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BY
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AALBORG UNIVERSITY
DENMARK

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by

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ENGLISH SUMMARY

The employment rate among people with disabilities is significantly lower than for those without a disability. While a range of different factors can influence employment disparity, this dissertation will focus on employers' recruitment practices. Previous research has shown that employers are reluctant to employ people with disabilities, which has often been explained by negative attitudes towards and concerns about people with disabilities. In this dissertation, I investigate how employers react to an applicant who discloses to be a wheelchair user, as well as the reasons behind their behaviour. The aim is to reveal how disclosing being a wheelchair user affects employers' recruitment practice and to explore different explanations and experiences of the recruitment process. I will methodically investigate this by combining a factorial survey experiment, a field experiment and qualitative interviews.

The factorial survey experiment tests employers' self-reported likelihood of hiring a wheelchair user, while the field experiment tests how employers actually react when they receive two similar applications for a posted vacancy in which one of the applicants discloses to be a wheelchair user. Besides testing the effect of disclosing being a wheelchair user, the two experiments also allow a methodical comparison, as both methods aim to identify unequal treatment but use two different dependent variables. The qualitative interviews aim to explore experiences of the recruitment process from the perspective of employers who were involved in the field experiment. This includes their perceptions and reactions when they read the application from the wheelchair user and when they decided which applicants to invite to a job interview.

The results demonstrate that the chances of being invited to a job interview (the field experiment) and the likelihood of employers hiring an applicant (factorial survey experiment) drop drastically when the applicant discloses that they are a wheelchair user. This result corresponds to findings in previous research. Like in other welfare regimes and labour markets, Danish jobseekers with disabilities are often excluded from the labour market. Several theoretical perspectives can explain the findings. In this study, status, stigma and ableism are included as possible explanations for wheelchair users being excluded from the labour market. The results also show that employers are concerned about accessibility and perceive accessibility differently. The way this perception affected their recruitment practice varied among the interviewees. Previous research on employers' perceptions of accessibility is generally sparse and this study contributes to an increased understanding of the concept of accessibility and its influence on the recruitment of wheelchair users.

Besides accessibility, the results also show that employers might be influenced by implicit bias when they are recruiting. The interviews reveal stereotypical beliefs and wheelchair users are described as more difficult to employ compared to other applicants. The rejection of wheelchair users is typically not a conscious choice, and employers often find it difficult to explain their decision. Some explain the rejection as a coincidence, while others question whether they themselves have an unconscious bias.

The overall findings of this dissertation demonstrate that wheelchair users might experience discrimination in recruitment. The employers do not express any intention to discriminate, and rejecting the wheelchair users might not be a conscious decision. Nevertheless, the labour market seems to have a discriminatory structure where wheelchair users are often rejected. From the employers' perspective, perceptions of accessibility and implicit bias may explain the unequal practice identified in both the factorial survey experiment and the field experiment.

DANSK RESUME

Personer med handicap har længe haft en lavere beskæftigelsesfrekvens end personer uden handicap. Selvom mange faktorer kan have indflydelse på beskæftigelsesgabet, vil jeg i denne afhandling fokusere på arbejdsgiveres rekrutteringspraksis. Tidligere forskning har vist, at mange arbejdsgivere er tilbageholdende med at ansætte personer med handicap og dette forklares typisk med arbejdsgiveres negative forventninger og bekymringer i forhold til produktiviteten blandt personer med handicap. I denne afhandling undersøger jeg hvordan og hvorfor arbejdsgivere reagerer, når de bliver mødt af en ansøger der nævner at være kørestolsbruger. Formålet er således at afdække både hvordan danske arbejdsgiveres rekrutteringspraksis påvirkes, når en ansøger nævner at være kørestolsbruger og yderligere at udforske mulige forklaringer på, hvilke udfordringer eller barrierer for ansættelse arbejdsgiverne oplever. Dette undersøges gennem en kombination af et survey eksperiment i en national arbejdsgiversurvey, et felteksperiment og kvalitative interviews.

Arbejdsgiversurveyen indeholder et eksperiment som tester arbejdsgivernes selvrapporterede sandsynlighed for at ansætte kørestolsbrugere, mens felteksperimentet demonstrerer hvordan arbejdsgiverne faktisk reagerer, når de modtager to ens ansøgninger, hvoraf den ene nævner at være kørestolsbruger. Foruden at demonstrere effekten af at afsløre et handicap i jobansøgninger, tillader de to eksperimenter også en metodisk diskussion. Begge eksperimenter tester effekten af at være kørestolsbruger i rekrutteringen, men anvender to forskellige afhængige variable. De kvalitative interviews inkluderer arbejdsgivere fra felteksperimentet og har til hensigt at afdække arbejdsgivernes oplevelse af rekrutteringsprocessen. Herunder hvilke tanker og forestillinger arbejdsgiverne gjorde sig, da de læste at den ene ansøger var kørestolsbruger og skulle beslutte hvilke ansøgere de ville invitere til en jobsamtale.

Resultaterne demonstrerer, at chancerne for at blive tilbudt en jobsamtale (felteksperimentet) og sandsynligheden for at arbejdsgiverne meget sandsynligt vil ansætte en ansøger (survey eksperimentet) falder drastisk, hvis ansøgeren nævner at være kørestolsbruger. Dette resultat korresponderer med tidligere undersøgelser og demonstrerer en eksklusion af kørestolsbrugere, som ikke er begrænset til en dansk kontekst, men eksisterer på tværs af kontekster, velfærdsregimer og arbejdsmarkeder. Flere teoretiske vinkler kan belyse dette og i afhandlingen inkluderes blandt andet status, stigma og ableism som mulige forklaringer på denne eksklusion. Resultaterne viser yderligere, at tilgængelighed på arbejdspladsen fylder meget blandt arbejdsgiverne. Men hvornår en arbejdsplads synes tilgængelig for arbejdsgiverne og hvilken effekt det har på deres rekrutteringspraksis varierer betydeligt i de kvalitative interviews. Arbejdsgiveres fortolkning af tilgængelighed er generelt sparsom i den eksisterende forskning og denne undersøgelse bidrager således med en udvidet forståelse af tilgængelighedsbegrebet og dennes betydning i ansættelsen af kørestolsbrugere.

Foruden tilgængelighed, viser resultaterne også, at flere arbejdsgivere kan være påvirket af implicit bias i deres rekruttering. Interviewene viser, at der eksisterer stereotype forestillinger om kørestolsbrugere, der italesættes som besværlige at ansætte, sammenlignet med ansøgere som ikke er kørestolsbrugere. Fravalget af kørestolsbrugeren er ikke nødvendigvis et bevidst valg af arbejdsgiveren, og nogle arbejdsgivere har svært ved at forklare, hvorfor de foretrak ansøgeren som ikke nævner et handicap. Nogle arbejdsgivere forklarer at valget af ansøgere kan være tilfældigt, mens andre sætter spørgsmålstegn ved, om de selv har en bias de ikke kendte til.

Resultaterne fra afhandlingen peger på, at kørestolsbrugere kan opleve en diskriminerende rekrutteringsproces. Arbejdsgiverne udtrykker ikke direkte hensigt om at diskriminere mod kørestolsbrugere og det er ikke nødvendigvis en bevidst handling. Der synes alligevel at eksistere en struktur på det danske arbejdsmarked,

som ekskluderer kørestolsbrugere. Fra et arbejdsgiverperspektiv kan både tilgængelighed på arbejdspladsen og implicit bias være forklarende faktorer på denne forskelsbehandling som er fundet i både survey- og felteksperimentet.

PREFACE

In recent years, I have had the pleasure of studying how recruitment practices are shaped, and it has been a journey into the world of human organisation and categorisation. This is a world that affects our current labour market, and it has been a rewarding and difficult journey, trying to grasp the logic and reasoning embedded within the recruitment practices of Danish employers. As a sociologist, I have been trained to study the social world of human interactions and I have enjoyed the opportunity to pore over this study for years.

This journey would not have been possible without my supervisor Thomas Bredgaard, who secured funding for this project through a grant from the Independent Research Fund Denmark (DFF grant 9130-00019B) and entrusted me with accomplishing the study. I would like to take this opportunity to say thanks to him and that I look forward to our future cooperation.

The study included a field experiment in which fictitious applicants applied for 600 vacancies twice. In total, 1,200 applications and CVs were thus sent out to Danish workplaces. It took one year to apply for all the vacancies and I could not have accomplished the field experiment without help from Andy Nielsen, Freja Johannesen and later also Emma Louise Hjort Jeppesen. You were all indispensable.

I would also like to thank the members of The Research Centre for Disability and Employment, the Centre for Labour Market Research (Carma), WISER, my co-supervisor Bjarke Refslund, who stepped in when I needed help and the PhD group for great cooperation, feedback, good advice and social fun.

Social research often involves people sharing their experiences and in my study, I relied on employers who were willing to talk to me and explain their recruitment

practice. So I'd like to extend a special thank you to all the employers who agreed to talk to me and help me understand how they recruit.

Another important group of people is all those who invited me to present results, who shared my findings and used them in their work. You have given my work a purpose and proved the importance of this field of research. Studying the social world matters, and it matters that we keep investigating human organisation.

I would also like to thank my family and friends for the support you have given me over all these years.

It is now coming to the end of 3½ years, and it is not fair to conclude that this summary and four articles is the only result of my journey. Non-material results that relate to knowledge, management, experiences, interesting discussions about human actions, scientific methods and lived experiences that I have had during these years have also been part of my journey. In particular, Rasmus Lind Ravn, Ditte Shamshiri-Petersen, Majbritt Kappelgaard Severin-Nielsen, Nanna Ramsing Enemark and Stine Rasmussen have provided many great discussions and important and helpful chats over the years. Even though it has been hard work, I will look back on these years with joy.

Contents

Chapter 1: Introduction

This dissertation examines Danish employers' recruitment practice in relation to wheelchair users. This is a group of people who still experience barriers to labour market entry, despite a labour shortage (ELA, 2023) and decades of political strategies to promote equal employment opportunities for people with and without disabilities (Krogh & Amby, 2020). Indeed, there is a great disparity in employment rates, and in Denmark, the employment rate among people with self-reported disabilities is 57.6% compared to 84.0% of people without disabilities (Larsen, M. et al., 2020). This amounts to an employment gap of more than 26.4 percentage points, which has been evident for many years (Larsen, M. et al., 2020). The employment gap is not limited to a Danish context, but is widely recognised (Grammenos, 2021; OECD, 2022). In the European Union (EU), the average employment gap between people with and without disabilities is 26.9 percentage points (Grammenos, 2021).

Today, work is not only a source of income and self-sustenance, but it also plays an important role in the formation of identity, self-realisation, well-being and social networks (Creed & Macintyre, 2001; Hoare & Machin, 2010; Leidner, 2006). Exclusion and labour market discrimination might result in not only a lack of individual benefits from employment, but the individual also becoming dependent on public unemployment benefits (Rees et al., 2014). As a result, people with disabilities who want to participate in the labour market might face exclusion, while workplaces miss out on competent employees and public expenditures increases.

Previous research has identified different factors that might influence the employment rate among people with disabilities. It is evident that individual supply-side factors like the type and degree of disability can reduce the employment rate among people with disabilities (Grammenos, 2021; Larsen, M. et al., 2022). Other individual factors include self-esteem and the use of a social network to gain employment (Thuesen &

Shamshiri-Petersen, 2020). Other researchers turn to the demand-side factors of the labour market to explain the employment gap. In this dissertation, I also examine the demand-side by focusing on employers' recruitment practices. It is crucial that employers are willing to employ people with physical disabilities, as employers are gatekeepers to the labour market (Bills et al., 2017; Lefcoe et al., 2023; Shakespeare, 2018). Previous research shows that while employers feel a sense of responsibility to employ people with disabilities, few employers actually do so (Bredgaard & Salado-Rasmussen, 2020). In this dissertation, I aim to investigate this discrepancy by examining employers' recruitment practice in relation to applicants using a wheelchair and to explore why employers act the way they do.

To the best of my knowledge, the recruitment practices of Danish employers towards jobseekers with disabilities has not previously been tested experimentally. Beatty et al. (2023) also stress the general need for more experimental research in disability and employment studies. Furthermore, the literature on employers' preferences in specific recruitment processes in relation to disability is sparse. As the following chapter reveals, there is a large body of literature on employers' attitudes towards people with disabilities in general and on employers' expectations and concerns about hiring an applicant with a disability. However, these attitudes are often detached from specific behaviour. In this study, I combine different methodologies to examine both *how* employers react during the recruitment process when faced with an applicant using a wheelchair and *why* they behave this way, before linking their attitudes and perception to their recruitment practice.

Research questions

Based on the introduction, this dissertation includes two research questions:

1. *How does an applicant's disclosure of being a wheelchair user affect employers' recruitment practice?*

2. *Why does the disclosure of being a wheelchair user have an impact on employers' recruitment practice?*

When testing the effect of being a wheelchair user on employers' recruitment practice, one can distinguish between employers' self-reported recruitment practice and their actual recruitment practice. Even though employers might have every intention to hire the best-qualified applicant irrespective of physical disabilities, these intentions might not be reflected in their actual recruitment practice. In this dissertation, I will examine employers' self-reported and actual recruitment practices towards wheelchair users through a factorial survey experiment (FSE) and a field experiment. Existing international literature shows that applicants with disabilities receive fewer invitations to job interviews than applicants without a disability (Ameri et al., 2018; Baert, 2016; Baert, 2018; Bellemare et al., 2018; Bjørnshagen & Ugreninov, 2021; Bjørnshagen, 2021). I therefore also expect this to be the case in Denmark and hypothesise that applicants who disclose that they are a wheelchair user will be less likely to be hired in the FSE and to receive fewer invitations to job interviews than applicants without a disability in the field experiment.

The second research question explores employers' reasoning when selecting candidates for the job interview. This part enables employers from the field experiment to explain their decision and considerations about whom to invite to a job interview and the potential barriers to employing wheelchair users. This is designed to link employers' attitudes and perceptions to the recruitment practice identified in

the field experiment. The two research questions are closely related and required a Mixed Method Research (MMR) design, which is addressed further in Chapter 4.

This dissertation expands on and adds nuances to the current knowledge of demand-side barriers to wheelchair users entering the labour market and contributes to the international literature with comparable experiments of the impact of disclosing to be a wheelchair user in applications. This allows an international comparison of results and enables a discussion of the impact of national contexts on employers' recruitment practice. Furthermore, this study provides new insight into how employers select candidates and expands the current knowledge within the field of research. I aim to combine behavioural research with an explorative qualitative approach to enable a link between employers' attitudes and recruitment practice. The aim is thus not limited to demonstrating discrimination in recruitment processes, but to understanding the complex practices and perceptions of employers during their actual recruitment process. This study further contributes to existing knowledge of how employers evaluate applicants in general and thus taps into the field of workplace diversity and employment opportunities for disadvantaged groups. From a broader perspective, it concerns the sociological study of social organisation and how this affects the recruitment practice of Danish employers. This study also aims to contribute with a comparison of two quantitative experiments that both examine employers' recruitment practice but using two different dependent variables.

This research only concerns wheelchair users, while other types of disability are beyond the scope of this dissertation. While there are a wide range of disabilities, wheelchair users can only represent one group, namely people with physical disabilities. Previous research has demonstrated that people with mental disabilities experience even more barriers to labour market entry than those with physical disabilities (Andersson et al., 2015). I therefore argue that wheelchair users are a critical case; if they experience labour market discrimination then we can expect that

people with mental disabilities will also experience it to at least the same degree (Flyvbjerg, 2010).

In this dissertation, I apply a relational understanding of disability and use the definition found in the WHO guidelines in the International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health (ICF). The ICF model defines disability according to the individual's ability to participate in everyday societal activities (WHO, 2013). In the present study, it is defined according to the ability to work. An important term from this perspective is *impairments,* referring to a dysfunction in the individual's body. When exposed to an excluding society (exemplified by employers' negative attitudes), the impairment can become a disability (WHO, 2013). This approach to disability is also referred to as the relational model of disability (Shakespeare, 2013; Thomas, 2004). The relational model defines disability from both a medical and societal perspective (Thomas, 2004). When investigating employers' recruitment practice and their explanation for the practice, I recognise the challenges an impairment can entail which is associated with the medical approach to disability and labour market structures excluding people with impairments from participation that is associated with the social approach to disability. The relational approach thus combines the two different perspectives on disability. In the relational approach, employers' attitudes and recruitment practice become essential in recruiting people with disabilities, which is not the case in the medical approach to disability. I acknowledge that several other approaches exist and the medical and social model of disability in particular should be mentioned here. The relational approach that I apply aims to combine these two contradictory approaches to disability by recognising that different bodily impairments can be seen as obstacles in the workplace, but also includes a critical approach regarding the recruitment processes and the social organisation as contributing factors to the construction of disability.

