Høgskolen i **Hedmark**

Faculty of Public Health

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Master thesis

Disability and work

Barriers to employment

A qualitative study on disability and experiences entering the labor
market.

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Acknowledgement/ Foreword

Finally,the time has come to write the foreword after completing the master's program in public health. It has been a challenging but very educational program. I have through this program and this thesis learnt a lot about my self and it is now time to move on to other pursuits. This Thesis has been a project that has taken a bit longer then usual due to work commitments at the same time as writing this, which has led me to be a weekend warrior and many late nights. First of all I would like to thank my supervisor Katie Powell for having such patience with me who have stuck by me this whole time during the writing process and have believed in me.

Also very big thank you to my girlfriend Anne-Sophie Prebensen who have supported me and helped me this whole time and have been someone I could confide in whenever I needed to. I really could not have done this without you.

Also I would like to thank the participants who gave of their time in order for me to do this project. Thank you for letting me take a trip inside your heads and for sharing your thoughts with me.

Oslo 22. May. 2016   Kjell Stian Sellevoll

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Abstract

Purpose: The purpose of this project is to investigate the experiences of disabled people in the job search process using the social model of disability.

Sample: This sample consists of seven people with disabilities and one employer.

Theory: This study is framed within a social model of disability. In a social understanding of disability the focus is on the person's environment and how these surroundings might be disabling.

Method: This study is an in depth qualitative study with a phenomenology and hermeneutic approach. Data is gathered through semi-structured interviews.

Finding: Within the social model of disability it might suggest they are seeking jobs in an environment where there is little room to be disabled and that they might be limited in what jobs they pursue due to experiences in the past. They all tell stories about a desire to be seen as ordinary workers without any needs for special adaptations, although some adaptation takes place. Findings may suggest they choose to act in a certain way because this is what is needed in order for them to pursue a position where they have a greater chance of succeeding in finding and gaining employment. This appears in the findings as strategies related to disclosing of ones disability, seeking a dialogue with the employer and a desire to not make any fuss.

Conclusion: This study suggest that the disabled are hesitant about disclosing a disability when applying for a job or being a bit more apprehensive in when you share it. It is important to work towards increased dialogue and mutual respect when it comes to the job search process and recruiting more disabled to fulfil the government's goal of intermediate aim of increasing disabled people in work. This will, among other things, lead to more openness about disability, and eventually contribute to greater social changes, such as equalizing the balance of power between employer and job seekers where increased knowledge of adaptations and disability in general will give employers less concern or feelings of risk when employing disabled people

Norsk sammendrag

Formål: Hensikten med dette prosjektet er å undersøke erfaringene til funksjonshemmede i jobbsøkerprosessen ved hjelp av den sosiale modellen for funksjonshemming.

Utvalg: Dette utvalget består av syv personer med nedsatt funksjonsevne og en arbeidsgiver.

Teori: Studien er forankret i en sosial forståelse av funksjonshemning. I en sosial forståelse av funksjonshemming er fokuset på miljø og hvordan disse omgivelsene kan være funksjonshemmede.

Metode: Denne studien er en kvalitativ dybde studie med en fenomenologisk og hermeneutisk tilnærming. Data blir samlet inn gjennom semi-strukturerte intervjuer.

Funn: Innenfor den sosiale modellen av funksjonshemming kan det være de søker jobb i et miljø der det er lite plass til å være funksjonshemmet, og at det kan være begrenset hva jobber de kan forfølge på grunn av tidligere erfaringer. De forteller historier om et ønske om å bli sett på som vanlige arbeidstakere uten noen behov for spesielle tilpasninger, selv om noen tilpasning finner sted. Funn kan peke på at de velger å handle på en bestemt måte fordi dette er hva som er nødvendig for å få dem til å komme i en posisjon der de har en større sjanse for å lykkes i å finne og få arbeid. Dette vises i resultatene som strategier knyttet til å avsløre funksjonshemming, å søke en dialog med arbeidsgiver og et ønske om å ikke lage noe oppstyr.

