådan et interview.

Jeg har altid forberedt mig ekstremt grundigt i et forsøg på at mindske uforudsigeligheden. Men min oplevelse er alligevel, at selve formen med interview ikke er specielt autisme-venligt. Uanset, hvor godt jeg forbereder mig, vil der altid komme spørgsmål, som jeg ikke har forberedt mig på. Ved uforudsete spørgsmål skal jeg først bruge tid på at afkode indholdet, dernæst at udtænke svarmuligheder og sortere (1000-vis af) irrelevante detaljer fra, og dernæst skal jeg tænke over formuleringen. Og inden jeg når så langt, har der været en alt for lang unaturlig pause i samtalen. Pinligt! Jeg er ret bevidst om det aspekt, og ender derfor tit med et ikke-fyldestgørende svar eller et simpelt "det ved jeg ikke" for ikke at tænke alt for længe.

Jeg synes, det er en kunst som Asperger både at kunne navigere i et interview, hvor jeg bliver udfordret på så mange af mine svage sider ved selve samtalen og samspillets form, og samtidig skulle kunne brænde igennem med mine stærke/faglige sider, og jeg har som regel været fuldstændigt drænet for energi efterfølgende.

Hvis man skulle gøre et interview mere autisme-venligt kunne man fx udsende en dagsorden inden, hvor der var redegjort for mødedeltagere, overordnede emner, forventet tidsforbrug, rutevejledning m.m. Man kunne også opfordre til, at kandidaten var velkommen til at uddybe sine svar i en mail efterfølgende, begrænse mængden af åbne spørgsmål, sørge for at kun én person stillede spørgsmål osv.

b. **Me:** Har du været til interviews, men ikke fået jobbet?

i. Hvis ja, hvilke forklaringer fik du på at du ikke fik jobbet?

Ann: Jeg har fået afslag en enkelt gang, og det var begrundet i for højt faglige niveau: At de ikke troede sig i stand til at udfordre/holde på mig mere end højest et år eller to.

8. **Me:** Kan du forklare, om Aspergeren, efter din mening, har betydning for dig når du har søgt jobs?

Ann: Aspergeren er en del af mig og min personlighed, og har derfor betydning på godt og ondt.

Positivt: De fleste af de ting (uddybet under personlighedstest i pkt 6), der gør mig god til mit job som administrativ kvalitetsmedarbejder / laborant, stammer fra Aspergeren. Min særinteresse (igen en Asperger-ting) er naturvidenskab, og jeg har formået at gør min særinteresse til min levevej. Så rent fagligt har min Asperger betydet, at jeg er god til mit fagområde og dermed fremstår fagligt skarp i jobsøgningen.

Negativt set er Aspergeren også en sårbarhed, jeg har med mig. Eksempelvist som ekstra udsathed overfor pres og stress på jobbet (og allerede til jobinterviews), og sociale evner under gennemsnittet. Det kræver personlig styrke at forvalte, er min erfaring, og uden den personlige styrke og bevidsthed omkring det går det ikke…

Mine egne valg: Aspergeren har betydning for, hvilke jobs jeg vælger at søge. Jeg fravælger fx meget udadvendte stillinger og stillinger, hvor alle opgaver løses i fællesskab/samarbejde i et forsøg på at mindske min tilpasning.

9. **Me:** Hvad er dit uddannelsesniveau?

Ann: Laborant (kortere videregående uddannelse) + efteruddannelse (akademiuddannelse) indenfor kvalitet- og miljøledelsessystemer, organisation og ledelse.

10. **Me:** Er det andet du gerne vil tilføje om dine erfaringer med at søge jobs og hvad det betyder for dig at være jobsøgende i det danske arbejdsmarked?

Ann: Intet yderligere.

1. **Me:** Når det kommer til at søge jobs, hvad er din general erfaring med det danske arbejdsmarked?

Bjarne: I den stilling jeg har været nu, har jeg været i cirka 20 år. Og for 20 år siden, var det ikke så svært at være mobil på arbejdsmarkedet, synes jeg i hvert fald. Det var nemt at skifte jobs, og det var længe før jeg kendte min diagnose. Så det parameter var jeg ikke indeover. Det blev aktuelt når jeg blev flyttet internt fra en mellemleder stilling til en gartner stilling. Jeg havde svært ved at tilpasse mig at jeg ikke havde ligeså meget indflydelse og skulle være mere ydmyg. På den måde det var et nyt job indenfor den samme styrelse. Det var ikke en nem overgang og det var på samme tid at jeg lærte Aspergeren at kende og ADHDen, det var ikke på en nem måde. Jeg kunne ikke skelne imellem min egen private sphere og min arbejdsmæssige imellem mine kollegaer som belastede mig og mine kollegaer. Jeg skulle ikke søge denne interne stilling, da det ikke fungerede med den anden stilling så blev jeg flyttet over til gartnerstillingen.

Me: Jeg spørger indtil hans diagnose da han blev diagnoseret som voksen. Fungerer du bedre nu eller før du blev diagnoseret?

Bjarne: Jeg synes at jeg fungerede dårligere før diagnosen. Fordi jeg vidste ikke rigtigt hvad jeg havde med at gøre. Diagnosen har været forklaring på de vanskeligheder jeg harstødt ind på og forklaring på hvorfor jeg blev så let stresset, og forklaring på hvorfor jeg havde gang i så ufattelige mange ting og til sidst gik ned med stress og depression. Senere blev der en forståelsesramme ift at hvis jeg agerer på en bestemt måde, så ved jeg hvorfor og ift kommunen at de forstå hvad mine behov er. Jeg er gået fra at have den her diagnose foran mig til at sige at hvis jeg skal fungere optimalt så er det vigtigt at alt er struktureret, i det hele taget hvad jeg har brug. Jeg har ikke brug for pga diagnosen men så jeg kan fungere. Mange er usikre på det ukendte og så er det bedre at være ærlig omkring hvad de har brug for.

Me: Han ville læse interview spørgsmålene før vi gik igang så jeg spørger om det har noget med at minimere uvished?

Bjarne: Jeg har brug for at forberede mindset hvad du har brug for, jeg kan nemt vandre fra spørgsmålene og derfor vil jeg gerne være forberedt.

2. **Me:** Er det noget ved en ansættelsesproces du har svært eller nemt ved, i forhold til jobsøgning?
    a. Hvis svært, uddyb
    b. Hvis nemt, uddyb

Bjarne: Jeg vil sige at det er den skriftlige fremstilling som er den sværeste, hvordan jeg skal præsentere mig på skrift. At gøre det interessant men stadig kortfattigt. Det er lidt en eksamenssituation og der klarede jeg mig dårligt i de skriftlige eksamener, men de mundtlige fremstillinger har jeg kunne vise hvad jeg kunne. Så interviewene har jeg nemmer ved, at vise hvem jeg er og fremstille mig. Der kan jeg igen, trække på min ADHD. Og hvad kan man sige, præstere, vise tydeligt hvem jeg er.

Me: Da han nævner at han klarer dig bedre mundtligt end skriftligt, spørger jeg: hvad ligger bagved at du præsterer godt mundtligt?

Bjarne: Jeg har oversolgt mig selv og kan være meget overbevisende. Det er også hvor jeg ikke fortæller om ting som ikke er relevant. Den del af ADHD har slået igennem. Jeg synes hele tiden at

jeg vidste bedst og er heldigvis udstyrret med store talegaver så bliver folk trætte og ender med at ansætte mig.

3. **Me:** Efter din mening, når du har læst jobopslag, du er interesseret i, hvorvidt er du blevet påvirket eller ikke påvirket af kravene til de faglige kvalifikationer, i forhold til om du ville søge jobbet?

   a. Hvis ja, bliver påvirket, så uddyb

Bjarne: Jeg søgte jo den her oprindelige stilling i 97, den var jo trin op ad i min karriere og da mente jeg at jeg havde kvalifikationerne og erfaringen til at bestride stillingen. Jeg blev ikke afskrækket af kvalifikationerne. Jeg var til cirka 3-4 ansættelsesamtaler hvor der hele tiden var udskillelsesforløb, så vi startede med at være cirka 4-5 og så var der 2-3 tilbage og så stod valget imellem mig og en anden, hvor jeg så blev valgt til den her stilling. Jeg har solgt mig selv godt til det her, jeg har bevæget mig udover hvad der stod i jobbeskrivelsen. De spurgte til 1. samtalen om jeg altid talte så meget, og jeg var nervøs og derfor talte jeg uafbrudt. Jeg har søgt gartnerjob og været kvalifikaceret til det. Ellers har jeg ikke søgt mange jobs, der har været en avisannonce, hvor jeg søgte et ufaglært job før jeg overhovedet fik min uddannelse – det har aldrig været svært at få jobbet. I begyndelsen for en ufaglært gartner, det var en stejl læringskurve og jeg vidste ikke noget om de diagnoser på det tidspunkt og hvad kan man sige, jeg ved ikke om jeg kunne have brugt viden om det på det tidspunkt. Det på samme måde svært for en arbejdsgiver at honorere særlige behov da viden omkring autisme, eller adhd er baseret på medie fremstillinger og alle mulige andre ikke videnskabelige kilder.

4. **Me: H**vorfor synes du at du kan sælge dine kompetencer i et jobinterview?

Bjarne: Det er ADHD der kommer til. Når jeg har skullet lave forarbejde så slår jeg Aspergeren til, hvor jeg nørder og gør nu ting så korrekte som det skal være. Når jeg skal til foredrag eller når ud til mennesker, så er det ADHD der kommer ind. Det er at have en introvert personlighed med extovert attitude. Jeg har fundet ud af at man skal præstere socialt i mange sammenhænge og så derfor har jeg slået autismen fra. Men det er noget jeg har lært mig selv, at få det ene træde lidt tilbage og den anden træde frem. I dag er det mest den introverte, reflekterene side der kommer frem.

5. **Me:** Var der nogensinde et job, som du søgte og du ikke fik jobbet?