Overview of the dissertation

This dissertation includes four articles and a summary of the research project. In this section, I provide a brief overview of the chapters included in this summary, the key findings of the articles and a brief note on which research question each article relates to.

The summary includes five chapters. Chapter 1 introduces the overall context, aim and research question of the study. It also introduces the understanding of disability applied in this study. Chapter 2 describes the different contexts in which the present study is conducted and previous research on disability and employment. Chapter 3 addresses the theoretical framework of this study. It includes several different perspectives considered in the four articles that contribute to the overall research questions. Chapter 4 includes the methodology of this study. I place a great emphasis on this chapter as the validity of this study is highly dependent on the design of the two experiments. Finally, Chapter 5 includes a discussion and conclusions. In this chapter, I reflect on the empirical and theoretical implications and contributions and how the four articles contribute to answering the research questions. I also include a methodological discussion and policy implications of my findings.

The four articles contribute to the research question presented in the discussion. However, each article can be read independently.

Article 1: "Disability Disqualifies: A vignette experiment of Danish employers' intention to hire applicants with physical disabilities" (Shamshiri-Petersen & Krogh, 2020) examines employers' self-reported likelihood of hiring applicants who disclose that they are a wheelchair user. The study uses a FSE in a national survey of Danish employers. The experiment reveals that employers' self-reported likelihood of hiring

an applicant drops significantly when the applicant mentions that they are a wheelchair user. The disparity decreased when we isolated employers who stated that they had job functions suitable for wheelchair users and an accessible workplace, but the difference remained significant. The study shows that information about access to economic support increases the likelihood of hiring the applicant who discloses that they are a wheelchair user. This study is the first to answer the first research question.

Article 2: "Unequal? A Field Experiment of Recruitment Practices Towards Wheelchair Users in Denmark" (Krogh & Bredgaard, 2022) is an empirical article that examines employers' actual recruitment practice through a field experiment. In the field experiment, two fictitious applicants both with similar credentials but one disclosing that they are a wheelchair user apply for 600 real vacancies in Denmark. The data include 1,200 observations. The results demonstrate that call-back rates drop from 17.0% to 7.7% when the applicant discloses that they are a wheelchair user. The difference is statistically significant and shows that mentioning being a wheelchair user strongly influences employers' recruitment practice. We theorise that these findings suggest ableism plays a role. This article contributes to the first research question by showing *how* Danish employers actually recruit.

Article 3: "The Relationality of Workplace Accessibility – Employers' Perceptions of Accessibility and the Impact on Recruitment of Wheelchair users" (Krogh, 2023) is the first contribution to answer the second research question. This study includes 29 qualitative interviews with 34 employers from the field experiment in Article 2 and shows that many of the interviewed employers are concerned about accessibility when they are faced with an applicant using a wheelchair. Although many employers share this concern, it does not have the same impact on every employer's recruitment practice. This article thus divides the employers into three groups: physically

bounded, unconcerned and accommodating employers. Each represents a different understanding of accessibility and different reactions towards the wheelchair user. In combination, the three groups of employers demonstrate a relationality of accessibility. What is considered accessible differs among the employers, and I suggest that future research should place more emphasis on employers' perceptions of accessibility in the study of demand-side barriers to employing people with physical disabilities.

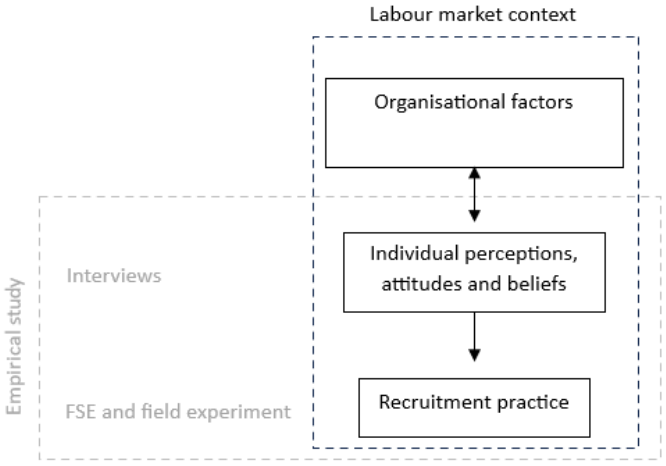
Article 4: "Employers' implicit bias against wheelchair users in recruitment" (Krogh, in review) is the second article that investigates the second research question. This article demonstrates that employers might have implicit bias against wheelchair users. Based on the systematic disparity identified in Article 2, this article investigates stereotypical beliefs and shows how employers articulate wheelchair users as inconvenient to employ. Furthermore, the interviews demonstrate an implicit bias. While some employers perceive the rejection of the wheelchair user as coincidental, others find it difficult to explain their own evaluation of applicants. The bias seems to be both unconscious and not endorsed by the employers. The findings illustrate that employers' recruitment practice is not only an objective evaluation of the applicant's skills but also includes unconscious actions and evaluations.

Chapter 2: Context and previous research

This chapter starts by introducing the Danish labour market, including a short description of how people with disabilities have previously participated in the labour market. It briefly addresses the historical setting of this study while introducing the current national labour market context. This is followed by a section that addresses the impact of organisational factors on individual recruitment. Finally, a literature review of employers' self-reported and actual recruitment practice and attitudes towards people with disabilities.

This chapter is structured as shown in Figure 1 below. On the macro level, the national labour market context is considered to be influential in terms of the organisation: all organisations are subject to the laws, policies and norms that define the Danish labour market. Furthermore, the organisational context is expected to influence the micro level, i.e. the individual employer. The individual employers are also expected to shape the organisational context. The perceptions, attitudes and beliefs of each employer are thus expected to be influenced by different contexts at different levels, and together they are all expected to affect the recruitment practice. Figure 1 also shows the unit of investigation of this study. That is the recruitment practice and employers' perceptions, attitudes and beliefs.

Figure 1: The relationship between contexts, attitudes and practices and the unit of investigation



In this chapter, I address the previous research in each of the three levels shown in Figure 1 and elucidate the labour market context, organisational factors and employers' recruitment practice and attitudes towards people with disabilities. I include both national and international research to shed light on the relationship between contexts and individual attitudes and practices. I empirically study the micro level; the individual employer's recruitment practice. However, to understand the individual recruitment practice, one must also understand the context in which the recruitment takes place.

The Danish Labour market context

The Danish labour market context differs from other national contexts, which allows for interesting comparisons of results to studies conducted in other countries. The context also affects the results, which must be interpreted with this context in mind.

People with disabilities have always been part of society, but their entry and participation in the labour market has changed throughout history (Bredgaard & Amby, 2020; Liisberg, 2011). At the beginning of the 20th century, people with disabilities were often excluded from the labour market of industrial societies due to the increased focus on productivity (Bredgaard & Amby, 2020). In the middle of the 20th century, in what has been characterised as the welfare regime, people with disabilities were entitled to public support but were still considered to be unable to work and were thus excluded from the labour market (Bredgaard & Amby, 2020). Instead, they were associated with the social security policies (Amby, 2015). In the 1990s, the active labour market policy (ALMP) was intensified with the introduction of activation policies (Bredgaard & Amby, 2020; Larsen, F. et al., 2001) a change in people's understanding of those with disabilities followed (Amby, 2015; Bredgaard & Amby, 2020). The ALMP redefined who was expected to support themselves (Nørup, 2020) and people with disabilities were instead expected to participate in the labour market. There have since been various political strategies aimed at including more people with disabilities in the Danish labour market (Krogh & Amby, 2020). These strategies developed separately from the labour market and social security policies, which seldom included people with disabilities as a target group. The political strategies have traditionally applied the policy instruments of information and economic means to introduce more people with disabilities into the labour market. These instruments have been viewed as compatible with the Danish labour market organisation, which has a long history of relatively autonomous employers due to the flexicurity model (Bredgaard, 2004; Bredgaard et al., 2017). Flexicurity refers to the

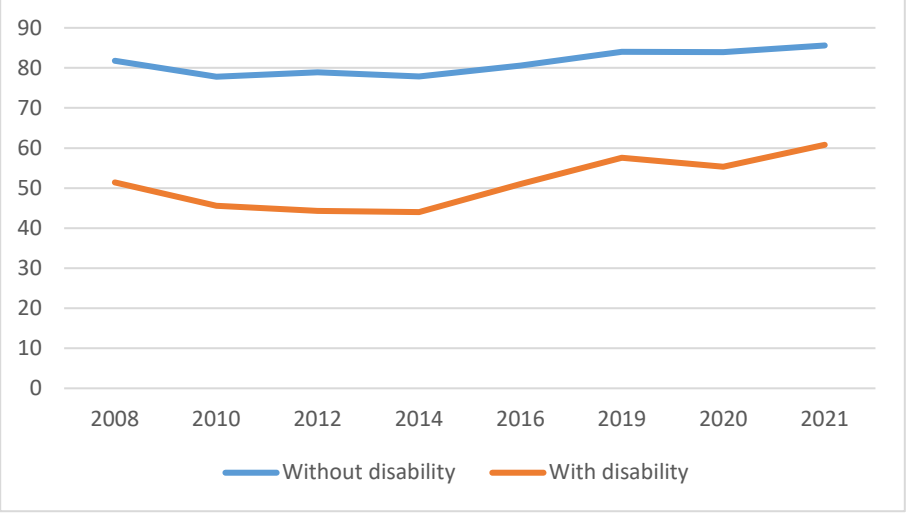
flexibility enjoyed by employers in terms of hiring and dismissal, as well as security for the unemployed (Bredgaard et al., 2017). Danish employers can easily recruit and dismiss employees without much public interference, while unemployed individuals are entitled to unemployment benefits. To employ or dismiss an employee, employers must present an objective argument for the decision.

The economic means that have been applied in the political strategies aimed at including more people with disabilities in the labour market include, for example, that Danish workplaces are entitled to apply for different compensation schemes when they hire a person with a disability. This can include personal assistance, physical aids and a wage subsidy for newly graduated employees with a disability. The strategies also involve information campaigns, and a recent example of is the "compensation card", which is still under evaluation. I will briefly discuss the "compensation card" in Chapter 5. Another example is the "job week" that was held in 2019, 2020 and 2021, when employers and people with disabilities met and shared their experiences. During the job week, consultants were further invited to share information about the different opportunities for compensation. The Danish government has only occasionally turned to regulation as a policy instrument to introduce more people with disabilities into the labour market and in 2005, the Danish government implemented an EU directive that prohibited discrimination due to disability in the labour market (Amby, 2015). The Danish anti-discrimination law that was implemented in 2005 prohibits employers from differentiating between people with and without disability when hiring or dismissing employees (The Ministry of Employment, 2008). However, that is the only protection for people with disabilities in the ordinary labour market. They can be dismissed just like employees without a disability if the employers present an objective cause. This means that the employers' attitudes and behaviour are crucial for applicants with disabilities who must compete on equal terms with applicants without disabilities. Danish employers are not obligated to employ applicants with disabilities. They are entitled to employ the person they believe best

matches the job description. As Danish employers are highly autonomous, it is even more important to understand their recruitment practice.

Despite the recent political strategies to include more people with disabilities in the labour market, the employment rate among people with disabilities is significantly lower than for people without disabilities (Larsen, M. et al., 2022). The Danish centre for social science research (VIVE) reports on the employment gap between people with and without self-reported disabilities and as shown in Figure 2, there has been a significant disparity among people with and without disabilities since reporting began in 2008. As disability is not included in any registers in Denmark, the employment rate is based on a self-reported disability.

Figure 2: Employment rates among people with and without self-reported disability in Denmark, 2008–2021. Percent.



Source: (Larsen, M. et al., 2022)

As shown in Figure 2, the disparity in employment rates has been rather stable from 2008 to 2021, with only small changes. However, the employment gap has slightly decreased since 2014, but remains around 25 percentage points. There is no register of people using a wheelchair in Denmark, but a study shows that the employment rate among people with major physical disabilities was 43.5% in 2020 compared to 29% among people with major mental disabilities (Amilon et al., 2021).

A final contextual factor related to the labour market that I will address is the Covid-19 pandemic. During the period that this study was conducted, Covid-19 had a strong influence on the Danish labour market (Bredgaard & Hansen, 2022). The first lockdown in Denmark happened in March 2020, three months into this dissertation project. During the following two weeks, the lockdown affected most of the Danish labour market (Statens Serum Institut, 2022). Over the next two years, consecutive lockdowns and re-openings, different rules and guidelines for gatherings, vaccines and Covid-19 certificates followed (Statens Serum Institut, 2022). This dissertation does not investigate how Covid-19 affected people with disabilities entering the labour market, yet the labour market context was highly influenced by Covid-19 when this dissertation was conducted.

Organisational factors influencing employment practices

In this section, I review the literature on organisational factors thought to impact the recruitment practice of individual employers. For example, Gelfand et al. (2012) argue that the organisation is part of the context in which the employers act and influence the hiring of applicants with and without disability. In addition, Vuletich and Payne (2019) demonstrate that the environment of the individual influences the recruitment

process, and in order to change recruitment decisions made by individuals, the environment in which the recruitment takes place has to change. Moore and Huberty (2023) also stress that the culture of a workplace has a strong influence on the norms and values of said workplace, thus influencing the recruitment practice. The norms and values of a workplace might be stated in organisational policies (Moore & Huberty, 2023; Stone & Colella, 1996) and at an empirical level. Araten-Bergman (2016), Bredgaard and Salado-Rasmussen (2020) and Erickson et al. (2014) demonstrate that workplaces with a corporate social responsibility (CSR) policy or other recruitment policies that include people with disabilities also are more likely to employ people with a disability. This demonstrates a relationship between written norms and values and individual recruitment practice. If the workplace encourages employing people with disabilities and has stated this as a workplace value, then it is more likely to have employees with disabilities compared to workplaces that do not have explicit statements regarding recruitment (Moore & Huberty, 2023). The sector and size of the company is also found to affect the recruitment practice of employers. Previous research shows that employers from both large and public workplaces tend to have more positive attitudes towards people with disabilities and marginalised groups in general (Bjornshagen, 2022; Llorens et al., 2007; Villadsen & Wulff, 2018). However, empirical research shows mixed results when investigating the effect of the workplace size and sector. For example, Bjørnshagen et al. (2022) found that large companies are more inclined to hire wheelchair users than small companies, but did not find the same results when investigating the inclination to hire applicants with a history of mental disability. In contrast, Bredgaard and Salado-Rasmussen (2020) found that small workplaces employed relatively more people with disabilities than large companies. Villadsen and Wulff (2018) investigated the difference in recruitment practice based on ethnicity in public and private workplaces, and discussed whether the public sector is generally more inclusive than the private sector, finding little evidence that employers from the public sector are more inclusive than employers from the private sector.

Both Erickson et al. (2014) and Bjørnshagen (2022) note that large companies are more likely to have hiring policies than small companies, and the likelihood of hiring people with disabilities might thus be an intersection of size, sector and policies affecting the norms and values of the workplace (Moore & Huberty, 2023; Stone & Colella, 1996).

In relation to the present study, the organisational context is important for understanding employers' behaviour. The methodology section shows how knowledge about the organisation is included in the interview guide.

Employers' self-reported and actual recruitment practice in relation to people with disabilities

Previous research has shown that both the national and organisational context can influence employers' recruitment practice, and I now turn to the self-reported and actual recruitment practice of individual employers.

A successful recruitment process is essential for workplaces that want to attract the best employees (Breaugh & Starke, 2000; Dessain, 2016; Rynes & Barber, 1990) and the recruitment process typically consists of three phases: 1) contact including job descriptions 2) choosing applicants for the job interview and the decision of hiring and 3) onboarding of the new employee (Larsen, H. H., 2014). Each phase involves decisions made by the employer. This includes, for example, decisions about the job description, and which applicants to invite to the job interview. The employers' recruitment practice is determined by the decisions that they make during each phase. In this study, I include phase two of the recruitment practice, i.e., who to invite to a job interview and who to hire.