Konklusjon: Denne studien tyder på at funksjonshemmede er nølende om å avsløre en funksjonshemming når du søker på en jobb eller å være litt mer nølende i når du deler den. Det er viktig å arbeide for økt dialog og gjensidig respekt når det gjelder jobbsøkerprosessen for å rekruttere flere funksjonshemmede til å oppfylle regjeringens mål om delmålet om å øke funksjonshemmede i arbeid. Dette vil blant annet føre til mer åpenhet om funksjonshemminger og etter hvert bidra til større sosiale endringer, for eksempel å utjevne maktbalansen mellom arbeidsgiver og arbeidssøkere der økt kunnskap om tilpasninger og funksjonshemming generelt vil gi arbeidsgivere mindre bekymring eller følelse av risiko ved ansettelse av funksjonshemmede.

1 Introduction

1.1 Why this research.

Internationally there has been an increasing focus on non-discrimination protection in the workplace and human rights for disabled people (Halvorsen & Hvinden, 2011). Article 23 in the Universal declaration on human rights states that "Everyone has the right to work, to free choice of employment, to just and favourable conditions of work and protection against unemployment" (The Universal Declaration of Human Rights, 1948) In addition article 27 in the UN Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities [CRPD] further states that disabled people have a right to work on equal basis with others, and its main purpose is to ensure individuals with disabilities equal opportunities, to realize their human rights and to reduce obstacles that hinder this (CRPD, 2008). Also the national discriminatory law in Norway (Diskriminerings og tilgjengelighetsloven [DTL], 2013) states that no one should be discriminated against in everyday life or in a work situation.

Employment is considered important in international and national society today. Social interaction and the importance of having work are important values in Norwegian society (Bråten & Svalund, 2015) and the opportunity to go to school and have a meaningful job is important if one is to say that the able-bodied and disabled are on equal terms in everyday life. According to the report by Svalund and Hansen (2013) this does not seem to be the case in Norwegian society for people with disabilities. People with disabilities who want a job and are willing to work are in many cases unable to find meaningful jobs despite having the proper qualifications and often fall short already at the entrance to the labour market. The Norwegian discrimination (Diskriminerings og tilgjengelighetsloven [DTL], 2013) makes it illegal for people to be discriminated against because of disability. This law gives the possibility to complain to the department of equality and anti-discrimination and the purpose if this law is to secure disabled peoples rights in giving equal possibility to obtaining paid work and having access to work. In spite of this law's existence disabled people experience possible discrimination in being denied access to work because of barriers to inclusion in everyday life, such as the opportunity to engage in paid work (Schedin Leiulfsrud, Reinhardt, Ostermann, Ruoranen, & Post, 2014). There is an aspiration from the government's side toward people with disabilities to live, work and coexist together with the able bodied in Norwegian society (Ose et al., 2013) and the Nordic welfare model has largely made

individuals independent and not dependent on the family like other countries have done, like securing income for people out of work (Halvorsen & Hvinden, 2011). Securing income for people outside of work is of course positive but has led to failure in policy areas, one being the ambition to promote participation in the labor market and remove obstacles to endorse equality and participation in society (Halvorsen & Hvinden, 2011).

Employment in the labour market is an important indicator of social participation and inclusion of disabled people, (Ministry of Health and Care Services, 2013; NOU) and the overall goal for the Norwegian policy for the disabled since the 1980s has been full participation and equality for this group as a whole and labour participation are being used as a measure for successful integration (NOU 2005:8; Vedeler, 2014a). The employment rate in Norway in general is high but the employment rate among the disabled in Norwegian society is low compared to the general population and has been at the same level for many years (Molden & Tøssebro, 2013). According to Bø and Håland (2013) 27 % or 86,000 people in Norway who have some kind of disability say they are willing to work but are not successful in finding employment. In the analysis by Molden and Tøssebro (2013) were they reanalysed previous collected data from three different national surveys and compared them with the recently labour force survey [AKU] they conclude that the most important finding in their article shows a downward trend in labour force participation among people with a disability since 1980 until the early 2000s with a further reduction in 2008. They do mention that there's too early to say whether this latest change is a trend or if it is only a short-term fluctuation.

In Norway authorities have developed a range of financial benefits for employers to promote hiring people with disabilities, such as benefits and support for technical aids for persons with various disabilities (Vedeler & Mossige, 2010). Despite good intentions, one can argue that the employment of disabled people in Norway is not as inclusive as one might think taking into consideration that the employment rate for people with disabilities have not shifted or increased but remained rather steady with small fluctuations since the first use of statistics in disability research and given that this is a priority of the government. The goal of full participation in working life for people with disabilities may be a ambitious goal but expresses a basic norm in Norwegian society about equality (Vedeler, 2014a). According to Andreassen (2012) politicians are puzzled by the number of disabled people outside of the labour market and are wondering why these programmes do not have an effect on employment rates. This is one of the major issues in policy discussions. She puts forward an

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alternative perspective focusing on whether disabled can in fact be an asset and not considered a liability.