Bjarne: Ja det var et firma som solgte flightcases, til musikindustrien. Jeg troede at de søgte efter en som kunne se i rummet, at se rummeligt at arbejde med tre dimensionelle kasser men jeg troede det var at se ud i rummet. Jeg forsøgte også tidligere at få læreplads som elektrikere, det mislykkedes også, da jeg slet ikke forstod hvad det indebar at have en læreplads og hvad en arbejdsgiver forventede af mig. Jeg troede at jeg kunne komme og gå som jeg havde lyst til. I forhold til den perfektionismen som nogen med ASF har, jeg har mødt rigtig mange, i sær unge, som har diagnosen, og det er ikke hovedparten som har det på den måde men det er nogen gange hvor de skal have ting så korrekte som overhovedet muligt. For første har de langsom tendenstid, det tager lang tid for dem at svare på noget, de skal hele skakspillet igennem før de leverer noget. Og hvis der er en utålmådig lytter så kommes der ingen vegne. Det er svært at generalisere, jeg har f.eks empati og kan udvise forskellige sociale kompetencer. Jeg har mødt mennesker uden diagnose med ingen empati. Det er svært at studere autisme da det er noget alle har på den ene eller anden måde, det er kun når den begynder at forstyrre ens måde at fungere at det bliver diagnoseret.

6. **Me:** Kan du forklare, om Aspergeren, efter din mening, har betydning for dig når du søger jobs?

Bjarne: Det har været, jeg vidste ikke at jeg havde Aspergeren når jeg søgte jobs. Men jeg har været meget nørdet når jeg har søgt jobs, jeg har været grundig om mange stillinger og læst rigtig meget og søgt mange informationer før jeg har søgt stillingerne, nok mere end de fleste. Man kan også sige at jobmarkedet for 20 år siden var en helt anden end den som er i dag, og dem med ASF fordi kravene er blevet skærpet, man skal aflevere mere, der er mangle på tid og grundighed, der er ikke tid til at være grundig med tingene når man skal aflevere ansøgninger fra højre til venstre.

7. **Me:** Da du har været ansat i over 20 år, hvordan tror du at det ville påvirke dig, hvis du ville blive arbejdsøgende?

Bjarne: Det er faktisk lidt svært at vide hvad et er jeg skal søge ind på job, gartnerjob ville være oplagt men jeg er i fleksjob så det ville være svært at finde en arbejdsplads, specialt privat som kunne rumme det at jeg kun kan arbejde 20 timer. Gartnervirksomheder er meget traditionelle og svært at rumme individuelle jobs. Jeg ville også ikke kunne tage administrativt job da jeg ikke kan koncentrere mig længe nok. I dag er jeg på en arbejdsplads, hvor jeg kan være allemulig mand og jeg laver mange diverse opgaver. Jeg har ikke set en stilling som min andre steder. Så det ville være svært at finde ligeså udfordrende job fordi det ville nik hurtigt blive meget monotont. Jeg ville dårligt vide hvor jeg skulle søge ind, hvor jeg ville passe ind, da jeg har mange færdigheder, indenfor mange forskellige fag. Den måde at søge job på nu, ville være at starte med at skrive til arbejdsgivere. Direkte konfrontation ville jeg ikke kunne håndtere da jeg ville være dårligt forberedt – der kommer nok perfektionismen ind. Bedre forberedt jeg er, så mere kan jeg præstere men hvis det er noget man gerne vil så ville alle sammen forberede sig godt før de ville ind til samtalen. Jeg har mødt nogle unge mennesker som har søgt nogle lærepladser og de har ofte været grundigt forberedt – og min søn med Asperger gjorde han store forberedelser og han fik det og de tror at han fik det fordi han var grundigt forberedt. Dem som han går i skole med, tager ofte lettere på tingene. Når han tager på skoleforløb så har han sat sig ind i pensum, og tror at de andre har gjort det men det har de ofte ikke. Og han skal lære at det er godt at være fagligt velfunderet og men man skal også kunne være socialt sammen med andre men problemet ligger i, at hvad man skal snakke om. Det ligger mig i mod at der er ingen sociale færdigheder men det handler om tryghed og når man er i et miljø hvor man er sammen med ligesindede så kommer trygheden. De sociale vanskelligheder kommer ofte når jeg f.eks er til konfirmation så er der mange jeg ikke kender, og så sidder jeg bare ved bordet og ikke snakker med nogen.

8. **Me:** Hvad er dit uddannelsesniveau?

Bjarne: Gymnasium, anlægsgartner og en anlægstekniker som er udbygning af anlægsgartner. Jeg forstod ikke at jobbet eller skolen skulle dreje sig om noget andet end det faglige så hvis folk har snakket med mig om personlige ting så har jeg tit undladet at svare da jeg ikke kunne forholde mig til det. Det kan man sige at hvis man tænker at man møder en kollega der er sådan så kommer ingen nærmere, og der kommer isolationen men nu når jeg er ældre så kan andre forstod mig bedre og jeg forstår mig bedre.

9. **Me:** Har det været en proces at tillære dig at være social?

Bjarne: Ja det har det og kommet specialt efter at jeg har mødt min kæreste. Jeg har trukket mig lidt mere ind i verdenen og lært mennesker at kende som jeg aldrig ville før. Når man kommer ind i et rum, så lægger andre mærke til en så må man forholde sig til det og være mere social. Der følge også et ansvar med at folk vender sig mod mig og vil vide ting om mig. Det er medfødt kan man sige og det har altid været sådan uden at jeg har lagt mærke til. Folk har været lidt forvirret over at jeg virkede som en som havde enormt meget styr på tingene men på den anden side, ikke så styr på noget.

10. **Me:** Er det andet du gerne vil tilføje om dine erfaringer med at søge jobs og hvad det betyder for dig at være jobsøgende i det danske arbejdsmarked?

Bjarne: Jeg synes at det var svært at ikke at have en daglig struktur – det med at være arbejdsløs så har man ikke struktur. Jeg trives ikke godt i ferier da så skal jeg planlægge det selv og fast struktur findes ikke, så det er hårdt at ikke have et arbejde.

Appendix 2c – Henning

1. **Me:** Når det kommer til at søge jobs, hvad er din general erfaring med det danske arbejdsmarked?
   a. Hvilke positive erfaringer kan du dele og negative erfaringer?

Henning: Jeg har haft svært ved at finde arbejde. Jeg har levet mange år uden diagnose, ikke. Og det har ligesom sat nogen ting på plads at jeg fik den diagnose. Uhm...men altså, jeg har svært ved at finde arbejde.

Me: Jeg spørger om ham om han kan komme med eksempler?

Henning: Jeg tror at jeg ligesom har været for...grunden til at jeg blev valgt fra er fordi jeg har været for usikker og langsom og forsigtig, og ikke haft den rette personlighed til det jeg skulle lave.

2. **Me:** Er det noget ved en ansættelsesproces du har svært eller nemt ved, i forhold til jobsøgning?
   a. Hvis svært, uddyb
   b. Hvis nemt, uddyb

Henning: Det er ikke rigtig noget jeg ville have nemt ved. Jeg har ligesom nogen...min uddannelse og sådan...men det er jo... altså jeg tror at det har været fordel at lære mig at kende og vænne sig til mig at jeg er lidt dårlig til at optræde. Men det er også lidt den anden vej. Fordi at jeg har altid haft den autisme lidelse men ikke har altid kendt det og det har gjort at det er sværere ved at performe. Når jeg har fået diagnosen er det meget som er kommet på plads. Det er sådan set nogle andre ting når man skal ansætte nogen med Asperger, de er loyale, reglerette, så har jeg god tænkeevne. Hvad er der andre ting, altså, men også vedholdende og jeg har lavet nogle ting som normale folk ikke har kunnet lave.

Me: Han nævner at han er dårlig til at optræde men han nævner også nogle stærke sider han besidder, så jeg vil spørge om han har haft svært ved at vise de evner han kan i et job interview?

Henning: Jeg har været til mange samtaler før jeg fik diagnosen. Jeg har nok ligesom svært ved at sælge mig selv og optræde. Ligesom det skulle være en person bagved de stillinger jeg søgte så der er blevet søgt efter mere power, at her kom en dygtig mand. Jeg har ligesom svært ved at optræde, ligesom man forventer af en gammel arbejdssøgende til at leve op til rollen.

3. **Me:** Efter din mening, når du har læst jobopslag, du er interesseret i, hvorvidt er du blevet påvirket eller ikke påvirket af kravene til de faglige kvalifikationer, i forhold til om du ville søge jobbet?
   a. Hvis ja, bliver påvirket, så uddyb

Henning: Jeg har nok så haft usikkerhed men jeg ved hvordan man skal søge de forskellige stillingsopslag og at man skal være dynamisk og have mange bolde i luften og det ene eller det andet. På den måde så er det vel det her spil. Jeg har også selv synes at jeg har svært ved at optræde med power og engagement. Min fysiklærer sagde engang at han aldrig havde mødt en som var så dygtig til fysik men havde så lidt engagement.

4. **Me:** Efter din mening, hvorvidt er du blevet påvirket eller ikke påvirket af de personlige kvalifikationer jobopslaget kræver?
   a. Hvis ja, bliver påvirket så uddyb

Henning: Jeg søgte jobs da jeg var tvunget til det, det var de regler det var men jeg har ikke været specifikt påvirket af nogle kvalifikationer. Men har svært ved at søge stillingerne, engagere mig

men jeg vidste hvad skulle til. Hvilke jeg har søgt og hvilke jeg har valgt fra, kan jeg ikke se et mønster i. Jeg har dog været meget forsigtig generalt og vidst at det var svært for mig. Jeg gav stille og roligt op på arbejdsmarkedet og røg ud af det, ligenu har jeg et alternativ job. Arbejdsmarkedsystemet er ikke lavet til os.

5. **Me:** Er du gået igennem en testproces i forbindelse med en ansættelsesproces, såsom personlighedstest eller kvalifikationer?
    a. Efter din mening, hvordan forløb det og hvordan gik det?
    b. Og kan du uddybe om du blev positiv eller negativ påvirket af at blive testet?

Henning: Jeg fik lavet en test hos A-kassen i 90erne, damen der testede mig, hun sagde at jeg ligesom skulle overkomme min usikkerhed. Det var en test til at finde ud af hvilke evner man bestridede. Jeg fik at vide at min tillid til andre mennesker havde fået knæk. Det handler mere om min Asperger personlighed, den kognitive forstyrrelse. Hun mente at jeg godt kunne bestride forskelligt arbejde selvom jeg ikke havde gennemsnitlig personlighed. Men alligevel hvis jeg kom i gang, men altså, men det er netop den type vanskellighed jeg ikke kommer over, den forbliver. Det skal man være klar over. Jeg har haft en anden mindre test, hvor jeg lå højt i de administrative evner, det var en DISC profil. Det var en hurtig en. Det var igennem et kursus.