To study recruitment practice in relation to applicants with disabilities, some researchers have turned to FSE, which examine a self-reported behaviour caused by different factors (Mcdonald, 2019). For example, FSE might include a vignette (description) shown to respondents in a survey and follow-up questions based on the description (Auspurg & Hinz, 2016). Andersson et al. (2015) investigated Swedish employers' willingness to employ applicants with different disabilities and found that employers are least likely to hire people with a brain injury and autism, and most likely to hire wheelchair users. The study presents a hierarchy of different disabilities that affect employers' willingness to recruit an applicant. Similarly, Dalgin and Bellini (2008) and Berre (2023) also used a FSE in a survey and identified a hierarchy in employers' perception of applicants with disabilities. They found that blind people and people with mental disabilities experience most barriers in recruitment. Fyhn et al. (2021) include various disadvantaged groups in their FSE and examine the likelihood of Norwegian supervisors and employers hiring different applicants. The results show that the likelihood of hiring an applicant with a physical or mental disability is significantly lower compared to applicants without any disabilities. However, studies of self-reported recruitment behaviour differ from the findings from actual recruitment behaviour. Due to e.g., social desirability bias (Wolter & Herold, 2018) employers can explicitly express their intention to employ applicants with disabilities in the survey without actually doing it. Petzold and Wolbring (2019) also showed that previous research found mixed evidence of what they define as the behavioural validity of FSE. In some studies, results from the self-reported behaviour correspond to behaviour in real life-settings, while other studies have found contradictory results between self-reported and actual behaviour (Petzold & Wolbring, 2019). Wulff and Villadsen (2020) used a field experiment and two FSE in a study on hiring discrimination in relation to people with different ethnicities. While the field experiment revealed significant disparities in call-back rates, the two FSE showed no effect or even a positive effect. The researchers suggest that the contradictory results might be due to the sensitivity of hiring discrimination. The few existing comparisons

of results from FSE and field experiments have raised questions about the ability of FSE to predict actual behaviour (Petzold & Wolbring, 2019).

To study actual recruitment behaviour, researchers have used field experiments. Field experiments have been used in various settings, but since the 1960s they have also been used to investigate employers' actual recruitment behaviour (Gaddis, 2018). These field experiments aim to detect discrimination by identifying differences in the number of job interview invitations for different groups of society based on e.g. gender, age, race, ethnicity, education or disability (Baert, 2018; Gaddis, 2018; Mcdonald, 2019; Rich & Riach, 2004). By sending applications for real vacancies with fictitious applicants varying on specific factors, differences in invitations to job interviews revealed employers' real recruitment behaviour during the initial stage of the recruitment process.

Baert (2018) identified eight field experiments related to disability and recruitment from 2005–2016. I was able to identify a further six recruitment and disability studies using field experiments (Ameri et al., 2018; Bellemare et al., 2018; Bjørnshagen & Ugreninov, 2021; Bjørnshagen, 2021; Deuchert & Kauer, 2017; L'Horty et al., 2022).

Common to all of the studies is that they identify discriminatory recruitment behaviour towards applicants with disabilities. Ameri et al. (2018) show that applicants with either a spinal cord injury or Asperger Syndrome received 26% fewer invitations to a job interview than applicants without a disability. When investigating the effect of being a wheelchair user in Canada, Bellemare et al. (2018) demonstrated a 49.7% difference in call-back rates between applicants who were wheelchair users and applicants who did not disclose any disability. This is a large difference, yet it corresponds to the difference found in a Norwegian study that also tested the effect of being a wheelchair user (Bjørnshagen & Ugreninov, 2021). The field experiments demonstrate that even though much research has shown the importance of education (Bills, 2003; Di Stasio, 2014; Smyth & Mccoy, 2011) and work experience (Humburg

& van Der Velden, 2015; Irwin et al., 2019) in gaining employment, this does not seem to have the same effect if the applicant mentions that they are a wheelchair user or have another disability. When applicants disclose that they have a disability, other factors that are normally perceived as important in recruitment lose some status. Instead, the disability becomes the predominant status and Berre (2023) articulates disability as a *"master status"* in recruitment. The field experiments demonstrate that the call-back rate drops significantly if the applicant mentions having a disability, even though the applicant has similar credentials to the applicant who does not disclose having a disability. It reveals that disclosing a disability has a strong influence on employers' recruitment practice.

Both field experiments and FSE examine recruitment behaviour; either actual behaviour or self-reported behaviour. However, neither study design is able to explain why people with disabilities are often rejected during the recruitment process. Other related literature has investigated explanations of employers' recruitment practice using another set of methods. These studies are addressed in the following section.

Employers' attitudes towards applicants with disabilities

In both surveys and interviews, employers agreed that they have a social responsibility to employ applicants with disabilities and stated that they did indeed want to employ people with disabilities (Bredgaard & Salado-Rasmussen, 2020; Kaye et al., 2011). According to the employers, they both should and intend to recruit people with disabilities. Yet the field experiments and FSE show that employers often reject applicants with disabilities. When attitudes and prejudice are investigated more thoroughly through survey questions, the results indicate that employers have concerns about applicants with disabilities. Murfitt et al. (2018) conclude in their

literature review that the main barrier to employing people with disabilities is the employers' negative attitudes and discriminatory organisational structures. This is also the conclusion of a literature review conducted by Vornholt et al. (2018). In addition, Bredgaard and Salado-Rasmussen (2020) demonstrate a correlation between attitudes and recruitment behaviour. Employers with more positive attitudes towards people with disabilities also tend to employ more people with disabilities. When reviewing the literature on employers' attitudes towards people with disabilities, three main concerns become apparent: concerns about qualifications, accessibility and additional costs.

Previous studies have shown that employers' express concerns about the qualifications of applicants with disabilities (Baker et al., 2018; Bonaccio et al., 2020; Burke et al., 2013; Jasper & Waldhart, 2013; Ju et al., 2013; Kaye et al., 2011; Lefcoe et al., 2023; Lengnick-Hall et al., 2008; van Beukering et al., 2022). Van Beukering et al. (2022) demonstrate in their literature review that several studies show that employers perceive workers with disabilities as incompetent. This includes expectations of a lack of competencies, qualifications and productivity. Others have found that employers are concerned about whether people with disabilities will require more training and supervision in the workplace (Bricout & Bentley, 2000; Peck & Kirkbride, 2001) and that employers tend to express concerns about the productivity of people with disabilities (Fraser et al., 2010; Gustafsson et al., 2013; Jammaers et al., 2016). In support of this, researchers from Sweden and Italy found that employers identify monotonous and less complex job functions that require low- or unskilled workers as being suitable for people with disabilities (Gustafsson et al., 2013; Nota et al., 2014). Applicants with disabilities thus risk being employed in job functions for which they are overqualified (Gustafsson et al., 2013; Jones & Sloane, 2010; Mousa, 2022) and missing out on job advancement opportunities (Lefcoe et al., 2023; van Beukering et al., 2022). Humphrys et al. (2022) also demonstrate that some people with disabilities in Australia found it difficult to meet the ideal worker norm as an

academic worker. The employers' demands did not match the ability of the individual. Instead of viewing obstacles as a structural barrier to employment, the study shows that they were viewed as an individual barrier and adjustments at the workplace were impossible (Humphrys et al., 2022).

Employers also expressed concerns that applicants with disabilities would not be able to accomplish the job functions due to inaccessible workplaces (Fraser et al., 2010; Houtenville & Kalargyrou, 2015; Jasper & Waldhart, 2013; Kaye et al., 2011; Lefcoe et al., 2023; Lengnick-Hall et al., 2008; Peck & Kirkbride, 2001; Shamshiri-Petersen & Frederiksen, 2017). In support of this, Munsell et al. (2022) found that 34% of American employers feared that an employee with a physical disability could not perform the job functions. Østerud (2022) also found that Norwegian employers are concerned about accessibility in the workplace and that they use it as a reason to reject applicants who use a wheelchair. The concern about accessibility is also evident in the Danish context. In fact, 48% of employers from public workplaces and 65% of employers from private workplaces consider their workplace to be inaccessible to wheelchair users or people using crutches (Dansk Handicap Forbund, 2018). A similar result is reported in Shamshiri-Petersen, Salado-Rasmussen & Krogh (2020).

Finally, employers are concerned about additional costs when hiring an applicant with disability. Additional costs might involve wages, adjustments to the physical environment or job tasks and costs relating to extra supervision or training (Baker et al., 2018; Bricout & Bentley, 2000; Deuchert & Kauer, 2017; Fraser et al., 2010; Gustafsson et al., 2013; Jasper & Waldhart, 2013; Kaye et al., 2011; Munsell et al., 2022; Peck & Kirkbride, 2001; Wilton & Schuer, 2006). However, a study in Norway and Sweden showed that the workplaces included in the case study did not need physical accommodations and received wage subsidies that would cover the salaries of employees with a disability (Kuznetsova & Yalcin, 2017). One researcher in the USA found that the cost of workplace accommodations is seldom very high; around

half of all accommodations are cost-free and 39% of the accommodations include a one-time average cost of USD 500 (Munsell et al., 2022). The studies imply that some of the concerns about additional costs may be unjustified. Danish law obligates employers to *"make reasonable adjustments at the workplace",* however, the employer may not be subject to *"excessive costs"* (Retsinformation, 2017: own translation). In addition, employers are entitled to apply for financial support if they require physical accommodations at the workplace. With this knowledge, one might assume that more employers would hire people with disabilities if they received financial support. Danish employers also report financial compensation as the most important factor in recruiting people with disabilities (Larsen, M. et al., 2020) and Berre (2023) found a small positive effect of information about economic wage subsidy in Norway. However, other studies evaluating the effects of financial support in Belgium, Canada and Switzerland show no effect of the support (Baert, 2016; Bellemare et al., 2018; Deuchert & Kauer, 2017).

Previous research thus identifies several different explanations of employers' reluctance to recruit people with disabilities, which can stem from stereotypical beliefs or negative attitudes and concerns. What is not clear from the previous research is how employers' attitudes, concerns and perceptions about people with disabilities are linked to their recruitment practice. The research questions in this dissertation take their departure from this knowledge and the theoretical framework presented in the next chapter, with the aim to link employers' recruitment practice to their attitudes and perceptions.

Chapter 3: Theoretical framework

This chapter discusses the theoretical framework included in this dissertation. Some of the approaches might seem closely related and involve a theorisation of how individuals meet and categorise each other and how this categorisation influences our practices in relation to others. However, the theories all offer different perspectives on the field of research. While some theories are included in only one of the four articles, others are included in several articles. Other theories are included in the articles where necessary. For example, in Article 3, which includes a review of previous research regarding physical accessibility and involves the concept of universal design.

I am inspired by various concepts with different scientific origins that can be tested through experimentation and structure the findings in other empirical data to identify four different origins of the included theories: 1) implicit bias that stems from cognitive psychology, 2) status and stigma, which both stem from microsociology, 3) discrimination theories with an origin in economics and 4) the ideal worker norm and ableism, which originate from feminist studies.

In the following sections, I will show that the theories all relate to each other even though they have different origins, and that they all provide different insights into the study of employers' recruitment practice. I have included all the different theories in order to answer both research questions. The employers might have different perspectives on the recruitment practice, and I find the inclusion of several theories about human organisation and categorisation to be useful in elucidating the findings.

I am aware that other theories, for example the concepts presented by Pierre Bourdieu and Howard S. Becker, could add other perspectives to the analysis, and including more theories would have shown the relationship among the large and interdependent "web" of theories that involve human practices. Although a discussion of the

relationship between different theories would be interesting, this was not the aim of my dissertation and I thus had to limit the number of theories included.

Productivity and discrimination

Much of the previous research concerning employers' attitudes towards people with disabilities addressed in Chapter 2 uncovered different assumptions by employers about the productivity of people with disabilities, and several studies found that employers perceive people with disabilities as being incapable of working (van Beukering et al., 2022). In Chapter 2, I also showed that many studies have identified discrimination against people with disabilities, especially studies using field experiments to detect discriminatory recruitment practices. Theoretically, the relationship between assumptions of productivity and discrimination is well described, and in the following section I will address different definitions and approaches to discrimination and show how productivity is embedded within these approaches.

The European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA) defines direct discrimination as follows. *"Direct discrimination will have occurred when: an individual is treated less favourably [1] by comparison to how others, who are in a similar situation, have been or would be treated [2] and the reason for this is a particular characteristic they hold, which falls under a 'protected ground' [3]"* (FRA, 2018:43). Direct discrimination thus includes three components, including unequal treatment in comparison to others in similar situations, based on protected characteristics. The field experiments and FSEs addressed in Chapter 2 aim to test this kind of direct discrimination by creating comparable applicants. Discrimination can

also occur in a subtle and indirect way, where the recruitment practice can appear to be objective but still disfavour certain individuals or groups (Khaitan, 2017).

In addition to direct and indirect discrimination, another distinction is found in the economic literature and concerns taste-based and statistical discrimination (Guryan & Charles, 2013; Neilson & Ying, 2016). Gary S. Becker is often referred as the founding figure of taste-based discrimination. In 1957 he published *"The Economics of Discrimination",* in which he argued for an economic approach to taste-based discrimination in the labour market (Becker, 1971). Taste-based discrimination in the labour market occurs when employers are faced with two applicants with a similar level of productivity (which is considered to be the market objective), but the employer prefers one candidate over the other due to personal characteristics (Becker, 1971). Productivity is the essential concept within taste-based discrimination and according to Becker, an employer thus discriminates *"by refusing to hire someone with a marginal value product greater than marginal cost; he does not discriminate by refusing to hire someone with a marginal value product less than marginal cost (...)"* (Becker, 1971:39). In Becker's theory of taste-based discrimination, the labour market forces have a significant impact on the definition of discrimination. It is not considered to be discrimination if an applicant with a marginal value product *less* than the marginal cost is rejected, even though the employer might harbour negative attitudes towards the individual. The employer's actions are still considered to be objective as it can be argued that they stem from the differences in productivity outcome and costs. However, discrimination occurs if the marginal value product is higher than the marginal costs and the employer rejects the applicant. In this case, Becker argues that the employer must have a preference or taste that disfavours the applicant (Becker, 1971). This might complicate the study of discrimination against people with disabilities, especially if the researcher has a medical or relational approach to disability. If disability is understood from either a medical or relational perspective, the marginal value productivity might in some cases be reduced by the

impairment (Michailakis, 2000; Shafer et al., 2019). If the disability affects productivity less than the marginal costs of the workplace, it is, according to the theory, not discrimination. Furthermore, if the employer expects additional costs due to extra supervision or physical accommodations which would increase the expected marginal costs to more than the expected marginal value productivity, it is unclear whether they are in fact discriminating. If the expected marginal cost is a market objective then it is not discrimination. However, assuming the expected marginal cost is subjective and based on negative attitudes and stereotypical beliefs, then it must be considered discrimination.

Arrow (1973), who also studied discrimination in the labour market from an economic perspective, also emphasises the importance of productivity in the definition of discrimination. Arrow includes what he defines as, *"imperfect information"* (Arrow, 1973:23), where the employer's perception of applicants' productivity, rather than their actual productivity, influences the recruitment practice. The notion of imperfect information relates to assumptions about decision-making theory also with an economic origin. A foundational assumption within economic behavioural theory is that the individual is rational and informed (Lagueux, 2010). Edmund Phelps (1972) suggests a statistical approach to discrimination, which also relies on imperfect information about workers. Phelps argues that employers who generally reject applicants due to characteristics like gender or ethnicity present statistical discrimination. The imperfect information about individual applicants might lead to the employer making general assumptions about e.g., applicants with disabilities as a group. The employers might harbour expectations about this group of people even though there is no evidence to support them (Schauer, 2017). Phelps explicitly states that statistical discrimination differs from the taste-based discrimination suggested by Becker, as it is not the employers' tastes that affect the recruitment process, but a general assumption about the productivity of a group, e.g., wheelchair users (Phelps, 1972). Again, the individual's productivity is of paramount importance. Phelps

distances statistical discrimination from the taste-based discrimination presented by Becker. However, Neilson and Ying (2016) found that taste-based discrimination can turn into statistical discrimination.

The different approaches to discrimination all involve unequal treatment of individuals or groups, and it is this unequal treatment that will be tested in the two experiments included in this dissertation. People with disabilities who experience unequal treatment might be expected to be less productive, a notion indicated in previous research of employers' attitudes. Yet the theories of discrimination are not very helpful when it comes to explaining why wheelchair users are assumed to be relatively unproductive or whether expectations of unproductivity can explain the unequal treatment. As already noted, theories of discrimination are based on an assumption about market objectives where the relationship between productivity and cost is a determinant for discrimination. While this might be one explanation, one can argue that other perspectives with an origin in sociology and psychology can provide an insight into how individuals categorise each other and how this affects the recruitment practice.