Despite high labour force participation, Norway has not succeeded particularly well to employ people with disabilities (Molden & Tøssebro, 2013), and according to the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development [OECD], employment among people with disabilities in Norway would be characterised as poor. The number of disabled in employment in Norway is the lowest in the northern countries when compared to Sweden, Finland and Denmark but around average for 27 OECD countries. When compared to just Sweden, Norway have 15% fewer people with disabilities in employment according to Molden and Tøssebro (2013). In order to better facilitate and make the proper political arrangements for succeeding in hiring people with disabilities as well as to shed light on the debate on disability and employment it is important to gain more knowledge about businesses and employers attitudes, experiences and practices related to employment of persons with disabilities. A sound knowledge base is a prerequisite for targeted efforts to combat discrimination and possibly improve the conditions for people seeking employment (Svalund & Hansen, 2013).

1.2 IA-Agreement

In the White Paper by the Ministry of Health and Care Services (2013) there is a an agreement on the need for an inclusive work place to prevent illness, exclusion and dropping out of the labour market. This is also the overriding objective of the inclusion into work (IA) agreement. This agreement is a letter of intent between the Government, represented by the Minister of Labour; and various employer organizations (Ministry of Work and Social Affair, 2010, p. 2). In the inclusion to work agreement from 2001 (Svalund & Hansen, 2013) which have been revised three times, 2005, 2010 and recently in 2014 has three specific goals. One of them is aimed specifically at disabled people saying an increase in the number of disabled people in employment is a specific target. This target has been the same for all the revisions of this agreement. Despite this focus on increasing the number of disabled people in paid work this one sub-goal of the three goals stated is the one that has succeeded the least. The other two objectives for the period, trying to reduce sickness absence and increase the average age of retirement have succeeded somewhat better according to the report of the inclusion to work agreement (Ose et al., 2013). In the previous appointment period the parties agreed that

the responsibility on the people already in the various businesses fall upon the businesses themselves, while it is the government's responsibility to protect people outside the business who are trying to enter into the labour market (Ose et al., 2013).

1.3 Benefits of Paid Work

According to Hansen, Andreassen, and Meager (2011, p. 120) there has in Norway as well as the rest of Europe for the last two decades been a focus on making "work the first choice" and "making work pay" for people with disabilities in order to make them more employable. In order to see a society as good or well functioning it should recognise diversity and paid work is very much important to empower people with disabilities that want to work and further more give them responsibility for their own welfare (Värlander, 2012). According to Tøssebro (2013) the way of thinking about disability is to be part of everyday society, to contribute and give back to society, and having paid work goes along with this kind of thinking. Schedin Leiulfsrud et al. (2014, p. 1177) describe the value of work as a "personal and social identity in interaction with others, as a hegemonic social norm and a sense of moral obligation to contribute to society". A regular job outside of government projects or routine jobs was more sought after, valued as more meaningful and described as most important for participation and integration in society among those interviewed in the study. In a review of literature relating to employment and disability and what work means to people with disabilities by Saunders and Nedelec (2014, p. 106) having a job was shown to mean not only that you receive pay for work that you do, it was believed to be a "natural part of life, source of identity, feelings of normality and self-esteem and worth". It is also a place where one forges a sense of self and takes part in a community where you have the opportunity to socialize on a regular basis with others in daily life. This is also the case in the article by Nota, Santilli, Ginevra, and Soresi (2014) saying that that "work is a crucial issue in lives of people with disabilities" and that it helps them construct their personal identity and find meaning in their life. Work is also an important arena for the distribution of income, but it is also an important arena for participation and self-realization (Svalund & Hansen, 2013). The review also indicates that having some sort of disability or receiving some sort of financial support because of injury or disability does not mean that people are not motivated or interested in work. Also the review states that having an occupation is essential to everyone's quality of life and basic existence. Their review does not just show that people with disabilities find work important and meaningful but that most who are able to work does want

to work and that people with disabilities "have the same desires as everyone else in life, including relationships with others, a sense of stability, and to have purpose in life" (p. 106).