6. **Me:** Er du gået igennem en interviewproces?
    a. Hvordan gik det efter din mening?

Henning: Det var jeg, det var ligesom, starten var de meget venlig, men de gik på mig, hvorfor jeg ikke havde fast arbejde i forvejen. Og hvorfor jeg havde klaret mig med deltidsarbejde og spurgte mig, hvem jeg var for en. Og det havde jeg ligesom svært ved at give et fornuftigt svar på. Jeg ved heller ikke hvordan jeg skulle svare i dag. Det var også et andet sted og hvor de ikke havde mange ansøger og jeg opfyldte alle de formelle kvalifikationer, men så alligevel vlev jeg sorteret fra. Når jeg ser på det i dag, var det nok ligeså godt. Jeg ved ikke fordi at det måske er at arbejdsmarkedet er ikke tilpasset mennesker med Asperger og det kan jeg godt forstå så jeg beklager mig ikke. Man kunne jo få lidt øje på hvad vi nu kan men det er meget godt for mit vedkommende, jeg er værdsat, hvor jeg er ansat nu.

7. **Me:** Hvad er dit uddannelsesniveau?

Henning: Jeg er cand.scient i biologi og kemi. Men arbejder ikke med det nu men på et lager. Men jeg har haft noget deltidarbejde. Jeg var teamlærer på mit gamle institut og det gik godt med de laboratorieøvelser, men altså at man skal have forskningsbaseret undervisning, og jeg var der i lang årrække men så holdt det op. Og jeg har undervist i gymnasium og det gik nogenlunde men det var temmeligt hårdt for mig og det var vikariet der stoppede af sig selv.

8. **Me:** Er det andet du gerne vil tilføje om dine erfaringer med at søge jobs og hvad det betyder for dig at være jobsøgende i det danske arbejdsmarked?

Henning: Jeg havde det ikke godt med det. Altså, jeg har jo også det synspunkt at arbejdsmarkedet er for de normale personer, det er meget fint hvis der er gjort noget at når der gjort noget ud af at få mennesker med autisme ind. Men altså man kan ikke forlange at vi kan konkurrere med de andre. Det kunne være at jeg fik et job som jeg så ikke kunne klare. Men altså det har ikke været nemt for mig på den ene måde men jeg harfået klaret mig igennem på en anden måde. Jeg ved ikke rigtigt, men jeg har lidt opgivet med at forsvare mig selv og tænkt at det er skæbnen eller vilkårene. Men det har været problem at ligesom have et arbejde.

1. **Me:** Når det kommer til at søge jobs, hvad er din general erfaring med det danske arbejdsmarked?
   a. Hvilke positive erfaringer kan du dele og negative erfaringer?

Louise: Jeg synes det er meget kompliceret at prøve at finde de regler der er for det. Når jeg ser et job opslag, så står der hel masse ting man skal kunne at gøre. Men jeg har fået at vide at man behøver ikke at kunne dem alle sammen. Man kan skrive noget pænere, noget der er ikke helt rigtigt på sit CV. Jeg var meget tæt på at jeg ikke søgte det (Novo) overhovedet fordi jeg tænkte at jeg ikke kan opfylde alle de der krav. Det var kun fordi at min veninde og min chef da jeg var i praktiksted sagde at jeg skulle prøve – fordi så ville man finde ud af det til samtalen. Men jeg har været ude til studiejobsamtaler hvor de alle sammen sagde at jeg var for overkvalificeret fordi jeg kun søgte ting hvor jeg vidste at jeg kunne opfylde alle kravene. Det var mindste kravene der stod på jobansøgningerne og jeg forstår ikke at man kan ansøge uden at have opfyldt dem.

Me: Før du fik jobbet hos Novo Nordisk, har du været igennem ansættelsesprocesser før?

Louise: Igen, når jeg har søgt studiejob. Og jeg har været til par ansættelsessamtaler. Og jeg har sendt ansøgninger flere steder hen til. Jeg forstår ikke rigtigt processen så jeg ved ikke om...jeg har fået at vide at så kan man ringe og gøre mere opmærksom på sig selv og der er alle mulige underlige tips men de står ingen steder. Der står at man kan sende en ansøgning og det er det jeg gør. Så er der også nogle som siger at der er nogle regler for hvordan ansøgninger og CVer skal se ud men det forstår jeg heller ikke.

2. **Me:** Efter din mening, når du har læst et jobopslag, du har været interesseret i, hvorvidt er du blevet påvirket eller ikke påvirket, af kravene til de faglige kvalifikationer, i forhold til om du ville søge jobbet?
   a. Hvis ja, bliver påvirket, så uddyb

Louise: Jeg har gennemgået og læst rigtig rigtig mange og der var storset ingen jeg synes at jeg opfylde og dervar meget få jeg ansøgte overhovedet. Jeg synes det er svært at læse og der er nogen der siger at man kan læse imellem linjerne men det er ikke noget jeg kan læse.

3. **Me:** Efter din mening, hvorvidt er du blevet påvirket eller ikke påvirket af de personlige kvalifikationer jobopslaget kræver?
   a. Hvis ja, bliver påvirket så uddyb

Louise: Hvis der står noget med gruppearbejde så bliver den lagt væk. Hvis de skriver det ned så må det betyde at det er det hvad man laver og så gør jeg ikke det. Så går det galt og det ved jeg. Der er noget med ord som samarbejde eller gruppearbejde og hvis der står det så tænker jeg at jobbet indeholder meget af det og det kan jeg ikke.

4. **Me:** Er det noget ved en ansættelseproces du har svært eller nemt ved, i forhold til jobsøgning?
   a. Hvis svært, uddyb
   b. Hvis nemt, uddyb

Louise: Altså selve søgningen og at finde jobbet er meget let. Der er mange hjemmesider. Jeg skrive de ting jeg kan og så kommer job frem som passer til det. Det er så svært bagefter at vælge ud. Der er nogle koder i som jeg ikke helt forstår. Det er ligesom at hvis man siger: et hus det har et

kig til vandet så betyder det at hvis man hopper op på taget så kan man se et eller andet vand. Sådan er det også i jobopslag og dem har jeg ikke en eller anden ordbog til at tyde.

5. **Me:** Kan du forklare, efter din mening, om autismen har betydning for dig når du søger jobs?

Louise: Det er svært at turde at søge og komme ud til mennesker når jeg ved ikke hvor stedet er og hvor mange mennesker der er. Uhm...det er svært at planlægge på forhånd og forestille mig, så det er svært med at gå i gang med. Jeg har svært ved ting jeg ikke kan planlægge og ikke kan forestille mig. Det er hele processen så det er svært at finde motivation til at overhovedet komme i gang. Så kan det også godt være at jeg tænker at det her job lyder rigtigt god, det lyder som et godt sted men at komme ud og se alle de her mennesker, det virker ret farligt.

6. **Me:** Kan du forklare om der er nemt eller hårdt for dig at gå igennem en interviewproces?

Louise: Når jeg skulle herud (Novo) til samtale så fik jeg en hel beskrivelse af, hvad skulle ske den dag. Det var rigtig rigtig let og så var jeg ikke så nervøs. Da jeg var det andet sted hen så sagde de at jeg skulle møde op, det var Glyptoteket, og jeg ikke hvilke dør det er, hvilke mennesker det er, hvordan de ser ud. Så jeg kom en tim for tidligt og gik rundt og prøvede at finde det og så blev de irriteret af at jeg kom for tidligt. Men jeg ville ikke komme for sent. Det er svært at vide, hvad det er jeg præcis skal.

7. **Me:** Synes du at virksomheder kunne gøre noget til at forbedre rekrutteringsprocesser for mennesker som dig f.eks. så de kan have det nemmere ved at gå til jobsamtaler eller søge jobs generelt?

Louise: Hvis det var et google maps og en dagsorden med. Så kunne der står noget....og man kunne forberede sig bedre på hvad det var de ville høre fordi jeg ved ikke om jeg kommer ind og vi taler om hvem jeg er som person, eller hvad det er jeg kan, hvem der er som arbejder der elle hvilke spørgsmål er tiladt at stille. Hvis der er en dagsordenen, så først så taler vi om hvad jobbet er, eller hvor vi er hen, så stiller vi spørgsmål om din person og dine kvalifikationer og så er det nemmere at bare møde op. Eventuelt et billede af hvordan rummet ser ud. Så kort, billeder og dagsordener. Fordi så er det nemmere når jeg ved hvad jeg skal ind til.

8. **Me:** Kan du forklare, om autismen, efter din mening, har betydning for dig når det handler om at blive ansæt til en stilling, du har søgt?
   a. Kan du uddybe?

Louise: Jeg synes det er svært når jeg ved ikke hvad det er jeg går ind til – så er det en eksamen i et eller andet om jeg får spørgsmål som jeg skal løse eller det er bare stille og rolig samtale.

9. **Me:** Hvad er dit uddannelsesniveau?

Louise: Bachelor i Datalogi fra KU.

Me: Jeg vil spørge konkret ind til hendes erfaring med jobsøgning så jeg spørger: når du har søgt jobs, fik du jobbene? Og har du været til mange processer?
Nej jeg fik ikke jobbene. Jeg har været til to processer og nogle har jeg ringet til. Men med dem i tlf så anede jeg ikke hvad skete. Når det ligger ikke på skrift så aner jeg ikke hvordan det går.

10. **Me:** Er det andet du gerne vil tilføje om dine erfaringer med at søge jobs og hvad det betyder for dig at være jobsøgende på det danske arbejdsmarked?

Louise: Jeg kunne godt bruge hjælp til at oversætte jobannoncer. Hvis vi starter der så ved jeg ikke hvad de betyder og jeg ved ikke hvad det er jeg kan søge eller ikke kan søge. Jeg har fået flere til at læse mine ansøgninger og CV til at fin de ud af hvad det er jeg skal eller ikke skal skrive. Det ville være rigtigt rart at få dagsorden for det hvad jeg skal gøre. Hvis jeg kommer ind og skal løse nogle konkrete opgaver så skal jeg vide at det er det jeg går ind til men hvis de lige pludselig kommer så har jeg ikke forberedt det og så kan jeg finde på at lukke fuldstændigt ned og ikke kunne løse noget som helst selvom jeg ville kunne det hvis det var mit arbejde.

Appendix 3 – Interview Transcription

Appendix 3 – Linda from NAI

1. **Me:** Kan du fortælle om forløbet hos det Nationale Autismeinstitut, når I får mennesker i praktik eller i job?