The ideal worker and deviance

The idea of a generic ideal worker norm has been developed in previous research on recruitment and carrier opportunities. The perception of the ideal worker often entails a stereotypical image of a white able-bodied male (Brown-Iannuzzi et al., 2013; Foster & Wass, 2013). In the 1990s, sociologist Joan Acker studied gender differences in the workplace and described an understanding of the ideal worker that strongly aligned the male embodiment (Acker, 1990). According to Acker, the ideal worker is a person with no obligations other than work, which enables them to stay long hours if

requested, meet deadlines and not have unpredictable obligations regarding home life or children. Foster and Wass (2013) suggest that high productivity is embedded within the notion of the ideal worker norm. A notion that Østerud (2022) also demonstrates in their study of employers' perceptions of applicants using a wheelchair in Norway. The ideal worker norm is thus related to an understanding of discrimination, even though it was developed within a feminist approach. As noted in Chapter 2, people with disabilities are often not associated with the ideal worker norm, but instead deviate from it. Theoretically, many studies of deviation are highly influenced by the Chicago School and interactionist approaches. Interactionist approaches study society from a microsociological context in everyday meetings instead of macro structures such as politics, economy and other institutions (Hannem, 2022; Harste & Mortensen, 2013). What occurs between individuals in everyday life can be understood as a reflection of the macro structures of society and this allows us to examine structural phenomena in social interactions between individuals. This perspective is also found in the work of Everett C. Hughes and his student Erving Goffman, who were both affiliated with the Chicago School of Sociology (Helmes-Hayes & Santoro, 2016).

In 1945, Everett C. Hughes published the paper *Dilemmas and Contradictions of Status,* in which he addresses the status of individuals (Hughes, E. C., 1945). The paper states that individuals categorise each other according to status and furthermore that status is associated with a set of expected characteristics of the categorised individual. Hughes describes the mechanism of human categorisation and some important factors. He argues that the white educated male often has the highest status— an early description that corresponds to the concept of the ideal worker norm. Disability could be another status that individuals use to categorise others, thus expecting them to have specific characteristics. According to Hughes, a consequence of categorisation is that individuals with a lower status are considered untrustworthy and will remain marginalised (Hughes, E. C., 1945). Hughes is especially concerned about the status given by profession, race, ethnicity and gender. He demonstrates how one status can

become a master status when individuals have different and conflicting status characteristics (van den Scott & van den Hoonard, 2016). During his time at Chicago University, Hughes taught many students who went on to become widely known within the field of deviation (Helmes-Hayes & Santoro, 2016). One of them is Erving Goffman. Even though Goffman presented a wide variety of theories and research areas (see e.g., Jacobsen & Smith, 2022), I only include the theory of stigma in this dissertation. This theory articulates the associations made by employers in relation to applicants with disabilities, and the concept of stigma presented by Goffman in 1963 has gained considerable international attention (Hannem, 2022; Link & Phelan, 2001).

According to Goffman, individuals who disclose a deviance like for example a disability can become stigmatised (Goffman, 1990). Although researchers have not fully agreed on what stigma is, Link and Phelan (2001) suggest that stigma is discrediting, negative associations that devaluate the stigmatised individual, resulting in a loss of status and unequal treatment (Link & Phelan, 2001). The loss of status and related consequences of unequal treatment are associated with the assumption of status found in the Hughes text mentioned above, even though Goffman rarely cites the work of Hughes (Helmes-Hayes & Santoro, 2016). The disclosure of disabilities or any other deviance is thus central in the theory of stigma, as people who have not disclosed a deviance are perceived as non-deviating. According to Goffman, individuals thus have both a virtual social identity and an actual social identity (Goffman, 1990). The theory of stigma does not predefine what is considered as normal or deviating, but relates to the interaction between individuals in which a characteristic is defined as deviating (Hannem, 2022). What is considered deviating might vary across different contexts. However, Goffman mentions that one type of stigma concerns *"abominations of the body – the various physical deformities"* (Goffman, 1990:4). Link & Phelan (2001) also notice that some individual characteristics seems to be pre-perceived as deviating, whereas other characteristics seem unimportant when arranging individuals within a hierarchy. People with

deviating bodies are at risk of being stigmatised, and this might be the case for wheelchair users. The employer might assign a stigma to the applicant when they disclose that they are a wheelchair user. In order to stigmatise others, one must hold some sort of power to be able to define what is deviating (Link & Phelan, 2001). In this study, employers are in a power relationship with the applicant in that they decide which applicants to invite to a job interview and which applicants to hire.

According to the theory of stigma, individuals are not necessarily aware of their own bias and expectations of others (Goffman, 1990; Link & Phelan, 2001). The social identity of a deviator is often unconsciously and automatically assigned by the stigmatiser. This dissertation involves a field experiment in which a fictitious applicant discloses that they are a wheelchair user. The applicant thus discloses a disability and might, according to Goffman's theory, become stigmatised by employers, thus resulting in unequal recruitment practice. The stigma theory as proposed by Goffman also relates to taste-based discrimination presented by Becker. Both theoretical perspectives involve individuals' taste or stigmatisation of the deviating individual resulting in unequal treatment.

The theories of the ideal worker norm and deviation, including status and stigma, provide an opportunity to interpret the findings. These theoretical concepts nuance the focus on productivity that is highly embedded within the literature on discrimination and suggest related ways to understand employers' recruitment practice. Hughes and Goffman also provide perspectives on the process of becoming or being defined as a deviator more than they focus on the outcome of discrimination, which is the case for Becker.

Implicit bias

Even though implicit bias stems from cognitive psychology, there are several overlaps with the theory of stigma. Stigma has its origin in microsociology and is a process that involves unconscious and conscious biases in human interactions (Link & Phelan, 2001) Implicit bias emphasises how the individual mind automatically makes unconscious judgements about other individuals based on stereotypical beliefs (Clarke, 2018; Frankish, 2016). Both stigma and implicit bias might lead to unequal treatment of the stigmatised individual and thus relate to the theories of discrimination, although they seem more subtle than direct discrimination.

There has been much research on implicit bias, but it is still not clear in the literature what exactly is meant by "implicit" (Holroyd et al., 2017). Holroyd et al. (2017) identify three different understandings of "implicit": 1) implicit as unconscious, 2) implicit as uncontrolled and 3) implicit as unendorsed. Biases that are implicit might therefore differ and can include the individual being unaware of their own bias, not being able to control the bias or not endorsing the behaviour that the bias influenced. According to Frankish, implicit bias concerns the manifestation of uncontrolled, automatic behaviour towards other people based on negative stereotypical beliefs (Frankish, 2016). Within this understanding, human interactions are made up of both controlled and uncontrolled behaviour. The uncontrolled or automatic processes are not necessarily negative. They can create flow in people's everyday lives as they do not have to rethink every social behaviour but can rely on previous experience and routines (Greenwald & Krieger, 2006; Whysall, 2018). However, with implicit bias, the unconscious and uncontrolled biases tend to include negative behaviour (Holroyd et al., 2017). This can include employers' evaluation of an application, where due to unconscious automatic stereotypical beliefs, the applicant is rejected despite having the right credentials. Within the theory of implicit bias, it is assumed that all interactions between individuals include stereotypical beliefs that help navigate the

conversation. However, stereotypical beliefs can become too simplistic and disfavour certain groups in society (Whysall, 2018). In this sense, implicit bias is a bias that the individual is not aware of, but still influences their behaviour towards other individuals in a disfavourable manner. Greenwald and Krieger (2006) include the concept of in-group bias, referring to individuals having more trust in people who are considered to be similar to themselves, i.e. the "in-group". This is a similar consideration to that suggested by Hughes.

When establishing what implicit bias is, the question is how to measure bias that the individual is not aware of themselves. While explicit bias might be captured in direct questions in surveys and interviews, this is not always the case when studying implicit bias. Implicit bias is often quantitatively tested using indirect methods, for example the Implicit Association Test (IAT), the Go/no-go association task (GNAT) and the Affect Misattribution Procedure (AMP) (Brownstein & Saul, 2016; Ratliff & Smith, 2021). However, other researchers have approached implicit bias qualitatively (Trachok, 2015). The qualitative approach can reveal the stereotypical beliefs individuals are expected to have. Whereas quantitative measurements demonstrate systematic bias against groups of individuals, e.g. based on skin colour, gender or disability and assuming that stereotypical beliefs are the causative factor, a qualitative approach to measuring implicit bias can show how stereotypical beliefs manifest in real-life settings. This is discussed further in Chapter 5 and in more detail in Article 4.

Ableism

The concept of "ableism" is frequently used in the literature and carries a variety of meanings (Campbell, 2019). According to Campbell, ableism is an epistemological

condition of the social world. Ableism turns disability studies upside down, and Campbell explains ableism as a landscape that communicates the culture and norms of society (Campbell, 2009). By focussing on ableism instead of disablism, the researcher dives into the norms of normality, the norms or imagination as Campbell says, that defines ableness and able-bodied. Campbell defines ablism as a:

"…system of causal relations about the order of life that produces processes and systems of entitlement and exclusion. This causality fosters conditions of microaggression, internalized ableism and, in their jostling, notions of (un) encumbrance. A system of dividing practices, ableism institutes the reification and classification of populations. Ableist systems involve the differentiation, ranking, negation, notification and prioritization of sentient life." (Campbell, 2019)

Ableism is thus a process rather than an outcome. Ableism is the structure of society in which norms of ableness and able bodies are reflected.

Campbell suggests a feminist origin of ableism (Campbell, 2009) and in that sense, the concept is related to that of the ideal worker. Like the concept of the ideal worker, ableism refers to a set of understandings about human qualities, where the abled bodied are theoretically superior.

The shift from disability to ability is important. According to Campbell, it is redundant to distinguish between those who are "able" and "disabled", and it is not appropriate to assume that ableism is simply a set of negative attitudes towards those who are presumably disabled (Campbell, 2019). Instead, ableism is an epistemological assumption regarding the social order, which includes all kinds of relationships. The structural approach to ableism offered by Campbell provides an understanding of what to investigate and how to conduct studies concerning disability.

Wolbring also includes the process in his definition of ableism, but focusses on prejudice, attitudes and discriminatory behaviour towards those defined as less able

than the species-typical body (Wolbring, 2012). In this sense, the concept of ableism is closely related to "handicapism" addressed in 1977 by Bogdan and Birklen (Bogdan & Biklen, 1977). The concept of handicapism and ableism refers here to a set of negative attitudes towards people with disabilities, and promotes unequal treatment of the individual. The negative attitudes are rooted in cultural understandings of the species-typical body and hence in the understanding of people whose bodies differ from this understanding. Wolbring (2008) compares ableism to other 'isms' like ageism, sexism and racism, which, according to Wolbring, all consists of two components: something valued in society and something that is not valued in society. Ableism also includes these components and reveals how ability (e.g., individual productivity) is valued in society (Wolbring, 2008). Wolbring (2008) clearly refers to the theory of stigma: *"This preference for certain abilities over others leads to a labelling of real or perceived deviations from or lack of 'essential' abilities as a diminished being, leading or contributing to justifying various other isms".* Like in stigma theory, the labelling of individuals involves a set of negative expectations based on certain characteristics. According to Wolbring (2008), ableism is the umbrella-concept and articulates the preferred values and norms of society. The concept is thus superior to sexism, ageism, racism and other isms. Ableism articulates that some individual characteristics are generally more valued than others in society.

This dissertation draws on the understanding of ableism offered by Campbell and uses the theory to articulate the structures and norms of society. I find the approach offered by Wolbring (2012) to be compatible with Campbell's approach. If society includes ableist structures that are more complex than prejudice and attitudes, as Campbell notes, then the outcome might also be prejudice, negative attitudes, labelling and discriminatory behaviour, as Wolbring suggests. This understanding of ableism is closely related to the stigma theory, even if the theoretical approaches have different origins.

Together, the included theories of discrimination, the ideal worker norm, deviance, implicit bias and ableism all provide a vocabulary that helps us to understand and structure the findings in the data. The theories not only structure the findings but are also helpful in designing the study and collecting the data. Although the empirical study concerns employers' recruitment practices, attitudes and beliefs, the theories relate to all the different levels that are included in Figure 1. As previously described, ableism relates to both the macro and micro level, whereas stigma empirically relates to the micro level, yet contributes to an understanding of the macro structures in society. Implicit bias relates to the micro level and how individuals think and act. As shown in Figure 1, all levels influence each other and I thus find it necessary to operate on a macro, meso and micro level to be able to understand the individual recruitment practice.

Chapter 4: Research design and methods

This study involves three different methods. While the first research question is addressed by a national survey experiment and a field experiment, the second research question is addressed by qualitative interviews with employers. The interviewees are employers participating in the field experiment that linked the attitudes and perceptions of employers to their recruitment practice. The combination of methods requires a Mixed Method Research (MMR) design as it integrates two different methodologies with different epistemological and ontological assumptions. This chapter addresses the research design and methods.

It is widely recognised that MMR increases the validity of findings (Harrison et al., 2020), but there is much discussion in the academic literature about what MMR actually entails (Creswell, 2010; Denzin, 2012; Giddings & Grant, 2007; Johnson et al., 2007). The understanding of MMR used in this study is consistent with the methodological definition offered by Johnson et al. (2007). By combining methods, the researcher also combines different methodological assumptions or viewpoints including ontology and epistemology. The interaction between qualitative and quantitative methods in MMR can include a primary and secondary approach and it can be argued that this is a predominantly quantitative mixed study. The qualitative investigation of employers depends on the field experiment, whereas the field experiment and FSE are independent of the qualitative research. The study is therefore based on a quantitative study, followed by a qualitative exploration. Without the quantitative field experiment, there would be no qualitative study. This gives the quantitative method precedence in this particular study. The design used for this study can be described as an explanatory sequential design and can be visualised as QUANT (factorial survey experiment) → QUANT (field experiment) → qual (interviews) (Harrison et al., 2020). The explanatory sequential design is characterised by a departure within quantitative data, followed by qualitative data collection and an

analysis that aims to explain the findings from the quantitative data (Harrison et al., 2020). The capital letters in the visualisation show that the quantitative methods take precedence and the arrows demonstrate the sequential data collection (Schoonenboom & Johnson, 2017). None of the methods were used at the same time.

The literature on MMR also discusses *how* to combine the methodological differences of qualitative and quantitative research rooted in different philosophical assumptions (Creswell, 2010; Johnson et al., 2007). A common understanding of the MMR paradigm is that it is based on the philosophy of pragmatism (Creswell, 2010; Denzin, 2010; Johnson et al., 2007; Onwuegbuzie & Leech, 2005; Taylor, 2013). Pragmatists argue that qualitative and quantitative methods are simply data collection tools and therefore not tied to specific epistemologies and ontologies (Onwuegbuzie & Leech, 2005). As argued previously, I find epistemology and ontology embedded within the methods, and the design I use is aligned with the situationalist view (Onwuegbuzie & Leech, 2005; Rossman & Wilson, 1985). Unlike pragmatists, situationalists argue that there are differences between qualitative and quantitative methods, but that the two are complementary. Situtionalists further argue that some questions call for quantitative research, while others call for qualitative research, and both methods are valuable (Onwuegbuzie & Leech, 2005; Rossman & Wilson, 1985). The first research question in this study calls for quantitative measurements, whereas the second calls for a qualitative method that allows us to understand the perspectives of the interviewees.

In the following sections, I address the factorial survey experiment, the field experiment and the interviews. I place great emphasis on the methodological descriptions to ensure the transparency of my design.

Factorial survey experiment

I used data from a national employer survey conducted in November 2018. The survey included an experiment and questions about the respondents' recruitment experience, experience with employees with disabilities, attitudes towards people with physical disabilities, knowledge about public compensation schemes when hiring people with disabilities and the experiment itself. The survey had a response rate of 41% with 1,901 full responses. The survey can be considered representative of the population of Danish employers.

Aim of the factorial survey experiment

A FSE is an experimental method that allows the researcher to test the effect of different variables (Auspurg & Hinz, 2016). The method evolved in the 1960s, but was systematically used as a method in the 1980s, in particular by Peter Rossi and Steven Nock (Wallander, 2009). FSE were designed to measure individual judgements that could affect behaviour, and the method evolved into a study of behavioural intentions or self-reported actions (Petzold & Wolbring, 2019; Wallander, 2009). FSE include a tailor-made description or vignette that is shown to the respondents with follow-up questions. In labour market research, FSE has been used to identify influential factors in recruitment processes and decisions (Mcdonald, 2019). By creating fictitious vignettes describing a recruitment situation, the applicants and the context, the researcher can test how different factors affect the respondents' answers. One advantage of FSE is that they combine an experiment testing the effect of randomised factors and a survey that can be distributed to large populations relatively easily (Auspurg & Hinz, 2016). While the experimental approach is expected to ensure internal validity, distribution to a large population can ensure high generalisability (Petzold & Wolbring, 2019).

The vignettes can include several factors, also called dimensions, that the researcher wants to test, and each dimension might include several levels (Auspurg & Hinz, 2016). The full combination of included dimensions and levels is called the vignette universe (Auspurg & Hinz, 2016). To be able to identify important dimensions to include in the vignettes, a thorough reading of the existing literature is required.