In the article by Vedeler (2014a, p. 3) she says Norwegian research points to two possible reasons for the low employment rates in Norway. First there is the chance that there has been too much of a one-sided focus on changing the competence of the disabled without changing environmental conditions. Secondly there may be lacking demands directed towards the employers to hire disabled workers and keep disabled employed. She further states that the knowledge in this field still is limited pointing to a report by Norvoll and Fossestøl (2010) saying that more knowledge on relations and working life, and how these affect how people behave when looking for work. In the article by Vedeler (2014b, p. 608) she states that a "research design, which includes interviews of employers as well as applicants, would allow us to investigate how different positions affect experiences of participating in job interviews that involve the issue of disability". Also in the report by Falkum and Solberg (2015) there is mentioned how a disabled person thinks would give valuable knowledge in the process of including more disabled people. Following this line of thought people who have a disability, and employers who have experience in dealing with this group may occupy valuable insights worth sharing that can shed light and contribute to increased knowledge in this field. On the basis of these statements the purpose of the study will be explained.

1.4 Purpose of the study

As mentioned previously in the foreword section this study is part of a public health program and part of the purpose is to contribute to more knowledge in this field. The findings of the study might be valuable for disabled seeking employment and for employers thinking of hiring disabled workers who according to the research are saying that more knowledge is needed when it comes to hiring people with disabilities. The purpose of this project is to investigate the experiences of disabled people in the job search process related to barriers using the social model of disability. Questions to be answered are.

How do disabled people experience the job search process?

What strategies do disabled people use while addressing any barriers they come across?

How do these experiences influence their strategies?

2 Theory

The field of disability research is spread out over many disciplines and there are various concepts and understandings of how disability is understood. How these terms are being used in relation to the social model are important in discussing the findings later on in this study and provide a framework for the study. In the following section the major concepts and different terms will be explained in order to help understand the complex field of disability and work.

2.1 Importance of definitions

In the review article by Lederer, Loisel, Rivard, and Champagne (2014) they examine how definitions of disability have been used in the existing published literature. How definitions are used in research, in political terms and in business. They also look at how the understanding of disability has evolved over time and they are saying that research on disability and work consists of a number of definitions that one must adhere to. Vedeler (2014a, p. 11) argues that the literature does not have a shared view of what the term disability is. This lack of clarity appears partly in how the term is used in "regulatory, legislative and political rhetoric, but becomes even more pronounced when looking at how the term is understood by managers, users and recipients in the community" (own translation). Here she is referring to the many disciplines´ and conceptualisations the disability field consists of. Part of the problem with how disabilities are understood and then being measured, can lead to difficulties in quantifying how many people really are disabled. Both Vedeler (2014a) and Lederer et al. (2014) emphasize the importance of being aware of these different perspectives and the need for researchers to clearly position themselves in relation to their own understanding when analysing conditions that promote or inhibit participation in working life. Also what sort of terms being used to describe a phenomenon can express our understanding of it (Vedeler, 2014a). Similarly, it will be central to my project to be aware of these understandings when doing this project.

2.2 Different understandings

There are within disability studies mainly two dominant understandings of disability, the medical, and the social models. Norway has also adopted a relational model, which is

according to (Shakespeare, 2004) just another type of social model. The following section will elaborate on these understandings.