Linda: Det vil sige Project Opportunity?

Me: Ja!

Linda: Det er primært der hvor vi arbejder i et ordinært form. Det som sker helt fra start af er at vi etablerer et samarbejde med en virksomhed. Der ligger et stort forarbejde før det bliver til noget der hedder en ansættelse. Første skridt på vejen er at etablere kontakten med virksomheden og fortælle virksomheden helt generelt hvad der er mennesket kan bidrage med til virksomheden. Så afstemmer vi sammen med virksomheden hvad er der for nogle faglige profiler de har brug for, hvad er der for nogle der er i virksomheden der kunne være relevante i den her sammenhæng – relevante for mennesker med autisme at varetage. Og hvordan man kan tilpasse de jobs og stillinger, til arbejdsopgaver så et menneske med autisme kunne varetage funktionen. Det vi typisk kigger på der, det er om vi kan sortere ud i det der ligge omkring arbejdsopgaven – arbejdsopgaven er nemlig som regel ikke en udfordring. Men det som kunne være udfordring er at det med at skulle have kundekontakt for eksempel eller i det hele taget meget kontakt med de andre i virksomheden, opgaver der kræver at man skal samarbejde på tværs eller har en udadgående funktion. Alt det får vi afdækket med virksomheden så vi ender ud i en stilling som er tilpasset sådan at vi mener at det ville en med autisme kunne varetage. Så kan vi finde ud af at de kan godt varetage de andre opgaver men vi starter ligesom med en model hvor det ikke er et krav at de har opgaver der ligger udover kerneopgaven. Når vi er nået så lang så er det næste vi gør er at lave en virksomhedsprofil eller analyse af hvad det er for en arbejdsplads. Der kigger vi på alt som ikke er nedfældet på papir – alt det uformelle, hvad er det for en kultur man behersker, hvad er det for en omgangsform med hinanden, hvad er det for uskrevne regler, hvad er det for et arbejdspladsmiljø mennesket kommer til at arbejde i, hvordan er det fysiske miljø indrettet – er det noget der skal tilpasses i den sammenhæng. En af vores store udfordringer på arbejdsmarkedet er at næsten alle sidder i sådan nogle storrumskontorer og det kan være en udfordring for en med autisme. Alt så noget laver vi en profil på, sammen med virksomheden. Når vi har gjort det laver vi en stillingsopslag, det er os og Landsforening Autisme der slår stillingen op – virksomheden går ikke ud og annoncere, det gør vi. Det gør vi via vores egne kanaler fordi vi ved hvor kandidaterne til stillingen er hen. Man søger stillingen så ved man hvilken virksomhed man søger stillingen til men man søger ind til os. Det vil sige at det er mig og os der modtager og læser ansøgninger, og vi inviterer alle som søger til en præ-samtale. Det er en samtale hvor vi selvfølgelig fortæller hvad stillingen indeholder og hvad opgaverne indebær – vi formidler den viden vi har fra virskomhedsanalysen og drøfter den med den enkelte ansøger. Derfor har vi meget fokus på i den fase at få afdækket menneskets udfordringer og ellers er vi meget resourcefokuseret. Men i den her del af processen er det vigtigt at vi får at vide hvilken udfordringer de har, man må gerne have udfordringer – det er jo hele setuppet at de har ofte nogle ufordringer også på en arbejdsplads og derfor er det rigtig vigtigt at kende de udfordringer så vi kan tage højde for det fra start af i en evt ansættelse. Vi gør meget ud af at tale med dem om at man ikke behøver i den her sammenhæng at man ikke behøver at lægge skjul på sine udfordringer. Vi bliver nød til at kende dem på forhånd. Vi har også erfaringer med at ikke kende udfordringerne på forhånd men lært dem at kende undervejs og så har det ikke kunne ladet sig gøre. Så derfor er det vigtigt at vi ved det på forhånd. Så når alle har været til præ-samtale der foregår her på kontoret så er det os der præsenterer virksomheden for de kandidaterne som vi mener at matcher bedst ind i opgaven og den virksomhed. Så er det typisk at jeg eller vi har valgt tre-fire kandidater men

kommer an på kanditaterne eller virksomheden. Så tager jeg til virksomheden og mødes med deres ansættelsesudvalg de har valg i virksomheden og så gennemgår vi kandidaterne. Og så tager virksomheden stilling til om det er de kandidater de vil have til samtalen. Så inviterer jeg kandidaterne til ansættelsessamtalen i virksomheden og jeg er også med til samtalen. Så er der et ansætteseudvalg som er ofte skræddersyet til de her mennesker – der sidder ikke 8 mennesker sammen omkring et bord – vi har været oppe på 5 og det er maks. Vi vælger de alle nærmeste der kommer til at arbejde sammen med mennesket. Så er det sådan set virksomheden der holder samtalen og der er vores opgave at fascilitere samtalen hvis den bliver svær. Så jeg har en mere tilbageholdende rolle og jeg er der også fordi så har kandidaten en som denne kender i forvejen. Eller som kandidaten ved helt masse om vedkommende så kan jeg supplere. Ellers er det forholdsvis almindelig ansættelsessamtale og efter ansættelsessamtalerne, så beslutter virksomheden hvem de gerne vil ansætte. Jeg kan være vejledende omkring hvem skal vælges men det er virksomheden der træffer den beslutning om hvem de tænker at kunne passe godt ind. Det er det overordnede forløb. Undervejs i hele processen har vi sideløbende med det uddannelses- og opkvalificerende forløb for virksomheden, det vil sige at ledelsen i virksomheden eller afdelingen får nogen grundlæggende viden om hvad er autisme og hvad man kan forvente af at arbejde med en med autisme. Hvilke fokus punkter skal man tænke på, kollegial og ledelses tanker der er anderledes end ellers set. Så er der en lang proces med at klæde virksomheden på at håndtere samarbejdet med denne medarbejder. Og det samarbejde fortsætter så efter de er blevet ansat. Både virksomheden og mennesket med autisme får vejledning og sparring og virksomheden får nogen supervision efterfølgende.

Me: Da de nævner at de laver job opslag og interviewer så jeg spørger indtil om de gør brug af tests?

Linda: Nej, det gør vi ikke. Det er kun mig der er med til præ-interviewet. Jeg bruger den autismeviden jeg har og viden fra virksomheden. Det vil typisk være arbejdsopgaver der ville blive udført af en med teknisk baggrund, ingenør, dataloger, IT generelt. Det er typisk de områder. Vores udfordring er at finde dem. Da meget få har den præcise uddannelsemæssig baggrund. Det som vi ved med autisme er at mange kan godt varetage de her jobs selvom de ikke har uddannelsen. Fordi vi har en målgruppe som ikke trives i vores uddannelsessystem men de har kompetencerne og mange af dem er jo helt autodiktakte. Vi har en meget dygtig medarbejder der er ansat i CT Scan i Hillerød. Der har det medarbejder (Nicolas) der laver samme arbejde som sine kollegaer der er hhv ingenøre eller fysiker. Den her medarbejder har taget 9. klasse som det højeste og enkelt semester på teknisk skole. Men han løser opgaver på et niveau med sine kollegaer – den mulighed havde han jo aldrig fået hvis han havde gået de gængse veje. Han var gået i gang med uddannelser men det har været svært og udfordrende for ham socialt og han har vidst alt som de underviste i så han kunne ikke se mening i at være der. Så faldt ham fra. Han er godt eksempel om at vi har målgruppe der langt hen ad vejen har kompetencerne men de ikke får mulighederne ellers. Han ville selvfølgelig ikke kunne varetage en normal ingenør stilling ift projektledelse, samarbejde på tværs og helt masse af andre ting. Men de opgaver der bliver trukket ud laver han på samme niveau som sine kollegaer men processerne omkring projekterne det er nogle andre der varetager.

2. **Me:** Har du eksempler på årsager til, at folk ansøger jobs igennem jeres forløb?

Linda: En af de største årsager er at de ikke har papirer på det de kan da de ikke har fuldført en uddannelse. Så kommer de ikke i betratning da i dag så opslår man jo ikke stillinger udelukkende på personlige kompetencer – de slår dem på på overordnede kvalifikationer – her skal du være inienør, laborant etc. Det er typisk det område vi arbejder med. Man efterspørger ikke i et stillingsopslag en som kan specifikke ting uden at referer til en uddannelsemæssig baggrund. Det er udfordring nr. 1 – så har vi med mennesker at gøre det har svært ved at foretage ufaglært arbejde og det har intet med

manglende vilje at gøre men det handler om at ikke kunne håndtere den enorme kontakt, de sanselige påvirkinger, det med at hele tiden skal tage stilling til noget hurtigt (sure kunder, kasseapparat der ikke virker etc). Derfor er deres muligheder for at komme på arbejdsmarkedet er ringe da det handler ikke om at de ikke vil arbejde med det som "ikke" er spændende. Det handler om ikke at kunne varetage andre opgaver. Det er barriere nr. 1.

Barriere nr 2. er dem som har taget en uddannelse men bliver sorteret fra til samtalen. Det store dilemma de har er at hvis man skriver at man har autisme eller Asperger syndrom så kommer man ikke til samtale men hvis man ikke skriver det og bliver indkaldt til samtale så kommer man til at fremstå mærkelig i ansættelseudvalgets øjne, eller som noget der ihvertfald der virker mærkelig på en arbejdsgiver fordi man måske håndterer en samtale anderledes. Hvis man ikke har viden om hvorfor en kandidat håndterer sådan møde anderledes så bliver man sorteret fra. Så det er det store dilemma dne her målgruppe har. På den ene side vil de gerne være åbne omkring deres autisme men så kommer de ikke til betratning men hvis de ikke fortæller om det bliver de sorteret fra. Derfor kræver det nogle særlige indsatser.

a. **Me:** Har du konkrete eksempler?

Linda: Af dem som er sorteret fra har jeg masse af – af nogle som oplever ikke at blive indkaldt til samtale særdeles dem som skriver at de har autisme i ansøgningen og stadig har opfyldt alle kravene. Så er det jo også udfordring at hvis man aldrig får chancen så går der lang tid ift uddannelsen og så er der kommet nogle nye på banen. Det er udfordringer der andre mennesker også har. Der er nogle ekstra udfrodringer men denne målgruppe.