This study only includes wheelchair users in the disability dimension. Other researchers conducting FSE within the field of disability and employment may include several levels of the disability dimension, see for example Andersson et al. (2015), who aimed to test the effect of different kinds of disability on employers' recruitment practice and thus included seven types of disability (Andersson et al., 2015). Berre (2023) also includes several different types of disability. The level of each dimension is not always given but depends on the aim of the study. This study compares wheelchair users to a control group for whom no disability is mentioned. Being a wheelchair user is thus not compared to other types of disabilities.

This study involves five vignettes: one vignette to test each dimension and a control group. In this design, known as a between-subject design, each employer only receives one vignette (Atzmüller & Steiner, 2010). In mixed and within-subject designs, each respondent can be presented with several vignettes, which would allow us to examine the effect for each of the respondent's replies (Atzmüller & Steiner, 2010). The design used for this study instead tests the effect of being a wheelchair user between employers. Birnbaum (1999) is critical of the between-subject design and demonstrates that it requires the researcher to carefully describe the context included in the vignettes to ensure they are identical and comparable.

All five groups included in this study received a baseline vignette and additional information was added for each experimental group (Table 1). The different information allowed us to test the effect of being a wheelchair user, information about economic compensation, reorganisation of work tasks and recommendations from the

public employment service (PES) in a comparable context described in the baseline. The test of employers' self-reported likelihood of hiring a wheelchair user compared to an applicant that does not disclose having a disability is closely linked to the theoretical framework presented in Chapter 3. As mentioned in Chapter 3, the concept of unequal treatment is embedded within all the theoretical perspectives. Unequal treatment is the articulated outcome of discrimination and is often the result of status loss, stigma, implicit bias and ableism. This experiment aims to test whether we can detect unequal treatment of applicants based on being a wheelchair user and thus test the overall underlying theoretical assumption of inequality in labour market entry for people with physical disabilities.

Table 1: Included vignettes

	Baseline vignette *Imagine a situation in which you are going to hire a new employee. A person applies for the job and states that they have a few years of experience in the industry and have the educational background you require. The applicant is positive, energetic, and a hard worker.*				
Vignette-group	Control group	Experimental group 1	Experimental group 2	Experimental group 3	Experimental group 4
Information about disability **Additional information**	Baseline vignette	Baseline vignette + *Furthermore, the applicant tells you that they are a wheelchair user,* + *which requires some adjustments in the workplace.*	Baseline vignette + *Furthermore, the applicant tells you that they are a wheelchair user,* + *which requires some adjustments in the workplace, but it is possible to apply for financial compensation.*	Baseline vignette + *Furthermore, the applicant tells you that they are a wheelchair user,* + *which requires a minor reorganisation of work.*	Baseline vignette + *Furthermore, the applicant tells you that they are a wheelchair user,* + *which requires some adjustments in the workplace. The PES recommends hiring the applicant.*
Factor captured by the additional information		Disability	Financial compensation	Workload	PES recommendation

(Shamshiri-Petersen & Krogh, 2020)

A follow-up question asked the respondent: “on a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 being very likely and 5 very unlikely, how likely is it that you would hire the applicant?”

This question enables the researcher to track changes in employers’ self-reported likelihood of hiring the fictitious applicant in the hypothetical recruitment situation described in the vignette across the five groups.

Construction of the vignettes

As already stated, constructing the vignettes and deciding which dimensions to include involved a thorough reading of the existing literature (Wallander, 2009). The construction of the vignettes thus relies on the findings in Chapter 2 and relates to the internal validity of the study (Auspurg & Hinz, 2016; Hughes, R. & Huby, 2004).

The control group received the baseline vignette and no further information. The control group therefore tested the effect of the baseline vignette to which all four experimental groups were compared.

The first experimental group received the additional information that the applicant is a wheelchair user. Based on previous findings, we expected that this information would decrease the self-reported likelihood of hiring the applicant.

Experimental group 2 received information about financial compensation. As mentioned in Chapter 2, previous research found that employers often have financial concerns about hiring an applicant with a disability. We expected that information about financial support would increase the self-reported likelihood of hiring the wheelchair user compared to experimental group 1.

The financial concerns identified in the previous research also related to employers' concerns about the workload of other employees. This inspired us to create a situation that tested the effect of minor changes in workload.

The fifth vignette included a recommendation from the public employment service (PES). In Denmark, the PES is expected to balance labour supply and demand, and this last dimension aimed to identify the effect of recommendations from the PES.

The included vignettes are rather short and the baseline is generic as it should be relevant to employers from various industries and sectors. The length of vignettes can vary and include different benefits and challenges (Hughes, R. & Huby, 2004). If the vignettes are too long, respondents might lose interest and skip ahead, but if the description is too short, the respondents will not have enough information to make their answers comparable. Another important factor when constructing vignettes is that they should be realistic (Hughes, R. & Huby, 2004). We considered whether employers would find the recruitment situation realistic, despite being hypothetical.

All groups received the baseline vignette to create an identical and comparable context. As Birmbaum (1999) notes, using a between-subject design might generate incomparable results, and the ability to ensure validity depends to a great extent on the comparability of contexts and thus on the construction of the vignettes. The baseline vignette creates a comparable situation and additional information is only added within each experimental group.

The respondents and analysis

Only employers from workplaces with three or more employees were included in the survey. Furthermore, production unit numbers (P-numbers) were used to identify workplaces with which the employers were affiliated. A P-number is a unique

identifier that refers to the location of the workplace, rather than the company itself. If a company has several locations, like for instance a supermarket or a national or international company with offices in different cities, several employers within the same company could be included in the survey. This strategy was used as the survey targeted specific employers who were responsible for employment.

Table 2: Respondents by sector and size

Variable	**Percent sample (percent population)**
Sector	
Public workplaces	13.4 (13)
Private workplaces	86.6 (87)
Size of the workplace (p. nr.)	
3–9 employees	57.9 (58)
10–19 employees	19.8 (20)
20–49 employees	14.6 (15)
50–99 employees	4.7 (5)
100–200 employees	2 (2)
200+ employees	1.1 (1)

Table 2 shows that the respondents widely correspond to the study population based on sector and size of the workplace. The size of the workplace is the number of employees at the specific location, which can be fewer than in the company as a whole if the company has several locations. The results of the FSE were run both with and without weighting to test whether the differences between sample and population influenced the results. This was not the case and the results presented in Article 1 do not include a weighting.

All respondents were randomly assigned a vignette and all were asked the same follow-up question. The randomisation of employers into the vignettes is an aspect of error control that aims to separate any systematic influence from factors other than the applicant mentioning they are a wheelchair user (Atzmüller & Steiner, 2010; Hinkelmann, 2015; Lawson, 2014). Without the randomisation, employers with certain characteristics could be assigned the same vignette and the results could thus be confounded. If, for example, employers from private workplaces were assigned one vignette and employers from public workplaces were assigned another then any statistical differences might not be caused by differences in the vignettes, but rather by the sector. This will be further elaborated in relation to the field experiment design.

The overall aim of the FSE is to investigate how disclosing being a wheelchair user affects employers' self-reported likelihood of hiring the applicant. This involves a comparison of the control group and experimental group 1. This test is the first of two approaches to answering the first research question. Furthermore, the FSE aims to test the effect of different dimensions, which previous studies have shown to affect the recruitment of people with disabilities. Based on the previous literature presented in Chapter 2, we developed several hypotheses to test in the FSE. These are all described in Article 1.

To test the differences across the five groups, we used an analysis of variance (ANOVA) in the statistical program SPSS.

Results from the FSE were compared to results from a field experiment aiming to measure actual recruitment practice instead of a self-reported likelihood. Previous research comparing the results of FSE and field experiments have presented mixed results on comparability (Petzold & Wolbring, 2019). While some studies show similar results when applying both methods, other studies show contradictory results. In Chapter 5, I address the comparability of the results of the FSE and field experiment.

The field experiment

Like the FSE, the field experiment is closely related to the concept of unequal treatment of applicants and thus has a clear theoretical and deductive drive.

Types of field experiments

This study involves a matched within-subject design, where each employer receives two (or more) applications (Larsen, E. N., 2020). The two applications differ in the varying factor affecting the employers' practice, but the applicants are otherwise similar. In the matched within-subject design the circumstances are constant as both applicants apply for the same job with the same employer, which minimises some of the lurking variables (Lahey & Beasley, 2018). The matched within-subject design is frequently used when only one varying factor is being studied. If the researcher is interested in testing several factors, the design requires that the employer receives more than two applications. Besides a greater risk of exposing the experiment, a greater number of applications sent to the same employer would create internal competition for the job, lowering the chances of each applicant being invited to a job interview (Larsen, E. N., 2020). In cases with several varying factors, an unmatched between-subject design might be more suitable. The design of this study is shown in Figure 2.

Figure 2: Design of the field experiment

Figure 2 shows the unit of investigation, i.e., the effect of being a wheelchair user on employers' recruitment practice. The basic term of experimental logic appears clearly in the figure, where a treatment is given to one applicant. The other applicant is included as a control. The two applicants are comparable but only the treatment applicant mentions being a wheelchair user. The use of a wheelchair is the only varying factor and the analysis is expected to show whether this factor affects the call-back rate.

I applied for 600 job openings with both a treatment applicant and a control applicant. This resulted in 1,200 observations in total. Applications for the 600 jobs were sent between May 2020 and May 2021.

The number of observations required was identified through a power analysis (Lahey & Beasley, 2018). The 600 included vacancies were all posted positions. By law, open positions in the public sector must be posted, yet this is not the case for open positions in the private sector. This could potentially create a bias in the data, as not all positions in the private sector are posted online (Bertrand & Duflo, 2017).

The field experiment has the same experimental logic as addressed in the FSE and includes the same independent variable (being a wheelchair user in a recruitment situation), however, the two experiments include two different dependent variables. The dependent variable in the FSE is employers' self-reported likelihood of hiring the fictitious applicant, while the dependent variable in the field experiment is an invitation to a job interview. The two experiments both aim to measure the effect of

being a wheelchair user on the recruitment process, but they measure the effect on two different decisions of the process. The dependent variable in both experiments involves two different limitations. As the field experiment only identifies the disparity in call-back rates, disparities in previous or subsequent processes of recruitment are not included in the field experiment (Villadsen & Wulff, 2018). This limitation therefore affects the interpretation of the results as it is not possible to draw conclusions on the level of unequal recruitment in general, only in part of the recruitment process. The FSE can, however, indicate the level of unequal treatment in the hiring decision, but not in the stages of recruitment prior to this. The responses that the fictitious applicants received from the employer in the field experiment sometimes indicated unequal treatment that was not included in the data. One example of this is in the response e-mails that the two applicants received on the same day, which had very different wording: the wheelchair user was rejected, while the other applicant was informed that the employer would now review all the applications before they decided who should be invited to a job interview. As a result, the wheelchair user seemed to be rejected without being fairly compared to the other applicants. Neither of the applicants were invited to a job interview and both were registered as »not invited to a job interview« in the statistics shown in Article 2. They are thus interpreted as being treated equally in the statistics. However, the response from the employer demonstrated that the two applicants were not evaluated as equals. This is a type of limitation that has been discussed in previous research (Bertrand & Duflo, 2017).

The results of the field experiment were analysed in RStudio using the lm function. As the only significant result in the field experiment was the difference between applicants who disclosed that they are a wheelchair user and applicants that did not mention any disability (i.e., not sector, gender or type of job), I did not apply any further analysis of the results.

Construction of the applicants

A field experiment of employers' recruitment behaviour included fictitious applicants that differ on one or more factors. Several aspects must be considered when designing the applicants as they should be comparable—especially in terms of productivity factors—yet still differ just enough so as not to expose the experiment. Furthermore, the applicants must be designed to minimise the lurking variables related to the applicants (addressed in the following section). The applicants each have their own CV and application in which they specify important personal characteristics. In this section, I present the fictitious applicants and explain how these applicants were created.

The study includes four fictitious personas: a male and a female without a disability and both a male and female wheelchair user. The applicants are wheelchair users due to an innate spinal cord injury. There is a wide range of disabilities, but for the purpose of the applications, it was necessary to choose one specific disability to increase reliability. The CV and application both reveal the disability. The application reads:

"Due to a congenital spinal cord injury, I am a wheelchair user. It is important for me to clarify that this has no impact on my ability to work. As a wheelchair user, I have become creative and solution-oriented."

In the CV, the disability is mentioned in a section about volunteer work:

"As a wheelchair user, I find it important to help others in the same situation as myself. I therefore volunteer with the Danish Association of Youth with Disability."

All applicants were born in 1993 and therefore aged 27 in January 2020. The exact date of birth was randomly produced for each applicant in Excel. This age was chosen because it simplifies the work experience. Older applicants would be expected to have more work experience and they are likely to have worked in several workplaces. More years of work experience would therefore involve finding several workplaces that are comparable. It would simply be too conspicuous if the applicants had worked at the same three or four workplaces, and the experiment would be exposed. For example, if each applicant had work experience from three different workplaces, it would be challenging to find six workplaces and ensure that the combination of the three workplaces in each application was comparable. Applicant comparisons become more reliable when the applicants only have work experience from one workplace.

The applicants' names were chosen in consideration of their age and gender. The two most popular male and female baby names in 1990–1999 were chosen, as well as the four most common last names from 2018. Excel randomly selected the combination of first and last names and the combination of name and disability.

For generalisability reasons, I included the five largest municipalities in Denmark, including: Copenhagen (and Frederiksberg), Aarhus, Odense, Aalborg and Esbjerg. The applicants' addresses must thus be in one of the cities, and they would apply for jobs within a radius of 45 minutes by car or public transport. Applicants living in Aarhus could therefore apply for jobs in e.g., Randers, Silkeborg and Skanderborg. This design enables a study of employers from Zealand, Funen and Jutland, thus covering four of the five regions in Denmark. However, the applicants located in Copenhagen could apply for jobs in two different regions, and the study therefore includes employers from all Danish regions.

The exact addresses within the five cities have similar characteristics. They are all apartments in areas that are not known as low or high socioeconomic areas.

Within each geographical area, the applicants applied for four different job functions. The job functions were chosen based on two main principles:

- A wheelchair user would be able to perform the job.
- Both public and private workplaces require the job function.

Based on these principles, this study includes the following job functions: secretary, HR consultant, IT consultant and accountant. Vacancies in both the public and private sectors were included.

The applicants' education was relevant to the job functions. For example, the applicants applying for the role of accountant had a Bachelor's degree in economics (finansbachelor), which in Denmark is a three-and-a-half-year programme. It is evident that education is an important factor in employment (Humburg & van Der Velden, 2015). In this experiment, the applicants with and without a disability had comparable educational backgrounds. The applicants applying for the role of accountant had the same education from either the University College of Northern Denmark (UCN) or Business Academy Aarhus. This represents the same education from two different but comparable schools. The highest educational level achieved by the applicants is a Bachelor's degree.

This means that the applicants would also have some years of work experience despite their young age. Ensuring the work experience of the two applicants was comparable balanced on three principals:

- The workplaces require all four job functions (secretary, IT consultant, HR consultant and accountant).

- The workplaces are represented in all five cities, ensuring no differences in work experience across applicants from Copenhagen, Aarhus, Odense, Aalborg and Esbjerg.
- The workplaces have comparable characteristics including sector, size and funding.

All applicants had at least four and a half years of relevant work experience[1] at either a university or a municipality. Universities and municipalities are both characterised as large public organisations that handle a lot of personal information and are mainly publicly funded.

When applying for job openings, two—sometimes conflicting—factors had to be considered: 1) the comparability of the two applicants, 2) not exposing the experiment. This was achieved by constructing 2 types of applications (type 1 and type 2). All applicants have a type 1 and type 2 application and CV. The two types differ in their wording but contain the same information. For each vacancy, Excel randomly chose which applicant used application type 1 and which applicant used application type 2, as well as the gender of the applicant and which application would be sent first.

I constructed 16 template applications, four templates for each type of job, including a type 1 and type 2 application for both the applicant without a disability and the wheelchair user. Three job consultants specialising in helping unemployed people write applications were contacted and they agreed to review the templates within their

[1] The number of years of work experience depends on the duration of the applicant's education. Some educational programmes take three years, while others take three and a half, and secretarial education programmes in particular involve long internships.

field. This process ensured that the right software, work experience and wording were included in the applications.