2.2.1 Medical understanding

Barnes and Mercer (2005, p. 528) argue that the "dominant view of a individual with an impairment" back in the 1960s was regarded as a personal tragedy. Oliver and Barnes (2012, p. 11) state that in spite of a "surge of interest in disability in political and academic circles since the publishing of the first edition of their book", many Western countries still think about disability as a personal tragedy. According to (Oliver & Barnes, 2012, p. 21) there is the need to distinguish between impairment and disability. Impairment is thought of as "lacking part or all of a limb, or having a defective limb, organ or mechanism of the body", while disability is defined as "the disadvantage or restriction of activity caused by contemporary social organisation which takes no or little account of people who have physical impairments and thus excludes them from participation in the mainstream of social activities". This has been adopted from Union of Physically Impaired Against Segregation [UPIAS] and was an early disability rights organisation from as early as 1974, which worked for the rights of the disabled. They criticized "organisations controlled by non-disabled experts for their failure to address the various barriers central to disabled peoples exclusion from mainstream economic and social activity and their lack of accountability to the disabled community" (Oliver & Barnes, 2012, p. 21). These initial ideas have had a large influence on the disabled movement and disability theorizing in the UK (Oliver & Barnes, 2012). The medical understanding is closely linked to impairment but the understanding of disability has changed over time (Tøssebro, 2010) and as Tøssebro (2013, p. 71) says in his article pointing to Norway "prior to 1990 medical perspectives dominated the research and was mainly done on impairments", meaning research focusing on social oppression and social problems like equality and participation was not the main focus, but in the "early 1990s a social scientific research tradition emerged and grew into an institutionalized area of research". Initially impairment was related to physical impairment but was later dropped to include all impairments, physical, sensory and cognitive. Today the term medical understanding is used when thinking of impairment. "In a medical understanding, disability is seen as a phenomenon that is caused by functional limitations resulting from illness, injury or disability (own translation, Vedeler, 2014a, p. 11).

2.2.2 Social understanding

Within a social understanding of disability the focus is on the person's environment and how these surroundings might be disabling. Such a focus can be seen as a reaction to a one-dimensional and individual perspective on disability like the medical understanding (Vedeler, 2014a). According to Vedeler (2014a) it is possible to divide into a weak and strong version when understanding the social model of disability. In the strong version disability is explained by the fact that society has established barriers that make the disabled unable to participate on equal basis with others. Society creates systematic and structural barriers that lead to social exclusion and oppression. For instance, it can be such things as unavailable buildings and transport- services. A weak version of social understanding of disability integrates subjective experiences of body and disease as important conditions for identity and understanding of self. This helps demonstrate how discriminatory and oppressive mechanisms can create disability (Vedeler, 2014a, p. 12). In the social model of disability impairment is not denied but is not thought of as the cause of disabled peoples economic and social disadvantage. Instead there is a shift toward how "far, and in what ways society restricts their opportunities to participate in mainstream economic and social activities" (Oliver & Barnes, 2012, p. 22). Meaning that disability is defined as an outcome of an oppressive relationship between people with impairments and the rest of society (Finkelstein in Oliver and Barnes (2012), the social model does shift its attention to the disabled people's common experiences of oppression and exclusion and that those areas can be changed by political action and social change.

2.2.3 Relational understanding

In a relational understanding, disability is created in the interaction between the person's disability and the social, cultural and physical environment (Vedeler, 2014a, p. 13). This relational understanding gives meaning to the "bodily characteristics significance from social conditions the individual is a part of". In other words a bodily or mental disability is not crucial in determining how disabled a person is since it is this interaction that creates the actual disability. Meaning that disability needs to be put into context for it to be understood fully.

Priestley (1998) demonstrates the various models by showing a model clearly depicting what sort of units who are being analysed according to how one understands disability.

TABLE II. Four approaches to disability theory

	Materialist	Idealist
Individual	Position 1 Individual materialist models Disability is the physical product of biology acting upon the functioning of material individuals (bodies) The units of analysis are impaired bodies	Position 2 Individual idealist models Disability is the product of voluntaristic individuals (disabled and non-disabled) engaged in the creation of identities and the negotiation of roles The units of analysis are beliefs and identities
Social	Position 3 Social creationist models Disability is the material product of socio-economic relations developing within a specific historical context The units of analysis are disabling barriers and material relations of power	Position 4 Social constructionist models Disability is the idealist product of societal development within a specific cultural context The units of analysis are cultural values and representations

This table shows the four approaches to disability theories and what sort of units are being analysed under each position. However with these previous paragraphs there is the need to clarify or sharpen the explanation of the understanding of disability. Priestley (1998) does in his article refer to basically the same theories but tries to complicate it further. Priestley (1998) does in his article argue that a proper understanding of disability theory does require more than the distinction between individual and social model approaches. Priestley (1998, p. 82) does in his article say that there are many approaches to "disability that appear to be concerned with social phenomena" but is in fact individualistic models. For instance he is referring to a study by Wood and Badly that saw attitudes and also physical barriers as playing a part in disability studies saying that attitudes "tend to be reinforced by their structural contexts" and the institutional frameworks. He also addresses the lack of "forethought" saying that the change of individual attitudes would remove disability.