3. **Me:** Kan du komme med eksempler på nogle erfaringer, personer med ASF har haft med arbejdsmarkedet, i forhold til at søge job?

Linda: Både og. Man kan sige at folk ikke får en tilbagemelding fordi du har en Asperger syndrom eller hvis de ikke ved om syndromet så fortæller ikke folk at de synes at kandidaten har fremstået som mærkelig. Så man kan sige at vi ikke har en konkret viden om at det er derfor at de bliver sorteret fra me vi har viden på et oplevelsesniveau. Jeg møder rigtig mange der oplever at de er blevet sorteret pga at de har fortalt at de har autisme eller at de ikke har haft den rigtige personlighed.

Me: Jeg spørger indtil hvordan tilbagemelding ofte lyder, når de kommer til jobsamtale men får afslag?

Linda: Når de søger almindelige jobs. Så får de, de forklaringer som alle andre også får. Jeg har lige talt med en som er ansat i en af vores projekter, at det svar han typisk fik var omrking at en anden havde mere erfaring. Det er jo aldrig et legalt argument og virksomheden kan komme nemt omkring afslag. Så kan man begynde at diskutere hvorfor han kom ind til samtale, hvis der alligevel var en som havde mere erfaring. Så har de som udgangspunkt haft interesse for at vælge en som ikke har den samme erfaring. Så derfor ved man også at når man får sådan et svar at det handler om noget andet end bare manglende erfaring. Det går så nok mere på det som man begrebsmæssigt kan kalde kemi, eller personlighed eller noget andet. Man har fået et indirekte svar synes jeg. Men det er min holdning. Han fortalte også om en anden samtale hvor de havde meldt noget positivt ud til ham selvom han ikke fik jobbet (han har en kombineret RUC uddannelse) og have ligesom søgt den ene vinkel af sin uddannelse. Og de havde sagt til ham at de fik en oplevelse af at hans interesse og fokusområde lå i den anden ende af uddannelsen, så de syntes at han skulle gå den vej. Man kan sige at det var en pæn måde at sige det på så er man ligeglad med at de andre siger at han skal går en anden vej når man bare vil have jobbet. Det var en af de mest faglige argumenter jeg har – jeg er blevet præsenteret for. Ellers handler det om oplevelser. Det er jo sådan at i vores samfund så kan man få en fortrinsret i det offentlige – man skal være godkendt til at få den ret. Det kan lægge med i den ansøgning og skal så indkaldes til samtalen – det giver vores og andre målgrupper erfaring med

at gå til jobsamtale. Jeg har endnu ikke mødt en der har fået job via deres fortrinsret. Man kan sagtens give afslag selvom man kommer til samtale igennem fortrinsret.

4. **Me:** Har du fortællinger fra mennesker med ASF om der er noget ved en generel ansættelsesproces, nogle af disse personer har haft nemt eller svært ved?

Linda: Jeg har ikke nogen med erfaring medat de synes det er nemt. De erfaringer jeg har hørt fra mennesker som har været til samtalerne – jeg er så priviligeret at jeg selv har siddet med i mange af samtalerne og der er forudsætningen at man skal have autisme – men det er så min erfaring ift det jeg har erfaring med men også de fortællinger jeg hører fra mennesker det er at de har svært ved at afkode hvad der bliver spurgt om. En typisk samtale kunne starte i retning af at du skal uddybe din motivation for at søge den stilling, kan du fortælle om dine personlige kompetencer og når man har autisme så er de spørgsmål meget svære at svare på. Og det helt klassiske spørgsmål hvor ser du dig selv om 5-10 år, det er meget svært at svare på når man har autisme og for os andre kan det også været svært. Men vi har erfaring med at snore os udenom eller tale os omkring det og har vi andre færdigheder ift at aflæse hvad andre gerne vil høre. Der er mennesker med autisme meget udfordret. Men det giver dem ikke muligheden for at svare på de spørgsmål og de føler så at de kommer til kort i en ansættelssamtale når de bliver spurgt om de her ting – især når det handler om de samtaler i dag der handler meget lidt om de hårde færdigheder fordi dem har man fået som et stykke papir og man ved som udgangspunkt at ansøgeren kan det som jobbet kræver af vedkommende. Det er blandt andet det her med at ift interviewet med Ulrik så handler det om kemi, at de passer ind i afdelingen, så bruger man intuition – det udefinærtbart vælger man medarbejder om de kan samarbejde etc og det kan man understøtte med personlighedstests, profiler etc. Alt efter hvilken stillinger det handler om og der er hvor de kommer til kort – særligt hvis de ikke bliver spurgt om noget konkret. Men mere bliver spurgt om at man skal uddybe sin ansøgning og der kunne en med autisme finde på at sige nej og så er den lukket. Hvis man hele tiden rent interview teknisk ikke ved hvem man sidder overfor og man bliver ved med at køre samtalen i det spor så får man intet at vide om den mearbejder og så får man et dårligt indtryk.

Hvilke oplevelser de selv har omkring at søge jobs så er at blive spurgt om ting de ikke forstår. Og de ved ikke hvilket svar forventes.

Me: Jeg kobler det til uvished – har de svært ved at ikke vide hvilke skridt der kommer næst?

Linda: Lige præcis, det er det som generelt, vi andre har sommerfugle i maven når vi skal ind til samtale men vi finde lynhurtigt ud af hvad skal ske når vi træder ind i rummet og efter to minutter så er vi fokuseret og lynhurtigt tunet os ind på de mennesker man skal agere sammen med. Det vi andre meget hurtige til at afkode – men dem som har autisme kan ikke nødvendigvis afkode det hen ad vejen. De misster pointen.

5. **Me:** Har du en mening om, hvorvidt generelle rekrutteringsprocesser hjælper eller hindrer mennesker med ASF til at få jobs?
    a. Kan du uddybe?

Linda: Jeg har klar holdning med at det forhindrer langt de fleste mennesker med at komme i arbejde. Men jeg hører heldigvis historier hvor det lykkes – for ikke så længe siden mødte jeg som en gang havde søgt stilling igennem os som han ikke fik og så blev jeg nysgerrig på a høre hvordan det gik ham. Så jeg kontaktede ham og han fortæller at han blev så ansæt i forsvaret på fulstrændig ordinære vilkår – han er meget klassisk Asperger mand. Jeg har mange års erfaring med autisme men jeg havde ladrig været i tvivl uanset hvor jeg havde mødt ham at han har Asperger. Han havde ikke fortalt det og ingen havde stillet spørgsmålstegn ved. Det siger måske mere om forsvarets

måde at arbejde på end det siger noget om ham – det gode ved denne historie er at han har faktisk fundet et sted hvor han matcher in, der er fokus på den opgave man skal løfte og alle arbejder efter en fuldstænding stringent kurs, hvor man ikke spilder tid på at spise morgenmad sammen, sidd eog hygge sig eller have uformelle samaler eller uformelt samvær – man skal bare fokusere på opgaven. Han har fuldstændig styr på hvad han skal og trives godt. Der stilles ikke de sociale kollegiale krav til ham. Det job har han opnået helt selv.

Baggrunden har jeg fortalt om da den måde man rekrutterer på i dag, den imødekommer ikke de forudsætninger de mennesker med autisme har til at komme samtale. De forstår ikke det setup. Og det kan jeg se når jeg sidder i de virksomheder vi samarbejder med – de mennesker som sidder og skal interviewe er tit mere nervøse end dem som skal ind til samtale da de ved at de skal gribe det lidt anderledes an end de plejer og det er stor udfordring for dem. Og de gør sig altid umage men ender altid med at starte på et åbent spørgsmål som ansøgerne ikke kan svare på. Så er man ligeså i gang. Det er noget som ligger i vores kultur – den kultur har vi arbejdet hen i mod. For tyve år siden når jeg skulle på arbejdsmarkedet var det ikke sådan, da varman interessert om at vide om ens kompetencer, færdigheder og baggrund men ingen fokus på hvem jeg egentlig var for en, min personlighed eller hvor jeg så mig selv om fem år. Men det er fokus i dag og det forhindrer. Så kan man sige at noget der også kan forhindre der skabte mulighed for ham i forsvaret er at man på arbejdspladser gerne vil ansætte en som ligner en selv så hvis arbejdspladsen er meget åbent, udadvendt, samarbejdende, projektstyret kultur så vælger man mennesker der afspejler det – og det er ikke ret mange med autisme der har. Og han med forsvaret passede jo perfekt ind men der er ikke mange virksomheder der tilbyder det og derfor bliver det meget svært.

6. **Me:** Har du en mening om, hvorvidt der er nogle aspekter af det at være diagnoseret med ASF, der gør det nemt eller svært for disse mennesker at gå igennem en generel rekrutteringsproces?

Linda: Det som gør det svært når man kigger på det rent diagnostisk med autisme, uanset om hvilke form for autisme har. Så er man udfordret på tre områder – det er hvad skal til til at få en autisme diagnose. Man skal være udfordret på det kommunikative (i vores målgruppe handler om det om at forstå og fortolke kommunikation imellem mennesker da det verbale er ofte på et højt niveau), sociale (er ikke nødvendigvis en barriere i rekrutteringsprocessen men mere når man har fået job). Men i det kommunikative forstår man ikke den form man kommunikerer på i jobsamtale – man har ikke de kodninger i hjernen der gør at man kan kommunikere på den måde – ens kommunikative evner er viret på en anden måde. Det tredje ben er at forstillingsevnet kan være nedsat og dækker over mange ting – dækker bl.a. over at kunne forestille sig noget, det dækker også de eksekutive funktioner (evnen til at grovt sagt til at sige det kort at få en idé, omsatte den til handling, justere den undervejs og opnå det mål man sætte sig når man fik ideen – være procesorienteret), og langt de fleste i både jobs og samtaler vil gerne have gode forestillingsevner – hvor ser du dig selv eller hvilken karrierespor vil du gerne går i kræver meget gode forestillingsevner. Og at man har nogle gode eksekutive færdigheder kræves tit. Derfor handler om ift at opnå jobs er det det kommunikative og forestillingsevner.

7. **Me:** Har du nøget at tilføje?

Linda: Nej!

Appendix 4 – Interview Transcription

Appendix 4a – Henrik from Specialisterne

1. **Me:** Kan du fortælle om processen, med at få mennesker med autisme i job?