The job openings were chosen by the author, who also undertook the application process, with help from two student researchers. To ensure consistency when applying for the job openings, I designed a protocol to follow. This protocol included visiting the workplace on Google Street View to determine whether a wheelchair user could enter the building. If accommodations were necessary for a wheelchair user to enter the building, we did not apply for the job. Only workplaces that appeared to be accessible from the outside were thus included in the field experiment and 101 vacancies were excluded from the study. This was implemented as a reaction to the FSE, which revealed the large impact that accessibility had on recruitment. Before we began applying, we (the author and student researchers) met and discussed how to organise the work, and adjusted our strategy during data collection in order to become more efficient. For example, this involved me searching for job openings on Mondays and Wednesdays, so that the team knew when they could apply for new jobs. This had no impact on the data we collected, only on our organisation.

The first 50 jobs were used as a pilot study to test whether the applications received any call backs. One of the job consultants who had reviewed the applications mentioned that generic applications seldom receive as many call backs as applications written directly for each vacancy. Even though the first 50 applications had received some call backs, I decided to adjust each application more to each job. This typically involved specific software skills that had to be added to the CV. When we had applied for 300 jobs and were thus halfway through the experiment, I once again evaluated the applications. This time, I did not find it necessary to make any changes.

Lurking variables and challenges of field experiments

Both the field experiment and the FSE aimed to determine a cause and effect (Lawson, 2014). This includes identifying treatment factors expected to have an effect and measuring the actual effect. When designing the experiment, the researcher must, to the best of their ability, isolate the treatment factor from what are known as lurking variables (Lawson, 2014). Lurking variables are factors that the researcher is either unaware of or unable to control. Depending on the field of research, lurking variables can differ substantially and potentially confound the effect of the treatment factor (Lawson, 2014). The researcher must thus strive for a result where the lurking variables are minimised as far as possible.

At the beginning of the 20th century, R.A. Fisher was sceptical about experimental design and argued that randomisation was necessary for controlling errors (Hinkelmann, 2015). When randomising, the researcher aims to eliminate systematic variation caused by lurking variables (Hinkelmann, 2015; Lawson, 2014). Experiments always include errors, but the principle of randomisation eliminates systematic errors that confound the effect of the treatment factor. In this study, I randomised the gender of the two applicants, which types of application disclose a disability and which applicant applies for the job first.

Just like randomisation, replication is also an aspect of error control in statistical experiments (Hinkelmann, 2015; Lawson, 2014). Replication includes the use of several experimental units in the same setting (Lawson, 2014). Replication minimises the impact of variation in each experimental run. By grouping several units, the small variation between individual units is stabilised and the estimate error reduced. The principal of replication was unfortunately not achievable in the field experiment of employers' recruitment practice. If replication were to be implemented in this study, each employer would have to receive several applications from each of the two applicants. Following this principle, the same applicant would have to apply for the

same job several times. Due to ethical, practical and methodological considerations, it is not possible for the exact same applicants to apply for the same job several times and expect reliable results from all the applications. Instead, the experiment was repeated: 600 different employers received one application from an applicant without a disability and one application from an applicant with a disability.

Ethics in field experiments

In field experiments, the subjects of investigation are not aware of their own participation in the study and the lack of informed consent raises important ethical considerations (Findley & Nielson, 2015; Podschuweit, 2021; Rich & Riach, 2004).

On the one hand, research is expected to include informed consent, but on the other hand, informed consent in this study would also mean that the recruitment practice of employers could be influenced by social desirability bias (Findley & Nielson, 2015; Wolter & Herold, 2018). Secrecy of the study is thus a key tenet in measuring the actual recruitment practice. As Al-Ubaydli and List (2019) argue, the study design does not allow the participants to opt into and out of the experiment. Al-Ubaydly and List also mention the absence of the Hawthorne effect, also referred to as higher ecological validity of the study due to the lack of participant awareness (Findley & Nielson, 2015). However, the secrecy raises ethical considerations, as the employers have not authorised their participation.

The collected data should not in any way harm the company or employer (Findley & Nielson, 2015; Rich & Riach, 2004). The majority of the collected data is publicly available and does not harm the company. The link between the company name and information about which applicant(s) they invited to a job interview was handled confidentially. All information will be published in general statistics, and it will not be possible to identify specific firms or individuals. Phillips (2021) posits that even

though individuals are not harmed directly by field experiments, the group of employers might gain a reputation as discriminators, which might amount to indirect harm. It is not my intention to imply that any employers are discriminatory. Even though companies and individuals are not directly harmed by the results, employers still use resources reading and evaluating the applications. I argue that these resources are relatively small in light of the results of the study.

Finally, the response from employers offering a job interview is important. When conducting research that waives informed consent, the individuals must be informed of their participation after the data collection (Findley & Nielson, 2015). When an applicant received an invitation to a job interview, the employer was contacted the same day to decline the job interview. This allowed the employer to move on to other applicants. When applications had been sent to all 600 vacancies and the employers had responded, all employers who had invited or contacted at least one of the applicants received an information letter explaining the aim of the study, the importance of the results and insurance that their personal information was safe.

Some employers replied and were interested in the study and its results. Only a small number of employers had a negative response to the information letter. Some of the employers found the research design necessary, but also rather problematic. This was also discussed in some of the interviews, and I fully acknowledge the perspectives of these employers.

The study complies with the Danish code of conduct for research integrity. At the time we conducted the field experiment, Aalborg University did not have an ethical committee that approved social science research, but a Norwegian ethical committee approved a similar design, and this study was reviewed and approved by renowned researchers during the funding process.

Interviews

When the field experiment is conducted, a qualitative study is used to investigate and examine the individuals included in the statistics. The qualitative study thus consists of semi-structured interviews with employers included in the field experiment, and this section will address the use and construction of the interviews.

The literature often describes the aim of interviews as an investigation of the interviewee's viewpoints, intentions and interpretations (Hviid Jacobsen & Qvotrup Jensen, 2012; Järvinen & Mik-Meyer, 2017). This qualitative study aims to increase our understanding of why employers reacted to applicants who mentioned that they were a wheelchair user the way they did in the field experiment, i.e., how they reason in their own recruitment practice and what they thought about the applications. Do they have concerns about employing a person with a disability and if so, why do they have these concerns? We need to investigate the individuals from the field experiment and their perceptions of the applicants and the recruitment process in general. An advantage of the interviews is that they allow the researcher to understand how the interviewees reason and argue for their own recruitment practice. This is also the argument of Levy Paluck (2010) who proposes combining qualitative and quantitative research in field experiments. According to her, this methodological combination provides the researcher with knowledge about the mechanisms of behaviour and enables a thorough understanding of the research field (Levy Paluck, 2010).

The qualitative study differs significantly from field experiments in ontology and epistemology. In this part of the study, it is recognised that knowledge emerges through the scientific conversation and consists of phenomena that are not measurable in numbers and statistics (Ormston et al., 2014). The aim is not to test hypotheses or theories but to understand the thoughts, interpretations and perceptions of the employers (Järvinen & Mik-Meyer, 2017; Ormston et al., 2014).

Construction of the interview guide and interviewing techniques

The interview guide helps the interviewer remember the themes and/or questions that have been prepared for the interview (Ingemann et al., 2018; Kallio et al., 2016) and in this section, I address the construction and use of the interview guide. Furthermore, this section introduces the different interview techniques used.

I found the semi-structured interview most suitable for this study. This structure can be adapted to different interviewees and situations (Bryman, 2016). I find it important to let the interviewee speak freely, but I still need to discuss the recruitment practice of the interviewees and I therefore need to prepare questions as well.

To answer the second research question, I identified four relevant themes to include in the interview guide: 1) Recruitment culture and context of the workplace, 2) The recruitment process and perception of the applicants, 3) General thoughts about employees with physical disabilities in the workplace and 4) Employers' thoughts on how to include more people with disabilities in the labour market in general. The final interview guide (in Danish) is attached in the appendix.

The first theme concerns the context and culture of the workplace. As noted in Chapter 2, an employer should not be understood solely as an isolated individual, but as an individual in the context of the workplace, so for the first theme, I aimed to understand the context of the workplace. The second theme included a conversation about the vacancy that was part of the field experiment and the expected qualifications of the fictitious applicants. This theme reveals how the employer interprets and evaluates the applicants. The first questions in this theme are direct questions about the specific recruitment situation included in the field experiment. At the end of this theme, I include indirect questions about the interviewees' expectations of other employers either rejecting the wheelchair user or inviting them to a job interview. It might be

difficult for an employer to express negative impressions about wheelchair users, as it is seen as inappropriate. However, indirect questions on their expectations about other employers' behaviour can reflect associations harboured by the employers themselves (Bergen & Labonté, 2020; Ingemann et al., 2018; Roberts, 2020). The third theme expands the conversation, but still includes the possibility of employing a person with disabilities. This theme reveals whether the employer expected any obstacles in recruiting a wheelchair user and what these obstacles might be in more general terms. The fourth theme differs from the first three. Whereas the first three themes concerned the actual recruitment process and the workplace in general, theme four zooms out and concerns general assumptions about the integration of people with disabilities in Danish workplaces. This involves political interventions to include more people with disabilities in the labour market.

At first glance, the interview guide may appear to be devoid of theory. It is true that I do not include a test of theories as I did in the two experiments, and that I do not mention theoretical concepts in my questions. However, testing theories is rarely the aim of qualitative research, which most often has an inductive design (Järvinen & Mik-Meyer, 2005). Instead, I am inspired by the concept of Herbert Blumer, namely sensitising concepts (Blumer, 1954). Sensitising concepts show the researcher where to look, but not exactly what to look for. For this, the researcher must use definitive concepts. A clear sensitising concept in the interview guide is *recruitment practice*. It provides the researcher with a concept to look for and includes different aspects. In addition, the second and third themes of the interview guide aim to identify whether there are differences in employers' perceptions of the two fictitious applicants. If so, this might be due to status, stigma, implicit bias or ableism. When constructing the interview guide, I therefore had the previous research and different theories in mind but had no intention of testing any of these in the interviews. At the same time, I do not claim to be completely unaffected by knowledge of previous research or theories

when constructing the interview guide and this knowledge will therefore have influenced the questions I chose to include.

As the interview is semi-structured, new themes might evolve during the interview. The experienced interviewer can allow themselves to be surprised during the interview and dare to follow the new information (Järvinen, 2005). I tried to use this ability to follow new paths while interviewing the employers.

In all interviews, I further include the concept of *stimulated recall interviews* (SRI) found in the ethnographic literature (Dempsey, 2010; Lyle, 2003), which can be helpful in the interviews with employers in this study. SRI is a technique used by researchers who are interested in the interviewees' thoughts of a specific event or their behaviour (Dempsey, 2010; Lyle, 2003). The researcher exposes the interviewee to an artefact that is expected to enable the interviewee to recall and describe what they felt and thought in a specific situation instead of how they might think or act in a hypothetical situation (Dempsey, 2010). I include the job description and the applications that were sent to the employer in the interview. By showing the employer these artefacts, the employers are expected to recall the job opening and the two applicants. In my experience, most of the employers recalled both the vacancy and the applicants. A few employers did not recall both applicants but did recall the one they had invited to a job interview. When they were shown the applications, some of the employers also recalled some of the information given in the application.

Contact with the interviewees and characteristics of the interviews

The interviewees are employers who participated in the field experiment and invited either one or both of the applicants to a job interview. In this study, an "employer" is defined as the person(s) responsible for recruiting for the job applied for by the fictitious applicants. The definition of employer is therefore a person who owns or

manages a company or one or more employees who are authorised to make hiring decisions on behalf of the workplace.

The sampling of interviewees followed the maximum variation strategy (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Firstly, employers who rejected both applicants were excluded. The remaining employers were then sorted into five groups based on geographical location, as I wanted to include employers from all the municipalities in which the fictitious applicants had applied for a job. Furthermore, I included employers from both the private and public sectors.

The invitation to the interview included a short e-mail informing the employer that I was interested in an interview and that two fictitious applicants had applied for a job at their workplace[2]. I further informed them which applicant(s) they had invited to a job interview and that the interview concerned the recruitment culture at their workplace. The e-mail further included an attached PDF file that described the overall project and the aim of the interviews in more detail. The invitation did not reveal the overall result of the field experiment.

In total, I invited 65 employers to an interview. The employers were contacted by e-mail, and I phoned any employers who did not respond within three days. Thirty-one employers agreed to participate in an interview, and in five cases, the employer invited one additional person to the interview. Two interviews were later cancelled, resulting in 29 interviews conducted with 34 employers. The study thus includes both individual and (small) group interviews. Both individual and group interviews aimed to increase our understanding of the individual's interpretations or a common shared experience (Ingemann et al., 2018). Table 3 below shows the distribution of individual and group interviews.

[2] The employers had already received the e-mail that disclosed the experiment when I invited them to the interview.

A further consideration in relation to the type of interview is how to conduct them. This can include e.g. face-to-face, synchronous computer-assisted interactions (on e.g. Skype, Teams, Zoom, FaceTime or other software programs) or by telephone (Ingemann et al., 2018). As I am concerned with individuals in their actions as employers, it is preferable to interview the employer face-to-face at their workplace. This allows me to observe the workplace before and after the interview and gain a better understanding of the challenges or concerns that the employers might have. Furthermore, face-to-face interviews also include unspoken signals (Ingemann et al., 2018; Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). This can include a certain look or gesticulation that is difficult to observe in computer-assisted interviews and not possible to observe in telephone interviews. The face-to-face interview also invites informal conversation before and after the interview and in my experience, the interviewee often reveals important and interesting information during these informal conversations. However, as I am located in Aalborg, the face-to-face interviews involved a lot of travel to Copenhagen, Odense, Aarhus and Esbjerg. This was both time-consuming and expensive. Even so, I found that the benefits of face-to-face interviews outweighed the challenges and therefore endeavoured to conduct as many face-to-face interviews as possible.

In contrast, one benefit of computer assisted- and telephone interviews is that geographical distance is not problematic (Ingemann et al., 2018; Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). In computer-assisted interviews, the participants still have visual contact on the screen, but the interaction is said to be more distanced (Ingemann et al., 2018). Table 3 shows the distribution of face-to-face and computer-assisted interviews.

Table 3. Types and numbers of interviews and interviewees

	Individual interviews	Group interviews	Total numbers of interviews		Total number of interviewees
Face-to-face interview	8	3	11	29	34
Computer-assisted interview	16	2	18		

As shown in Table 3, 18 interviews were conducted online and only 11 interviews were conducted face-to-face. When inviting the employers to an interview, many asked for a computer-assisted interview. During the Covid-19 pandemic, many people worked from home, and I believe the ability and familiarity with digital solutions might have made it more convenient for them to meet online. In my experience, the online interviews worked very well, although I missed first-hand impressions of the workplace and informal conversations. Instead, I spent more time asking the employer to describe the environment, for example, if they mentioned stairs.

I interviewed 22 female employers and 12 male employers and in 17 cases, the applicant without a disability had been invited to a job interview. The wheelchair user was invited to the job interview in only seven cases, and in five cases, both applicants were invited.

I interviewed employers from eight public workplaces and 16 private firms, and five interviews were conducted with employers who worked in other types of firms, including NGOs and workplaces that were partly private and partly public.

After the first 25 interviews, I felt that I was not gaining any new significant information that could shed light on my research questions and a saturation point was achieved (Mason, 2010). Having already scheduled the last four interviews, I ended

up with 29 interviews in total. The last four interviews also provided examples and nuances to the empirical data, but I did not identify any new themes emerging.

Analysing, coding and categorisation

All interviews were recorded and transcribed and further coded and categorised as part of the analysis. This section shows the analytical process of the qualitative interviews.

The aim of the coding was to explore the patterns and information revealed in the empirical data. The coding process is a part of the analysis and as Richards and Morse (2012:154) write, *"[coding] leads you from data to the idea, and from the idea to all the data pertaining to that idea"*. Coding thus helps the researcher look "up" from the data and gain an analytical perspective, but at the same time, coding allows the researcher to delve "down" into the data to explore the perspectives of the interviewees (Richards & Morse, 2012).

As coding is often a heuristic process (Saldaña, 2016), it was not limited to the process in Nvivo, which is the software tool I used for some of the coding. Instead, the coding and categorising process began when I conducted the interviews. The data collection and analysis therefore developed simultaneously.

Firstly, I took notes after each interview and wrote down themes that I remembered or wondered about. This helped me to identify central themes in the interviews and be more precise in the next interview. When all interviews were conducted, I listened to them all once through over the course of a week. I listened to and took notes on between four and six interviews each day. The result was a document of 17 themes and descriptions of the themes. When I had an overview of the themes included in my interviews, I was able to decide which themes to include in my analysis. These were

themes that I felt contributed most to new knowledge of the research field and at the same time answered my research question. Some of the themes were pooled and I spent a large amount of time studying a board of all the themes in order to combine or divide them and eventually make a decision about which themes to move forward with.