2.3 Barriers to inclusion into working life (literature study)

When conducting a literature review of the disability and work there is a vast amount of information available and the task of knowing what to include is difficult. Research on disability consists of many concepts and is widely spread over many disciplines such as economics, medicine and sociology, which makes the whole field very comprehensive and difficult to understand (Roulstone, 2013). Much of the research available is found in reports and in research done by national research institutes. An explanation of how the literature review was carried out is explained in the methods section. Internationally, research on the transition to adult life including work participation has received some attention and is showing this transition to be very difficult, especially for young people with disabilities (Vedeler, 2014a). This transition is difficult because of individual conditions such as physical, sensory or cognitive limitations. Obstacles or barriers are areas like peoples attitudes toward people with disabilities, lack of knowledge among service providers, educational institutions, parents and others (Vedeler, 2014a).

2.3.1 Knowledge of employers

In a focus group survey conducted by the US department of labour where 13 employers from various industries were asked what they thought the most important areas in terms of low employment among people with disabilities were. The most common response was that employers need more practical information on how to remove own prejudices and concerns about hiring and retaining people with disabilities (Burke et al., 2013). In the recent report by Bråthen and Svalund (2015) as well as Svalund and Hansen (2013) they both mention four different barriers for the integration of people with disabilities. These are discrimination barriers, a cost barrier, a productivity barrier and an information and attitude barrier. Vedeler (2009) addresses the fact that processes in the welfare service may be a barrier in getting employment. Rusnes (2010) mentions in her report that many of the youth was met with a sceptical worker when meeting with NAV. The NAV-caseworker had a lack of knowledge and actually recommended disability benefit instead of being guided into work (Rusnes, 2010). At the same time others have positive experiences with NAV-caseworkers who have helped them in getting jobs they were suited for. Even though the young people have sought after qualifications for various jobs they have experienced being placed last and not received any employment. What sort of disability you have does influence your chances of getting into

paid work (Sima, Wehman, Chan, West, & Leucking, 2014) and generally more severe disabilities have poorer chances of securing employment.

2.3.2 Attitudes of employers

There are currently several barriers persons with disabilities face when trying to progress into the labour market. In two studies done by respectively The Work Research Institute [AFI] (Rusnes, 2010) and Norwegian Institute on Research on Social welfare and aging [NOVA] (Grue & Finnvold, 2014) they recognise two different places where Norwegians with disabilities encounter different barriers or obstacles. This is when faced with welfare administration or when faced with working life. The main barriers in the welfare administration are related to meeting with caseworkers, restrictive and passive labour market measures and young disabled people's self-understanding/awareness. When faced with working life the main barriers they address are the lack of accommodations, the demands in the workplace, low education, lack of relevant competence, openness about disability and employer's attitudes and behaviour.

2.3.3 Fear of cost by employers

In the article by Erickson, Schrader, Bruyère, VanLooy, and Matteson (2014, p. 310) they state that organisations are pleased with their performance and are open to hiring disabled people but it is "complicated by negative stereotypes and fears of cost and litigation" (Burke et al., 2013). Burke et al. (2013, p. 21) did in their study a review of the literature where 34 studies were included. The studies were divided into three categories looking at "hiring and accommodating employees with disabilities, work performance, and affective reactions and behavioural intentions of employers". This review states that employers in general have positive attitudes towards disabled workers but "employer affective reactions and behavioural intentions of employers towards disability in the work setting were less positive and negatively impact hiring decisions, provision of accommodations and work performance appraisals" (p, 21). This is also the case in the FAFO report by Svalund and Hansen (2013). This report interviewed more than 1600 human relations managers in organisations with more then ten employees and are saying employers are very positive to employing disabled workers and seeing the disabled as a labour resource but these good intentions does not show in actual hiring in the organisations included in the study. This study does share similar views with Burke et al. (2013) who both state in spite of many good reasons for hiring disabled workers

that a lack of applications from qualified applicants was given as a reason for employers not hiring more disabled workers. This is also commented on in the recent article by (Kuznetsova, 2015) stating that willingness to comply to public expectations often exceeds actual hiring of disabled people. This article discusses how companies present themselves outward to the society but has a different policy internally. The article by Hernandez and McDonald (2010) are saying that when comparing the disabled against non- disabled they received the same score when it comes to work performance which is often the most cited misconception or concern about people with disabilities. Employers are worried it might be more expensive hiring people with disabilities.