Henrik: Det er meget forskelligt rundt om verdenen men i Danmark så forgår det på den måde at der kommer en kommune med enten et voksent menneske eller et stort ungt menneske. Dvs at hvis det er et ungt menneske som ikke er færdig i uddannelsessystemet så kommer barnet i UU vejledning (han fortæller videre om det og om STU processen – Specialisternes uddannelseforløb). Hvis man er rigtig god til matematik så nytter det ikke noget at kommunen sender en til at slå græs – det bliver du ikke motiveret af. Man kan også være voksen og arbejdsløs hvor man har aldrig haft et job eller haft mange jobs, så skal man igennem resourceforløb. Resourceforløb, det er 3 måneders eller 5 måneders foranstaltning – kommer an på kommunen. Så tager vi dem ind. STU er 3 årigt skoleforløb, resourceforløb er eller 3 måneder, hvor de kigger dem an, hvem de. Det bruger de lego til – her er opskrift og man skal f.eks. opbygge en robot og det kan tage nogle timer. Det giver os rigtig mange oplysninger. De ender i den praktik alt afhængigt af hvilke kompetencer de har, hvor de bruger den til at afklare hvordan de passer ind i arbejdsmarkedet.

2. **Me:** Hvem betaler for forløbene?

Henrik: Når de er i praktik er det en kommunal udgift men når de skal ansættes så skal virksomheden betale.

3. **Me:** Hvilke udfordringer oplever i så, både fra virksomhedens side og til at få dem ansat?

Henrik: Alt hvad du kan drømme om. Hvad er de for nogen? De er bare almindelige mennesker. Når vi starter en opgave, hvis de f.eks er konsulenter så orienterer de hvad er autisme. 1-2 timers session hvor de informerer og det ikke er obligatorisk for medarbejderne. Så præsenterer det unge menneske sig selv.

4. **Me:** Bliver autismen altid italesat før medarbejderen starter?

Henrik: Ofte men for nogens vedkommende er det ikke nødvendigt.
(Han fortæller om processen i USA f.eks hvor de har samme templates). De leger meget med lego og bruger uddannelsesmodellen SCRUM. Så kan man se om folk er i stand til at prioritere.

5. **Me:** Har i mange positive eller negative erfaringer ift at når mennesker bliver ansat?

Henrik: Det er mange positive erfaringer. De står på lige fod med andre medarbejdere og som regel i DK så kan man få fleksjob. DVS hvis de kan arbejde 24 timer i ugen så betaler de 24 timer og resten klarer kommunen. Så er det tiltrækkende at have en i fleksjob eller med løntilskud. Fordi hvis der er en som kan sit job med autisme så løser de det til perfektionismen. Det er fordelen – de laver ikke fejl.

6. **Me:** Når I har fået mennesker ind som skal straks i jobforløb og ikke uddannelsesforløb, har I så nogle historier om udfordringer de har oplevet når de skal til at ansøge jobs, hvorfor de har brug for jer?

Henrik: Det er fordi at de får aldrig jobbet på grund af mange ting men de er ikke så gode til at sælge sig selv. De skal have en advokat som kan være med til at dokumentere fordi vi har f.eks

ingeniøre ansatte her og de siger at de altid blev nr. 2 – der var altid en anden en der vandt fordi talegaverne ofte er bedre. Autismen kommer med en hudløs ærlighed. Hvis der en eller anden som spørger, er du ekspert i det her så ville personen med autisme sige nej men normalt-begavet menneske ville sige ja for fanden det er jeg – jeg er pissegod. De er meget frygtsomme over for begrebet ekspert. De får ofte ikke jobbet fordi de er ikke gode til at køre ansættelsesinterview men også ofte fordi dem der interviewer dem, interviewer traditionelt. F.eks. at de har fredagsbar hvortil en person med autisme kan svare: det interesserer mig ikke. Det er rigtig godt hvis du er fleksibel og humoristisk – jeg har faktisk ingen humor. (han referer til et video de har på hjemmesiden). Det er blevet meget svært at være et menneske i den verden vi har i dag. Hvorimod, hvis man tænker filmindustrien som er begyndt at tage ind mennesker med autisme eller aspergers eller lave film om mennesker med autisme. Han forklarer om manglen af humor hos mange af de mennesker. Derfor kan du forestille dig at face-to-face interview biver meget sært.

7. **Me:** Nu snakker du om interviewprocessen som er jo del af ansættelsesprocessen som er vanskellig, har du mening om hvorvidt hele ansættelsesprocessen kan hindre mennesker med autisme at få jobs?

Henrik: På hele verdensmarkedet. Vi ser det samme mønster – enten har du ikke et job ellers er du underemployed. Det er netop fordi at de får ikke givet nok udtryk for, hvad de egentlig kan og der findes ikke processer for, hvad de egentlig kan. Vores process hvor vi er sammen med dem, hvor vores første pre-test er et lego interview. Så sidder vi med CV og kan konkret fortælle hvad de er gode til. Og de er ofte ikke opmærksomme på hvad de er gode til. De har ufattelige mange dokumentationer på hvad virker, og hvad virker ikke. Samtidig så skal de være faglig, det skal ikke være psykologer som kigger på dem. Hvide kirtler er gode, og på alle steder hvor mennesker med hvide kirtler er med så er det med udgangspunkt i sygdommen. Og vi har ikke udgangspunkt i sygdom men at et eller andet sted findes nogle evner og dem skal vi finde. Så må alle andre tage sig af sygdommen. Så ved vi godt at det kan være skrøbelige mennesker og have tendens til sygdomme så derfor vil de sørge for at de jobs de får ikke er fuldtidsjob. Han nævner at i USA er der no mercy og de skal arbejde 40 timer om ugen.

8. **Me:** Du nævner at I søger efter evner hos menneskerne og I kører efter Dandelion metaforen, betragter I så mennesker med autisme som talenter?

Henrik: Ja, vi har arbejdet med Mærsk, TDC og Lundbeck så mennesker med autisme kan sagtens være på arbejdsmarkedet. Nogen gang har vi jobsene men vi har ikke talenterne. Andre gange, der kommer talenterne ikke i træning. Den gruppe vi har ansat bliver stillet høje krav til dem fra virksomhederne. Der forventes noget af Specialisterne. Det skal være penge for virksomheden at få mennesker ind og for samfundet kan vi se meget positive udkomster i forhold til cost/benefit. Så den tredje bundlinje er den personlige velfærd i form af at vedkommende har et job – nu har jeg status og bedstemor spørger ikke til juleaften om jeg har et job og nu skal jeg ikke slibe mig ned i netto når alle andre ikke er der fordi jeg ikke har råd til andet. Når man har med autisme at gøre så kan virksomheder ikke forvente at det menneske kommer ind ad døren og bare med høj motivation kan arbejde fuld tid. Det kan godt være at 6 timer er dosen men så får de effektive 6 timer.

9. **Me:** Hvad skal der til at få dem på arbejdsmarkedet?

Henrik: I og med at der er økonomisk gevinst for staten at få svage mennesker på arbejdsmarkedet, har de satspuljer omkring det. Virksomheder siger ofte at de ikke har kapacitet til at tage nogen ind – ikke tid eller resource. Derfor den måde at snige sig ind via praktik er rigtig god.
Kommunen og arbejdsmarkedet kan så lave en aftale.

Henrik slutter af med at sige at han synes at de her mennesker er meget herlige og normale men er ligesom elefanter i en glasbutik når de bliver sluppet løs så er det ikke neurodiversitet. De kan ofte ikke filterer sig og siger nogle upassende ting der kan gøre situationer pinlige. Det største problem er at de tit ikke er dannet. Ungerne er ofte hudløs ærlige, hvor de har drevet alle til vanvid. De trækker tit på autisme kortet – den opdragelse og menneskesyn man får så skal man bruge ekstra tid på det som bliver forsvundet i inlusionens tegn. Der kommer mange misforståelser. F.eks. påpege fejl på en høflig måde som kan blive misforstået.

Appendix 4b – Charlotte from Specialisterne

1. **Me:** Kan du fortælle om dit arbejde i Specialisterne?

Charlotte: Vi som er i Specialisterne DK har tre søjler. 45 mennesker med autisme ansat, konsulent afdelingen med 29 mennesker og så har vi STU og resourceforløb som er rolle fra kommunerne hvor de køber ydelser fra Specialisterne. Og kan f.eks være borgere som allerede har forsøgt noget kommunalregi og har tit mange sidediagnoser. Der er tre forskellige opgaver. (Hun fortæller om sin baggrund) – hun har været ledere i center for autisme og i kommunal arbejde med autister. Hun er meget optaget af hvordan man får flere udsatte i arbejde. Det gør hun sammen med at snakke med folketinget og andre politikere. Dem som kommer i Specialisternes ungdomsuddannelse kommer alle sammen jobs men kun 6% er kommer i job på landsplan.

2. **Me:** Hvad med mennesker som kommer fra kommunen og skal direkte i job?

Charlotte: De kommer i resourceforløb og ikke direkte i job, under de nye reformer skal alle i resourceforløb under 40 år før de kan blive betragtet som førtidspensionister. Nogle har brug for længere resourceforløb da de er så dårlig og resourceforløb kan vare 5 år. De afklarer deres evner f.eks. med Lego Mindstorms.

3. **Me:** Hvilke område arbejder du specifikt med?

Charlotte: Jeg arbejder med business udvikling og med konsulenterne. Nogle af dem sidder her på kontoret da de er for sensitive til at sidde ude hos kunderne og arbejder gennemsnitligt 24 timer om ugen. Det er højtbegavede mennesker som sagtens kan arbejde.

4. **Me:** Igennem dit arbejde, har du enormt meget viden og igennem forskning og den viden du har indsamlet, hvad præsenterer det sig som den største udfordringer når mennesker med autisme vil søge jobs?