The next step of the coding process included the use of Nvivo and was an iterative process at two different time points. The first process concerned the theme of workplace accessibility, whereas the second process concerned implicit bias. Both themes involved several iterative coding processes. Once I had identified the themes that I would include, I could apply sensitising concepts (Blumer, 1954) as previously addressed. I used a semi-open coding strategy: I did not include predefined codes in Nvivo, but was still looking for a specific theme in the empirical data and had an idea where to look for the themes based on the descriptions I had made during an earlier stage of the analysis.

The first theme that I investigated was workplace accessibility. This topic was highly inductive and allowing myself to be surprised and follow new paths during the interviews paid off. The results from Article 1 assured me that accessibility might influence the employers' recruitment practice, however, I was unaware of the different perceptions of accessibility. The coding of this theme included several iterations, but two major processes can be addressed.

In the first iteration, every quotation regarding accessibility was coded under "Accessibility/inaccessibility" in Nvivo. The quotations were manually pooled into four categories: 1. Found the workplace accessible and invited the applicant using a wheelchair to a job interview, 2. Found the workplace inaccessible and did not invite the wheelchair user to a job interview, 3. Found the workplace inaccessible and did invite the wheelchair user to a job interview and 4. Costs of adjustments and knowledge of public support. Nvivo helped to locate all the relevant quotations during

the first coding process. The second round of coding was more analytical, and I did not use Nvivo to a great extent. It was easier for me to manually code, decode, categorise and add theoretical concepts to different categories. The aim of this analysis was to explore the perceptions of accessibility, but it also revealed one of the most important differences between employers who invited the wheelchair user to a job interview and those who rejected the wheelchair user.

The second theme for investigation was implicit bias, but it was later in the process that I discovered the theoretical structure of the empirical data that I was analysing. The aim of the second theme was to understand the employers' different perceptions of the two fictitious applicants, with the concepts of the ideal worker norm and stigma in mind. The first iteration of coding in Nvivo included the codes: "Had to choose one more applicant/by chance", "hard to explain rejection" and "the easy solution", which were later changed to "expectations of other employers" and some more quotations were added. The second iteration of coding also included the employers' recruitment experience and their daily work activities. This was a way to include the context in which the recruitment decision was made: who made the decision and with what experience and context in mind? In contrast to workplace accessibility, the theme of implicit bias is closely related to the interview guide. In particular, the first and second themes in the interview guide were represented in the analysis of implicit bias. That is why the employers acted the way they did towards the two fictitious applicants and background information about the workplace and the interviewee.

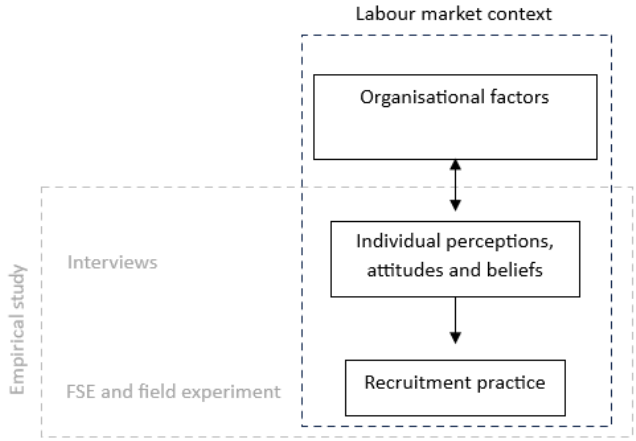
Chapter 5: Discussion and conclusion

In this chapter, I discus the synthesis of the four articles and summary, and will thus address the implications and contributions of the key findings. The four articles included in this dissertation all contribute to answering the research questions, and in the first section, I address the most important implications and contributions regarding empirical and theoretical findings. This is followed by two methodical discussions, finishing with conclusions and policy implications.

Empirical and theoretical implications and contributions

The empirical and theoretical implications and contributions relate to Figure 1, as introduced in Chapter 2:

Figure 1: The relationship between contexts, attitudes and practices and the unit of investigation



The FSE and field experiment investigated the recruitment practice, as shown in Figure 1, and I hypothesised in Chapter 1 that wheelchair users would receive fewer invitations to job interviews and that the self-reported likelihood hiring a wheelchair user would decrease. My hypothesis was based on previous research in other national contexts (Bellemare et al., 2018; Bjørnshagen & Ugreninov, 2021). The results support the hypothesis and this is the first field experiment and FSE concerning disability and employment in a Danish context. The FSE and field experiment demonstrate that disclosing being a wheelchair user significantly affects employers' decisions about which applicant to hire or invite to a job interview. In Article 2, we argue that stigma and ableist structures might explain the differences in call-back rates. Using the three

components from the FRA definition of discrimination presented in Chapter 3, the results of these two experiments support the conclusion that Danish wheelchair users might experience discrimination during the recruitment process. The chances of being invited to a job interview drop significantly when an applicant discloses that they are a wheelchair user, which is in accordance with the first and third component, namely unequal treatment based on a protected characteristic. Secondly, the unequal treatment is in comparison to an applicant with similar credentials but who does not disclose any disability, and finally, the two applications are sent to the same employer, thus supporting the last component of discrimination: similar situations. It is not my intention to imply that any individual employer is a discriminator, which is mentioned by Phillips (2021) to be one of the negative outcomes of field experiments. During the interviews, I felt that each employer would do their best to hire the most qualified applicant, and some employers did also invite the wheelchair user to a job interview. At the same time, my study reveals that wheelchair users are excluded from the Danish labour market to a significant degree, and that many employers contribute to this situation, yet often in an unconscious way. The two articles contribute comparable experiments to the existing research and show that the negative effect of an applicant disclosing that they are a wheelchair user on recruitment practices might not be limited to a national context, but is instead evident across borders. This implies an underlying structure, such as ableism, which might be unrelated to specific labour market contexts. Even though studies of employers' attitudes have indicated an underlying structure, only a small number of comparable empirical studies have been carried out.

The aim of this dissertation was to link employers' recruitment practice with their attitudes and perceptions about the applicant with a disability, as investigated in Articles 3 and 4. The findings demonstrate that the employers' perception of accessibility is important, but it is a field of research that has gained little attention and is highlighted as a research field that could be elaborated on further (Fattoracci et al., 2023). Employers have major concerns about financial costs in terms of

accommodations and accessibility (Fattoracci et al., 2023; Lefcoe et al., 2023). The FSE also revealed that employers who received information about economic compensation were slightly more likely to hire the wheelchair user. Yet how employers perceive accessibility and how it influences their recruitment practice is often missing from the literature. In Article 3, I found that employers' perception of accessibility can be understood as relational. This finding relates to the results from Article 1, in which more than half of the employers considered the workplace to be inaccessible. This finding from the interviews elucidates the importance and relevance of accessibility and the nuances embedded within the concept. It also contributes to an expanded theoretical understanding regarding the study of workplace accessibility. The findings suggest that workplace accessibility involves both physical architecture and subjective perceptions of what is accessible to wheelchair users. As the article concludes, the presence of stairs does not necessarily exclude wheelchair users from employment: For employers that I conceptualise as physically bounded, the stairs presented a barrier to employing wheelchair users, yet this is not the case for employers that I conceptualise as accommodating. In Article 3, I elaborate further on this and argue to have identified a relationality of workplace accessibility. What one employer would consider to be accessible is not necessarily what another employer would consider to be accessible. I also discuss the theoretical approach to studying accessibility and show that workplace accessibility is rather under-theorised from a demand-side perspective. Instead, accessibility has been studied from the perspectives of people with disabilities. I suggest that further research could benefit from applying a demand-side perspective to the study of accessibility. It may be that the concerns about accessibility identified in previous research also demonstrate that most employers are physically bounded and not unconcerned or accommodating. The findings regarding accessibility relate to the two-way arrow between the organisation context and employers' perceptions, attitudes and beliefs (see Figure 1). The perception of accessibility builds upon the physical design of the workplace and is a clear example of the interdependence of organisation and individual. Previous

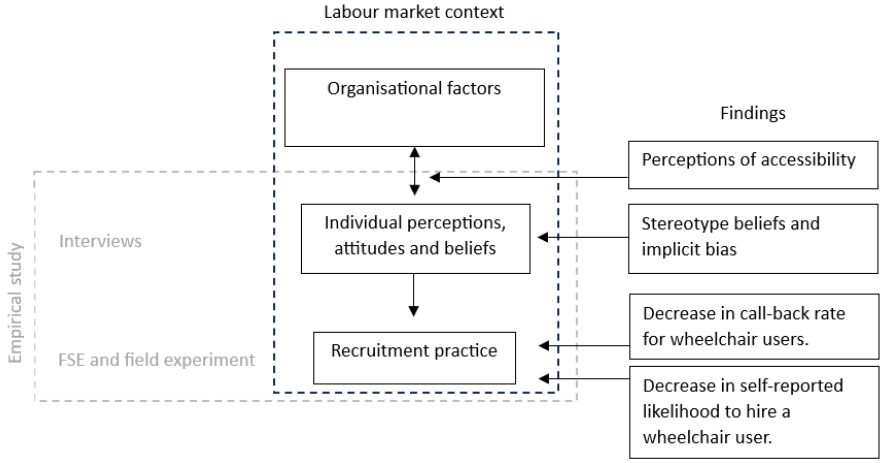
research has emphasised organisational policies, sector and size as influential organisational factors, but my study adds accessibility as another influential factor that depends on both the organisation and individual perceptions.

The interviews further demonstrated stereotypical beliefs about wheelchair users, and I show that employers might harbour implicit bias. This might explain the disparity between employers' attitudes and recruitment behaviour found in Article 1 and the previous research addressed in Chapter 2. Employers might unconsciously stigmatise wheelchair users, who are often excluded from the labour market, as demonstrated in the two experiments. Applicants who mention that they are wheelchair users thus seem to deviate from the ideal worker norm, as also demonstrated in the previous research (Foster & Wass, 2013; Østerud, 2022) and are, according to Goffman's theory, stigmatised. As Goffman notes, the study of single interactions reflects the societal structure, values and norms of a society. In this study, each employer's perceptions about the wheelchair user contribute to a systematic structure in the Danish labour market. Their decisions regarding the applicants using a wheelchair are part of this overall structure, and the recruitment impacts not only individual employment. The underlying concept of this structure might involve what Campbell defines as ableism. The very understanding of what makes a good employee or candidate for a job interview is affected by a collective discourse and way of thinking and categorising individuals based on their bodily being. Being a wheelchair user matters a great deal to employers, even though it should not affect the job performance. The results revealed the value of being able to walk and sit in an office chair. Like in the study by Hughes (1945), the overall result of this dissertation demonstrates that individual characteristics like being a wheelchair user signal a status that is ascribed to negative associations. The significance of being a wheelchair user during the recruitment process might also entail a "master status". Even though the educational level and work experience of the applicant who disclosed that they are

wheelchair user indicated a qualified worker, the disclosure itself led to a loss of status resulting in the "marginalised man" (Hughes, E. C., 1945).

The key findings enable an expansion of Figure 1. Even though the expanded figure simplifies the findings, it still demonstrates the relationship between the contexts, the empirical study and the findings.

Figure 1a: Relationship between contexts, unit of investigation and key findings



Although I empirically studied the recruitment practice and individual perceptions, attitudes and beliefs, the findings are also strongly related to the organisational context revealed by the employers in the interviews. I do not empirically study the organisational factors, and the results thus mostly relate to the individual micro level.

Finally, as this section shows, the theories of status, stigma, implicit bias and ableism have explanatory value in both the quantitative and qualitative findings. They

articulate and generalise the empirical findings and thus structure and validate the findings. Theories of discrimination have also been shown to be helpful. In Article 3, I found that applicants using a wheelchair were rejected based on productivity issues, as the wheelchair user was expected to be unable to perform the job tasks due to inaccessibility. This is in accordance with theories of discrimination with an economic origin. However, even though the employers turned to the rationales of productivity and costs, other factors were also shown to be important: in some cases, the applicant using a wheelchair would be able to perform the job, but they were rejected because certain areas of the workplace were perceived as inaccessible. The rejection was therefore not only due to the job performance and productivity. Instead, Article 4 indicated that employers might hold stereotypical beliefs about wheelchair users and could be influenced by implicit bias. Employers do not evaluate the applicants solely based on the rationales of productivity and cost.

Methodical discussions

This study also allows for two methodological discussions: 1) a comparison of results from the FSE and field experiment, which both aimed to investigate the effect of being a wheelchair user on recruitment but used two different dependent variables and 2) the mixed methods research design that I used in this dissertation contributes a methodical discussion regarding the study of implicit bias.

Field experiments have become a gold standard in social science as the design is expected to isolate the effect of the varying factor and test a real behaviour instead of a hypothetical behaviour like in FSE, for example (Gaddis, 2018; Larsen, E. N., 2020; Wulff & Villadsen, 2020). Few previous studies have compared results of the methods aimed at determining the behavioural validity of FSE, and it has been emphasised that

more knowledge and examples are required (Petzold & Wolbring, 2019). The comparisons of the results aim to determine whether the results from FSE can in fact predict the actual behaviour detected in field experiments (Petzold & Wolbring, 2019). The use of both methods in this study contributes to the literature on this. In Article 1, we used a FSE related to a national survey. The employers were thus aware of their participation in a research project and the answers could have been affected by social desirability bias. However, Article 2 used a field experiment without informed consent and the respondents could not have been affected by social desirability bias, but the design raises ethical considerations (Phillips, 2021; Rich & Riach, 2004). The results from both studies demonstrate a significant disparity between applicants who disclose that they are wheelchair users and applicants who do not mention any disabilities. The findings in my study imply a level of agreement between the employers' self-reported and actual recruitment practice. However, previous research found mixed evidence about whether hypothetical situations can be viewed as determinants for real-life behaviour (Petzold & Wolbring, 2019; Wulff & Villadsen, 2020). The comparison of results must include the employers who stated in the FSE that they had job functions that can be performed by wheelchair users and are accessible to wheelchair users. This is not the whole sample of the FSE, but it is the group of employers who are most comparable to those in the field experiment. The self-reported recruitment practice of these employers is expected to be the best case; there should be no issues linked to accessibility or the job tasks when employing a wheelchair user. This group of employers is not completely comparable to the employers in the field experiment, but they are as close as I could come to a comparable group. Not all employers in the field experiment identified their workplace as accessible to wheelchair users, as shown in Article 3, and this might explain why the field experiment detected a slightly larger disparity than the FSE. Whereas some of the previous studies comparing the two methods found very similar results to those found here, other studies found contradictory results from the two methods. What is interesting in this case is that previous comparisons of the two methods also show that studies with similar results

often do not include sensitive topics. The studies that found contradictory results often included sensitive topics, which led Petzold and Wolbring (2019) to suggest that FSE including sensitive topics are often subject to social desirability bias. Even though the results in the first article of this dissertation might be influenced by social desirability bias, they are still highly comparable to the field experiment. Although this dissertation involves a sensitive topic, it does not seem to have significantly affected the results, as seen in other studies.

The second methodical contribution I will address is the contribution of the mixed methods design in relation to the study of implicit bias found in Article 4. The study of implicit bias was only possible due to the mixed methods design. Most research on implicit bias includes a quantitative measurement and most often uses an implicit association test (IAT) (Ratliff & Smith, 2021). However, the IAT only demonstrates the systematic difference in the respondents' perception of individuals with different characteristics, e.g., disability. Like in the field experiment, the IAT fails to provide insights into why the respondents act they way they do towards people with this specific characteristic. It is only assumed in the experimental methodology of the IAT (and field experiment) that the act is due to stereotypical beliefs, but neither the IAT nor the field experiment provide any evidence of these stereotypical beliefs that are said to precede the action (Frankish, 2016). Instead, they provide evidence of a systematic disparity in human action, in this case: an unequal treatment of applicants. When applying a qualitative approach and interviewing employers about the action that is assumed to be affected by implicit bias, the empirical data can demonstrate the stereotypical beliefs as they are constructed in real life (Trachok, 2015). I demonstrate in Article 4 that people using a wheelchair are expected to be inconvenient to employ compared to applicants without a disability. I consider it a stereotypical belief to expect wheelchair users in general to be more difficult to employ than an applicant without a disability. The qualitative interviews also revealed different types of implicitness in employers' rejection of wheelchair users that the quantitative material

was unable to demonstrate. The combination of a field experiment and qualitative interviews thus qualified the assumption that employers have stereotypical beliefs and might thus be influenced by implicit bias in their recruitment practice. This is an example of one of the strengths of MMR that is mentioned in the literature: the combination of methodologies is often said to improve the validity of results (Harrison et al., 2020). With the field experiment alone, I would not have been able to show the implicit bias, although I could have discussed the theoretical assumptions. Further research might also benefit from combining different methods.