Charlotte: De største problemer viser sig i neuropsykologiske tilgang: executive functions, theory of mind og sense of coherence. Det er tre måder du enten bearbejder eller processerer information på, de vanskelligehedr med de executive fukntioner ift at planlægge, hvad der er som kommer efter når du starter noget. Evne til at forestille sig andre mennesker intentioner, evnen til at læse hvad andre mennesker tænker eller tage hensyn til andre mennesker perspektiver – alle de tre kompetencer ofte udgør det sociale samspil. Vi er alle sammen på et spektrum og de her kompetencer er distribuerer forskelligt og nogle har problemer med disse og derfor opstår der fejl og man f.eks. sårer hinanden. Det er jo det værste at man skal ind til et jobinterview hvor man ikke kun skal performe og blive vurderet på ens faglige kompetencer men også på de sociale kompetencer – kommunikative kompetencer som er kerneværdien af diagnosen. De f.eks. også være meget sensitive ift lyd og lys og det kan påvirke deres evner. Alle styrkerne er at de er meget loyale, gode til at fokusere og koncentrere sig, de er ærlige – nogen gange kan det være den ærlighed man ikke bryder sig om. Men det gode ved ærlighed er at de f.eks når de har en 6 måneders opgave og de ved at de kan løse den på 3 måneder så siger de det højt. Så har de også logisk tilgang til opgaverne og ikke så følelsesmæssig som mange andre kan være. De er meget på opgaverne, meget fokuseret og kan blive hypofokuseret så de ikke brænder sammen. Når de bliver ansat så skal virksomhederne vide, hvor intenst kan de arbejde, man skal kende vedkommende der kommer ind (business profilen), hvor længe kan de arbejde, kan de spørge om hjælp, kan opgaven tilrettelægges hvis der behov for det, kan arbejdspladsen tilrettelægges til at passe sammen til menneskets evnet.

5. **Me:** Efter din mening, hvordan kan mennesker med autisme blive betragtet?

Charlotte: De har nogle helt speciale evner hvor de muligvis går for meget i detaljer men andre som er mere generalister som mig skal se fordelen i det da man har brug for de mennesker som kan levere fejlfrie produkter og påpege og rette de fejl som nu kan forekomme. Så det ene er ikke bedre end det andet. Hun nævner Grandin's moivational quote at alle mennesker har forskellige evner til at folde ud neuropsykologiske evner med executive funktioner, theory of mind og sense of coherence – det er blot forskellige kompetencer alle os mennesker har. Den leder som er en rigtig god leder til mennesker med autisme og vægter ikke den kommunikative del for højt, vil også være fantastisk leder for andre mennesker da de virkelig forstår diversiteten er en kæmpe værdi for virksomheden. Større diversitetsledelse skaber mere værdi.

6. **Me:** Specialisterne er kendte for at betragte mennesker med autisme som talenter, ville du betragte dem som talenter?

Charlotte: Ja det ville jeg da. De har alle de samme talenter som alle sammen og det kan også være at de har et andet talent da de har nogle særlige evner. De har øje for detaljer, evne for at dykke ned, tænke logisk og rationalt, for at kunne huske. Mange steder hvor man kræver meget særlige evner eller at man dykker ned i opgaven og der er mennesker som har det lidt svært kommunikativt kunne blive betragtet som autister men de har ikke brug for hjælp så de har heller ikke brug for en diagnose.

7. **Me:** Hvad er din mening omrking at mere viden omkring autisme kommer til at hjælpe mennesker med autisme til at få jobs?

Charlotte: Når folk aldrig har mødt en person med autisme så er det ukendt at få en person som en arbejdskollega. Jeg kan fortælle en historie om Robocop konkurrencen hvor en mand som deltog i konkurrencen fortalte til en fotograf som kommentarede at det nu må være fedt at lege med lego når man er voksen – han svarede dertil: jeg har altid interesseret mig for det her og på folksekolen havde de hold hvor man måtte arbejde med lego mindstorm og jeg fik aldrig lov til at være med da jeg havde autisme. Som er besynderligt da han har særlig evne for det her område. Og jeg elsker de her historier da de fortæller hvor totalt eskluderende vi er i vores samfund. En anden som holder oplæg som fortæller en historie om sin skolegang, hvor hvis de ikke gjorde som læreren sagde så blev de låst ned i et rum i kælderen (han er 27 så det er ikke mere end 20 år siden). Der er en anden som kig på kontanthjælp i 24 år (han kommer kørende i en Tesla for nyligt efter han havde fået job). Så det er noget historier om mennesker som har haft underlige vilkår som finder åndehul hos specialisterne, som faglig åndehul hvor de bliver mødt ift deres kompetencer i stedet for at blive stillet masse krav som de ikke kan honorerer.

8. **Me:** Er inlusion svaret?

Charlotte: Ja helt klart, social inklusion, viden. Vi sagde da jeg arbejdede i social styrelsen hvor man snakkede om inklusion at man skal inkludere viden, før man kan inkludere børnene.

Appendix 4c – Lars & Sebastian from Specialisterne

1. **Me:** Kan du fortælle om ressourceforløbet hos Specialisterne?
    a. Hvordan foregår hele processen generelt?

Sebastian: Klassisk forløb foregår at vi får en borger med autisme eller en anden lignende diagnose der bliver refereret fra kommunen og som det første har vi en kontrakt der løber over 13 uger. Kontrakten går ud på at vi skal afklare den her person, enten ift uddannelse eller til et arbejde. Afklaringen går ud på at undersøge hvilke resourcer har kandidaten, det kan være de personlige, de sociale, de kommunikative, men også de faglige. Og undersøge hvilke udførdringer der er og hvilke behov, og hvordan man kan støtte den her borger ift de her behov. Og de her 13 ugers forløb er bygget op på at de første uger foregår igennem at få et indtryk af borgeren igennem f.eks. lego mindstorm. Men det er ikke kun opgaver men også samtaler man har med kandidaten. Det er vigtigt ift at lære kandidaten at kende på personlige grundlag så man opbygger relationer og kandidaten bliver tryg og vi får skabt et socialt fælleskab. Vi oplever ofte at kandidater kommer ind og har lavt selvværd som ikke har de store sociale netværk hvor vi kan skabe de sociale rammer. Det er sådan set de første uger som er meget vigtigt at få skabt det her rum. Efterfølgende kan vi stille nogle flere faglige krav.

Lars: Vi tager udgangspunkt i deres interesse til at fange dem et sted hvor vi kan lave en afklaring som de føler sig godt tilpas i. De opgaver som vi giver kandidaterne reflekterer hvad man kan forestille at få som opgaver i den ordinære arbejdsmarked. Netop fordi interesse giver energi og hvad hvis man bliver stillet i en opgave som ikke indgår i ens interesse så vi starter der og så bevæger også så mere og mere hen til de opgaver som passer til det ordinære arbejdsmarked.

Me: Nu bruger I meget Lego til at teste, kan I forklare hvad i præcist vil opnå når I beder kandidater om at bygge Lego robotter eller andre konstruktioner af Lego?

Sebastian: Ift en faglig opgave, ligger der forskellige ting i det. For eksempelvis, de får fuldført en opgave, de får en succesoplevelse, at de tænker at det er sgu noget det her. Det driver deres motivation, deres interesse at gå videre med noget. Men også så vi prøver at få i starten ikke at lægge nivaeuet for højt nemlig til at give en succesoplevelse. Men den anden del af det er at Lego giver os et førstehåndsindtryk af de kompetencer som de har.

Lars: Kan de følge en vejledning, kan de spørge om hjælp hvis de støder ind på problemer, hvad er arbejdstempoet, og så først når de lige har fulgt vejledningen så kan man se på kreativitet og man kan stille åbne opgaver. Når det handler om denne konkrete diagnose så er det spørgsmål om, hvor konkret opfattende er man. Når man er ude på den ordinære arbejdsmarked skal man kunne forstå nogle fluffy ting, og hvordan reagerer man på de ting. Det er vigtigt at vide hvor tilpas de er med fluffy ting. Så er det hele med at man kan overskue en opgave, hvor man ikke nødvendigvis kan se målet. Har man evnet til at automatisk bryde opgaven til nogle del-opgaver. Skal vi give værktøjer til eller synliggør at du kan lave denne opagave, eller få den brudt ned i mindre målsætninger. Det som er interessant er at vide om de kan bryde opgaven ned i mindre målsætninger så man kan finde ud af hvad er motivationen bagved det – er det konkurrence mennesket som bare vil eller er man forsigtig. Det siger rigtig meget hvordan man ville reagere på det ordinære arbejdsmarked når man får stillet opgaver. Det er også med kompleksiten af en opagve, om man kan gentage opgaver. Der har vi andre opgaver en Lego.

Sebastian:
Der er indtastningsopgaver, hvor vi har Excel ARK med data som skal indstastes i en hjemmeside. Så kan man se, hvor koncentrerer de kan arbejde og hastighedstempoet, hvor mange pauser de har brug for, kan de selv administrer de her pauser. Opgaverne siger rigtig meget om hvordan de kan håndtere arbejdsopgaver.

Lars:
Det som er vigtigt at sige omkring det. Vores hverdag er struktureret lidt som en arbejdsplads. Man har sin arbejdsplads, sin computer, der er nogle regler omkring man færdes omkring her at man ikke må råbe og skrige men at man skal tage hensyn til alle og så holder vi fælles frokostpause. Vi har ugentlige stå op møder.

Sebastian:
Det er et helhedsbillede vi danner os om de møder til tiden, melder sig syge som ofte inkluderes på arbejdsplads som de uskrevne regler. Vi afspejler en normal arbejdsplads selvom der naturligvis er en forskel.

Me: hvor mange af de kandidater I får ind kan påtage sig et ordinært job på normale vilkår, hvis de havde rammerne for det?

Sebastian: spørger 37 timer?

Me. Ja!

De svarer begge to 0%

Lars:
Det er den gruppe vi får ind.

Sebastian:
Den gruppe som kan varetage normalt job får vi ikke herind.

2. **Me:** Har du eksempler på årsager til, at folk kommer til jer i ressourceforløb?

   a. Kan du uddybe eksemplerne?

Sebastian: Jeg har fået forskellige årsager. 1) eksempelvis være at nogle får diagnosen sent i livet (midten af tyverne eller tredieverne). Der falder en verden sammen hvor de pludselig forstår at de har spillet en rolle hele deres liv. De får et mentalt breakdown og finder ud af at de har haft stress hele deres liv og kan ikke håndtere det her.

Lars tilføjer at der kan være en sekundær diagnose der kommer ind.

Sebastian: Det behøver ikke at være autisme diagnosen men en angst diagnose eller depression. Så mangler den støtte at komme i gang igen. Vi får ofte kandidater der ikke har en stor forståelse for deres egen diagnose. Derfor mangler de redskaber til at kunne håndtere den i hverdagen. Det ser vi som problem.

Lars: Vi har faktisk en hel del synes jeg som får lov til at bruge tid herinde til at studere hvad er konsekvensen af deres diagnose. Man kan mærke at når de får lov til at studere deres diagnose så falder der noget i hak. Vi taler stadig kun om 13 uger.

Sebastian: Andre eksempler som jeg tit hører er at de er blevet misforstået på en arbejdsplads. Nogen kan være meget direkte og derfor bliver misforstået, som kan opfattes som beskyldning eller negativ kritik. Det tænker de ikke så meget over da de ofte taler meget ligeud. Det kan ende i et fyringsgrundlag. Der kan være vanskeligheder i selve kommunikationen som jeg ofte hører.

Lars: En anden kategori findes af de mennesker som er unge og er blevet diagnosticeret meget tidligt. Har måske STU forløb men ved ikke hvordan de skal komme videre. De har kun haft småjobs. Lige pludselig er de væk fra de småjobs, og så bliver det svært at få småjobs og de går lang tid i systemet og bliver sendt til resourceforløb. Dem ser vi også mange af. Når de er 25 år og yngre så vil kommunen helst have dem i uddannelse. Dem som vi har vil aldrig nogensinde på egen hånd, kunne gå ud og finde et sted de kunne være. Dørene skal sparkes ind. Og man kan sige at når vi laver en kontrakt i 13 uger så forlænges den kontrakt nogle gange med endnu 13 uger, hvor de prøver at finde praktik til dem.

(Sebastian begynder at snakke om deres samarbejde med Føtex – i posen).
Væsentlige han nævner i det her eksempel er at kandidater som har fået job igennem I posen, ville aldrig få et job igennem en normal Føtex job samtale fordi han har en meget konkret og direkt måde at tale på og forstår ikke det smalltalk og den måde man agerer på i en samtale. Så for ham er det vigtigt at han kan bevise at han kan varetage de her opgaver. Vi giver dem mulighed for at bevise at de kan udføre den konkrete opgave men at de ikke behøver at sælge sig selv eller tale sig til et job. Det kan være svært.

Me: nu nævner i nogle gange at de mennesker I får ind i jeres forløb aldrig ville få et job selv igennem en generel rekrutteringsproces: hvad tror i egentligt at det kan skyldes?
Lars: Han ville ikke kunne gå igennem den samtale. Han kan ikke sidde som vi gør her før han kender dig.
Sebastian: Når du er til en samtale skal du f.eks. kunne fortælle om dine kvalifikationer: hvad er du god til, hvad er dine største udfordringer. Det er spørgsmål han ikke kunne forstå og ikke kunne forklare så stopper samtalen allerede der.
Lars: Når vi kan lave samarbejde med Føtex så er det at Føtex er klar over at mennesket som sidder til samtalen har et specielt behov. Han ville aldrig, aldrig, kunne komkurrere med en som kommer fra et normalt jobsøgningskø. Aldrig. Og sådan er det bare. Der er så stor konkurrence at få et job, at dem som skal ansætte skal kunne have den indstilling at de vil gøre noget for en gruppe af mennesker. De ville aldrig nogen sinde kunne give de her mennesker de værktøjer der skal til at få dem ind men vi skal lukke dem ind. Når vi gør det og dem som åbner døren forstår at vi er forskellige så er det helt perfekt. Så får man fede oplevelser og ser at vi alle er forskellige. Men i en konkurrencesituation så niks. Arbejdsmarkedet er ikke så fleskibelt. I gamle dage så var der småjobs til landsbytossen som kunne varetage forskellige opgaver. Lige nu er konkurrencen så stor og man skal være på det bedste niveau rent uddannelsesmæssigt og svo videre. Der er helt masse evner som ikke går under de konkurrence parametre længere. De her fantastiske kandidater som vi har, det kan godt være at de har nogle begræsninger men de har tilgængæld også nogle fantastiske evner i andre sammenhænge. Det f.eks at være konkret opfattende. Vi skærer rigtig meget fluffy snak fra da de ikke forstå hvis man bare sniksnakker. Og Føtex kan finde ud af hvor godt det bliver at de skal være mere konkrete i kommunikationen. Grunden til at vi snakker ligenu er vel fordi at det her er et meget jomfrueligt område – det kan godt være at når Føtex har set de her mennesker i nogle år og kender til dem, så kan de blive selvkørende og begynde selv at køre det her. Men som markedet er på det her tidspunkt så får de kun jobs med støtte fra aktører som os. Eller andre rekrutteringsbureauer som specialiseres i den specifikke gruppe.
Sebastian: Det som vi typisk hører er at de sender ansøgninger men de ikke får noget svar. Men vi har årsager til at de ikke kommer til samtale. De har ofte lange pause peridoer så de ikke får lov til at komme til en samtale. De er ofte skridtet væk fra at kunne søge jobs selv.

3. **Me:** Har du en mening om, hvorvidt generelle rekrutteringsprocesser hjælper eller hindrer mennesker med autisme til at få jobs?
     a. Kan du uddybe?
Sebastian: Hvis det er jobsamtale hvor man skal sælge sig selv og tale i en halvtime er det ikke nok for de her mennesker. Det er helt klart en barriere for dem da de skal helt klart kunne bevise hvad de kan. Og se skal have en person som de er tryg ved som evt. kunne kommunikere de kompetencer den kandidat har. Jeg mener at det skal være et længevarende forløb.
Lars: Det kan være meget autodiktat hvad du kan. Du har ikke nødvendigvis noget papir på hvad du kan. Min påstånd er at selvom du kunne skrive et pænt CV og sende ansøgning så bliver du sorteret fra da du ikke har den formelle uddannelse til at bestride jobbet. Det er også

arbejdsmarkedet vi ser at man skal bevise at man kan et eller anden men det er ikke så væsentligt om man rent faktisk kan det – det er illusionen man skal bevise at man kan. De kommer aldrig nogensinde til en jobsamtale. Når man er sendiagnosteret så kan man have et CV med mange huller i. Man bliver ikke vurderet på de resourcer eller faglighed som man besidder, man bliver dømt på om man kan sælge sig selv og din faglighed og det kan de ikke. Han har et eksempel om en mand i jobcenter som stammede, hvor han fik at vide at det skulle han ikke gøre men han kunne ikke stoppe med at stamme så han måtte fortælle om det.

4. **Me:** Kan du forklare Dandelion metaforen, også i forhold til, om den kan overføres til andre virksomheder når de skal ansætte en person?

Sebastian: Den går ud på at den bliver set som ukrudt men hvis den bliver placeret det rigtige sted såsom i et køkken, kan den bruges til noget. Jeg tænker godt til dels at man kan overføre det fordi de kandidater som vi arbejder med har nogle kompetencer men de har også udfordringer og der er begge ting man skal være opmærksom på. Så hvis der en kandidat der er god til at gå i detaljer og koncenterer sig, så kunne han udføre f.eks. et repeititivt arbejde men de rigtige rammer skal også være til stede. Det kunne f.eks være fysiske rammer med at han sidder i et lille lokale. Det kunne også være støtte på arbejdspladsen, såsom mentor der kan støtte med dagligdagsting. Det som jeg ville sige, ja kompetencerne kan findes hos de her mennesker men den rette støtte skal også være til stede.

Lars: Man kan sige at vores oplevelse er at i udlandet har man mere afklaring på at der ligger et job derude men vi arbejder med at støtte mennesket i afklaring af mennesket og ultimativet ville være at afklare mennesket til et job. Man kan sagtens føre os ud og blive success. Hvad er det egentligt for et arbejdsmarked hvor den største potentiale findes. Det vil taler om her er den ene som er lidt stille, til den som er svært præget af autismen. De er så forskellige. Vi er meget forskellig alle sammen og vi siger tit at alle besidder lidt autisme i sig.

Appendix 5 – Interview Guides

The Four People with Autism

The Topics	The Questions
Experiences with the Danish Labour Market	Når det kommer til at søge jobs, hvad er din general erfaring med det danske arbejdsmarked? • Hvilke positive erfaringer kan du dele og negative erfaringer?
Job Obtainment	Søgte du selv det job du har nu? • Hvis ja, hvordan var din erfaring med hele ansættelsesprocessen, fra at du søgte jobbet indtil at du fik stillingen? • Hvis nej, hvordan fik du jobbet?
Job hunting experiences	Er det noget ved en ansættelsesproces du har svært eller nemt ved, i forhold til jobsøgning? • Hvis svært, uddyb • Hvis nemt, uddyb
The effects of job adverts	Efter din mening, når du har læst jobopslag, du er interesseret i, hvorvidt er du blevet påvirket eller ikke påvirket af kravene til de faglige kvalifikationer, i forhold til om du ville søge jobbet? • Hvis ja, bliver påvirket, så uddyb Efter din mening, hvorvidt er du blevet påvirket eller ikke påvirket af de personlige kvalifikationer jobopslaget kræver? • Hvis ja, bliver påvirket så uddyb
The effects of testing	Er du gået igennem en testproces i forbindelse med en ansættelsesproces, såsom personlighedstest eller andet? • Efter din mening, hvordan forløb det og hvordan gik det?
The effects of interviewing	Er du gået igennem en interviewproces? • Efter din mening, kan du forklare om du blev negativt eller positivt påvirket af at blive interviewet?
The effects of the autism diagnosis during job hunting	Kan du forklare, om autismen, efter din mening, har betydning for dig når du har søgt jobs?
Educational Level	Hvad er dit uddannelsesniveau?

Linda from NAI and Lars & Sebastian from Specialisterne

The Topics	The Questions
The process at NAI and Specialisterne	Kan du fortælle om forløbet hos det Nationale Autismeinstitut/Specialisterne, når I får mennesker i praktik eller i job?
Reasons for why people with autism seek jobs through supported employment organisations	Har du eksempler på årsager til, at folk ansøger jobs igennem jeres forløb? • Kan du uddybe eksemplerne?
Job hunting experiences for people with autism	Kan du komme med eksempler på nogle erfaringer, personer med ASF har haft med arbejdsmarkedet, i forhold til at søge job?
The effects of a recruitment process on people with autism	Har du fortællinger fra mennesker med ASF om der er noget ved en generel ansættelsesproces, nogle af disse personer har haft nemt eller svært ved?
Are MRPs hindering or assisting people with autism when applying for jobs	Har du en mening om, hvorvidt generelle rekrutteringsprocesser hjælper eller hindrer mennesker med ASF til at få jobs? • Kan du uddybe?
The diagnostic aspects of autism in juxtaposition to MRPs	Har du en mening om, hvorvidt der er nogle aspekter af det at være diagnoseret med ASF, der gør det nemt eller svært for disse mennesker at gå igennem en generel rekrutteringsproces?