Conclusions and policy implications

This section outlines the conclusions and policy implications of the findings based on the discussion. In this dissertation, I set out to study the following research questions:

1. *How does an applicant's disclosure of being a wheelchair user affect employers' recruitment practice?*

2. *Why does the disclosure of being a wheelchair user have an impact on employers' recruitment practice?*

Using different methods I tested the effect of an applicant disclosing that they are a wheelchair user and reached the conclusion that if this information is disclosed in an application, the call-back rate drops by 54.7%. This was identified in a field experiment conducted between May 2020 and May 2021. When the effect was tested in a factorial survey experiment, the results also revealed a major disparity. When we

isolated employers who stated that they have job functions that can be performed by wheelchair users as well as accessible workplaces (i.e., the group of employers most comparable to those in the field experiment), the disparity decreased. However, this disparity was still significant. The two studies reveal a significant negative effect of mentioning being a wheelchair user on the employers' recruitment practice. The unequal treatment of applicants is an underlying outcome of the different theoretical concepts included in Chapter 3. The results of the experiments can be compared to studies in other countries and show that labour market exclusion of people with disabilities is not limited to a Danish context. It appears that being a wheelchair user results in a loss of status at a global level.

By interviewing employers from the field experiment, this dissertation also found that workplace accessibility is a barrier to employment for wheelchair users. The study unveiled a relationality of workplace accessibility that has been under-theorised in previous research. Future research might benefit from placing more emphasis on employers' perception of workplace accessibility and thus allow us to theorise further on employers' perceptions of accessibility.

Another finding revealed in the interviews is that some employers might be affected by implicit bias when recruiting. This was also found in previous research on the recruitment of other groups based on e.g., age, gender and ethnicity. The results of this study show that even though 7.7% of the employers in the field experiment invited the wheelchair user to a job interview, the chance of being invited to a job interview is significantly lower for wheelchair users compared to applicants without disabilities. The qualitative interviews revealed stereotypical beliefs about wheelchair users and showed that employers were often unaware of their own bias.

Theories with different origins may contribute to our understanding of employers' recruitment practice. Many of the theories were not developed specifically to aid in our understanding of recruitment practices, yet still provided high explanatory value

in this dissertation. The employers' concerns or reluctance to employ a wheelchair user create major barriers to labour market entry. The ableist structure in the labour market might prevent people with disabilities from entering the labour market. Although the results from the field experiment showed that some employers invited a wheelchair user to a job interview, the effect of disclosing the disability had a significant negative effect. The findings of this dissertation contribute to an extended understanding of how and why wheelchair users might face discrimination in recruitment. From the previous research, we know that employers might have negative attitudes or concerns, but at the same time feel an obligation to employ people with disabilities. We can now see that the discrepancy between employers' attitudes and actions might originate in different understandings of accessibility or unconscious biases and stereotypical beliefs.

Policy implications

In continuation of the discussion and conclusion, I will address some of the policy implications of this dissertation.

The results from this dissertation clearly show that disclosing being a wheelchair user in an application lowers the applicant's chances of being invited to a job interview, and the qualitative interviews demonstrate that accessibility, stereotypical beliefs and implicit bias are particularly influential factors. The question remains of how to minimise the effect of these factors in the recruitment process and thus promote employment of people who use a wheelchair. In other words, how political goals translate into organisational changes.

Information as a policy instrument has traditionally been used in Denmark and there have been several public strategies, action plans and information campaigns all aimed at including more people with disabilities in the Danish labour market (Krogh & Amby,

2020). The strategies, action plans and campaigns aim to disseminate information about recruitment and the publicly funded financial schemes that are expected to increase the number of people with disabilities in employment. In the words of Vedung (2007), this is a sermon strategy in which employers receive more information and are expected to change their recruitment practice. Previous research also points to the fact that employers lack information about recruiting people with disabilities and this might explain their reluctance. A lack of information has also been highlighted as a reason why employers do not engage in political goals (Bredgaard, 2004). The results of this dissertation also reveal a small but statistically significant effect of information. Employers who received information about public economic schemes were slightly more likely to hire the applicant who disclosed that they were a wheelchair user compared to employers who did not receive this information. Applying a sermon strategy of information and persuasion to encourage more employers to employ people with disabilities also seems compatible with the organisation of the Danish labour market in which employers' autonomy is a key tenet. Information respects this autonomy (Bredgaard, 2004). However, as the two experiments in this dissertation demonstrate, people using a wheelchair are still excluded from labour market participation. If information and persuasion are important political tools, it is important to consider how the information can reach employers that have not yet been reached. There have already been trials of a "compensation card", which is a personal document that lists the possible compensation that can be applied for if the workplace recruits this person. In this way, each employer is informed about the possibilities of compensation when hiring a person with a disability: relevant information in a relevant situation. In 2020, it was possible to apply for funding for trials relating to this concept, and four municipalities received funding. The projects have now ended, and we must wait for the results to be published by the Danish Agency for Labour Market and Recruitment. Results from the projects might show an effect of information and suggest further improvements in this type of information. Information like the "compensation card" may also provide

employers with more information about accommodations regarding accessibility in the workplace. The results of this dissertation indicate that many employers are concerned about accessibility when they are faced with an applicant using a wheelchair. Informing employers about the possibility of publicly funded physical environment accommodations might alleviate the concerns highlighted in the interviews.

The interviews revealed the significance of accessibility, and another political instrument related to this might involve regulation; a policy instrument that has also been labelled a "stick" (Vedung, 2007). The building regulation of 2018 (BR18) includes different regulations concerning accessibility in new buildings, but many workplaces have offices in existing buildings that are often perceived as inaccessible. Denmark ratified the UN convention in 2009, when we agreed to pursue a labour market that is accessible to people with disabilities (Thomsen & Pedersen, 2010). In the UN convention, the term "access" has a broader definition than just physical accessibility, but it is still worth considering whether physical accessibility at Danish workplaces can be improved by law. A policy implication might thus involve regulation and/or control of both new and existing buildings or including the concept of universal design as also mentioned in Article 3. This would not aim to influence employers' recruitment practice directly, as seen in information campaigns. Instead, it relates to structural circumstances that have proven to be important in recruiting wheelchair users, and might indirectly influence employers' recruitment practice, especially those that I conceptualised as physically bounded. Regulation might be in conflict with the autonomy of employers if the regulation is not considered to be fair or legitimate by the employers (Bredgaard, 2004). If the workplace does not have employees with physical disabilities, it might not seem relevant to adjust the physical environment. However, it might prevent the employer from turning down future applicants with physical disabilities due to inaccessibility at the workplace.

Regulation has been used as a tool in other countries in terms of quota systems. According to the International Labour Organization (ILO), over 100 countries worldwide have already implemented a quota system that aims to help more people with disabilities into employment (International Labour Organisation, 2019). There is not a political tradition of using quotas in Denmark, although this policy instrument has recently been discussed by politicians in relation to gender differences in management positions (Folketingstidende 2021-22, 2022). The quota system has traditionally been viewed as being non-compatible with the Danish flexicurity model (Bredgaard, 2004). The employers I interviewed were generally very sceptical about quota systems and found the system to be inappropriate and too drastic a tool. Research on quota systems related to the employment of people with disabilities found that they had a very limited effect – if any (Sargeant et al., 2018). However, it may be that the effect of quota systems is difficult to measure as it cannot be isolated from other policy instruments and the organisation and norms of the labour market (Sargeant et al., 2018). Although not a quota system, Danish employers in public workplaces are obligated to invite applicants with a disability to a job interview if the applicant pleads this right, although they are not obligated to employ the applicant. The political instrument can also be labelled a stick due to the obligation to invite applicants with a disability to a job interview. This is not an option in private workplaces. However, an analysis revealed negative attitudes among people with disabilities towards the right to plead for a job interview (Marselisborg Consulting, 2021).

The third and final policy instrument mentioned by Vedung (2007) is the "carrot", which involves economic means. Workplaces in Denmark can employ a person with a wage subsidy on a fixed-term employment contract. Employers can also apply for wage subsidies for newly educated people with disabilities (isbryderordningen). Few employers are aware of this, and the local job consultants in the public employment services also find it difficult to inform them about the possibility, as they too lack

relevant knowledge (Marselisborg Consulting, 2021; Shamshiri-Petersen et al., 2020). The wage subsidy for newly educated people with disabilities is thus thought to have unexploited potential (Marselisborg Consulting, 2021). In general, the policy instruments of information and economic means seem most convincing in terms of translating into organisational change, although regulation must not be overlooked and the results of this study highlight workplace accessibility as a factor that requires political attention.

A final implication that I will include here relates to the individual level. When looking at the results from Articles 1 and 2, one might think that a simple solution would be not to disclose a disability in a job application. This is also in line with the theoretical assumptions of Goffman, where disclosure of deviance is crucial (Goffman, 1990). However, I do not believe this can be a generic solution as it depends on the type of disability, the type of job and the individuals involved. Failing to disclose certain information in an application was discussed at length in Denmark in 2022 as politicians tried to deal with labour market discrimination due to age. As a result, a new law was introduced in July 2022, which states that employers are prohibited from asking for an applicant's birthday (Retsinformation, 2022). By omitting this information, it is assumed that applicants who might be exposed to age discrimination will be protected. However, it is possible that previous work experience and dates of education might still indicate the applicant's age. The law states that employers are not entitled to know about any disability, but they must be informed if the applicant has any health conditions that could affect their ability to perform in the specific job. Different types of disability might affect an individual's ability to work in specific roles, and those with a disability might feel differently about disclosing their disability. Therefore, I do not find it appropriate to suggest omitting information about a disability in applications in general, but acknowledge that it might be relevant in some cases. The applicant may disclose a disability before or during a job interview without disclosing it in their application.

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Appendix

Interviewguide

Kort introduktion til undersøgelsen, fortrolighed og publicering

Baggrundsoplysninger om virksomheden og informanten

- Vil du kort fortælle lidt om dig selv og dit arbejde?
- Antal år ansat på arbejdspladsen
- Antal år med ansvar for rekruttering
- Arbejdsopgaver
- (tjek antal ansatte hjemmefra) Hvordan vil du karakterisere jeres medarbejdergruppe? (Hvordan er I fordelt på alder, etnicitet, køn, handicap mm. hos jer? har arbejdspladsen en person med handicap ansat? Ved du om der har været nogen med handicap ansat tidligere?)
- Tidligere ansat med handicap: Hvordan var jeres erfaringer med den tidligere medarbejder, som havde et handicap?
- Har du tidligere arbejdet sammen med en person med handicap? (på en anden arbejdsplads)
    - Hvis ja: hvordan fungerede det?

- Har I nogen retningslinjer eller politikker om socialt ansvar i forbindelse med ansættelser her på arbejdspladsen? (eksempelvis en CSR-strategi hvor rekruttering indgår)
  (OBS: opfordrer de i jobopslaget alle til at søge stillingen?)
- Hvad står der heri? (konkrete mål, løse formuleringer?)

- Når I rekrutterer, hvordan bruger I dem så? (taler de meget om dem eller er det noget der bare ligger?)
    - Nogen på skrift jeg må se?
    - Hvis nej: Er det noget, I taler om på arbejdspladsen, det med at have ansatte med anden etnicitet, køn, hudfarve, handicap mm.?
    - Hvis ja: hvad har I talt om? Hvor forpligtende oplevede du de samtaler?

Rekrutteringsprocessen:

- Kan du huske dette jobopslag? (medbringer det jobopslag jeg har søgt)
- Vil du fortælle lidt om stillingen, hvad var det for en person, I havde brug for?
- Kan du huske, hvor mange ansøgninger I fik til jobbet? (sådan ca.)
- Når du husker tilbage på rekrutteringsprocessen, hvilke faktorer lagde I så vægt på, da I skulle udvælge kandidater til jobsamtalen?
- Hvor mange var I til at udvælge kandidaterne?
    - Hvis flere: Var I nogenlunde enige om, hvilke kandidater I ville have til samtale?
- Hvad gør I med ansøgere, som ikke får jobbet? (får de altid besked om det?)
- Jeg har oplevet, at nogle ansøgere slet ikke får en tilbagemelding.
- Har du nogen forslag til, hvorfor arbejdsgivere ikke giver skriftligt afslag til ansøgerne?

- Jeg har jo søgt jobbet to gange, kan du huske disse ansøgere? (medbring ansøgningerne)

- Ansøger uden handicap: Hvordan tænker du denne ansøger passer på jobopslaget?

    - Hvad lægger du først mærke til ved Rasmus/Camilla?

    - Hvad gør, at det lige netop er det du lægger mærke til? Hvorfor er det vigtigt?
    - Hvad taler for Rasmus/Camilla, og hvad taler imod?
        - Hvorfor?
- Jeg tror, at når man har læst en ansøgning, forsøger man at forestille sig ansøgeren ud fra de ting vedkommende skriver.
- Vil du ikke prøve at indvie mig i, hvad det er for en person du har i tankerne, efter du har læst den her ansøgning. Hvad er det for en person du ser for dig?
- Ansøger med handicap: hvordan passer denne person på jobopslaget?
    - Hvad lægger du først mærke til hos Mathias/Julie?
    - Hvad gør, at det lige netop er det du lægger mærke til? Hvorfor er det vigtigt?
    - Hvad taler for Mathias/Julie, og hvad taler imod?
        - Hvorfor
    - Hvilken person ser du for dig?
- Hvis ja til retningslinjer/politikker om socialt ansvar: hvordan tror du det har påvirket din vurdering af ansøgeren?

(nævner informanten nogle forskelle mellem ansøgerne, som bør følges op?)

Personer med handicap som medarbejdere

- Hvilke tanker gør du dig om handicappet hos Mathias/Julie?
- Ville personen kunne arbejde her på jeres arbejdsplads med sit handicap? (OBS: stilles ikke hvis ansøger med handicap fik jobsamtale)
- Hvorfor/hvorfor ikke? (personen har jo erhvervserfaring fra en lignende stilling?)
- Hvis nej: hvilke udfordringer forestiller du dig kan opstå?
- Hvis ja: hvilke informationer gør, at du tænker vedkommende kan arbejde her?

- Hvilke jobfunktioner kan du se denne person foretage sig på jeres arbejdsplads?
- Hvilke jobfunktioner kan du ikke forestille dig vedkommende kan udføre?
- Hvad gør netop denne jobfunktion problematisk?
- Vil du vurdere jeres arbejdsplads som tilgængelig for kørestolsbrugere?
- Kan du give nogle eksempler på, hvorfor du vurderer således?
- Har I talt om tilgængelighed på jeres arbejdsplads? (er det overhovedet del noget, de gør sig tanker om?)
- Er der nogle forhold på arbejdspladsen, som du tænker kan skabe udfordringer for en kørestolsbruger?
    - Hvis ja: kan du umiddelbart se nogen løsninger på de udfordringer?

- Mener du det er vigtigt, at personer med handicap skriver det i deres ansøgning?
    - Hvorfor/hvorfor ikke?
- Hvor omfattende skal et handicap være, før det bør nævnes? (hvis det ikke har betydning, skal det så stadig nævnes?)
- Hvordan synes du om måden, Mathias/Julie beskriver sit handicap på?
- Opstår der nogle spørgsmål omkring handicappet hos dig?
- Kunne ansøgeren skrive mere om sit handicap, for at besvare dine spørgsmål i ansøgningen? Ville det hjælpe noget? (fx arbejdsevne eller kompensationsmuligheder)
- Bør det stå både i CV og ansøgning, eller bare det ene sted?
- (resultat fra felteksperimentet) Kan du forstå, at nogle personer med handicap udelader det i ansøgningen?
    - Hvorfor/hvorfor ikke?
    - Hvad tænker du om resultatet af eksperimentet?
    - Overrasker resultatet dig?
    - Hvad tror du, det skyldes?
    - Hvorfor tror du, at Mathias/Julie oftere bliver valgt fra i rekrutteringsprocessen?

Politisk ønske om at få flere i arbejde?

- Med din erfaring inden for rekruttering og i dit daglige arbejde, oplever du så et politisk ønske at om få flere personer med handicap i arbejde?
    - Hvordan?
    - Påvirker det jeres rekrutteringsproces?
- Oplever du, at jobcentret henvender sig til jer ang. rekruttering af personer med handicap?
- Henvender de sig ift. rekruttering af ansøgere uden handicap?
- Med din viden og erfaring, tænker du så det er muligt, at flere personer med handicap kommer i arbejde?
    - Hvis nej: hvorfor ikke?
    - Hvis ja: hvordan?
- Hvad tror du der skal til, for at jeres arbejdsplads og lignende arbejdspladser ansætter flere personer med handicap?

Afslutning

Er der noget vi ikke har været inde på, som du gerne vil have, jeg får med?
Spørgsmål eller kommentarer til undersøgelsen eller det videre forløb?

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