2.4 Conclusions

This previous chapter has presented theoretical understandings of disability. The medical, the social and the relational model. The chapter has also tried to point out the most important barriers for the disabled from the employer's perspective. It provides a comprehensive image of the field with many theories and different methods being used pointing not having a shared view of the nature of disability studies. Access to employment is a complex issue. Many things influence these experiences such as emotions, social norms, expectations, physical environment, attitudes and law. In this study the purpose is to investigate the experiences that the disabled people might have related to the job search process. The main focus is the disabled peoples experiences with the added edition of the employer who might give valuable insights into how different positions affect experiences of participating in job interviews.

3 Method

In the following section the methods for choosing the appropriate instrument for gathering data, how the study was conducted, how participants were selected, how data was collected, analysis of data as well as strengths and weaknesses of the chosen method and ethical considerations in execution of the project.

3.1 Qualitative approach

Kvale and Brinkmann (2012) say that if you want to know how people experience the world and their life, you simply have to ask them. The goal within qualitative methods is to explore meaning within social and cultural phenomenon in their natural context and looked upon from

the informants' own perspective. If you like to learn more on how your experiences during childhood and growing up shape your experiences in adult life then qualitative interview is a good way to go (Malterud, 2011, p. 66). Qualitative methods can in this respect be used when wanting to know how disabled experience seeking employment and further shed light on the factors that are important to the disabled themselves when seeking employment.

According to (Malterud, 2011) one can ask for this meaning and achieve diversity through the questions and the various nuances of a phenomenon and this may help to improve our understanding of the different experiences disabled have related to barriers and work inclusion. Qualitative research is usually focused on words and is inductive by nature, meaning that the focus is more on generating theory rather than trying to test hypotheses which is the main focus in quantitative research (Bryman, 2012).

3.2 Phenomenology and hermeneutic approach

When conducting research on how the respondents in this study experience the barriers of inclusion to working life, phenomenology and hermeneutic approaches will be used as an inspiration when answering the research question. According to Kvale and Brinkmann (2012) phenomenology, is within the context of qualitative research understood as making sense of social phenomena from the perspectives of the participants themselves, meaning their lived life- experiences and within this tradition of qualitative research, phenomenology is central together with a hermeneutic approach. This hermeneutic approach is related to interpretation of meaning through text analysis of the data collected through your studies. This approach is also used when reading and sorting out information in the articles being used in the study. Kvale and Brinkmann (2012) does expand on this a bit referring to the hermeneutic principles of interpretation saying this is also a process that goes back and forth many times mentioning the hermeneutic circle as an example, meaning as you read and develop your project you open up for an ever deeper understanding of the material.

Phenomenology is according to Malterud (2011) a valid form of understanding peoples' experiences and can be described from different perspectives but all perspectives are not equally relevant for the researchers point he or she is trying to give. That is why the perspective and position of the researcher have significance in what knowledge emerges from a study. The goal is to explore the meaning of social and cultural phenomena as the participants in their natural context experience it. Malterud (2011, p. 27) say that qualitative

methods are especially good for exploring dynamic processes like interactions, development, motions and wholeness. This approach will be beneficial in exploring the experiences of the participants in relation to the job search process and how the disabled experience different barriers and how they may choose to react to these barriers.

3.3 The qualitative Interview

This form of interview is used when one wants to gain insight into the informants´ life world or lived experience (Creswell, 2014). When trying to get a better understanding of the lived experiences and specific phenomenon from certain people you need to get information from the people who have been through the actual problem you want to know more about.

According to Kvale and Brinkmann (2012) when trying to explore people's "experiences, perceptions, values, and interactions" you can only get partway with using epidemiological or biomedical research methods and testing hypotheses. There is a need for other research strategies when wanting to find out such things as personality traits, personal experiences, perceptions, motives and attitudes. When determining an appropriate way to examine barriers that my actual research participants experience it is appropriate to use semi- structured interviews (Malterud, 2011, p. 153). Qualitative research using interviews provides a deeper understanding of a phenomenon or problem that you want to know more about and it is also an appropriate method if one wants to understand the complexity of a given situation (Malterud, 2011) as explained earlier in the literature review.

When doing the interviews there is a need for being flexible (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2012). Meaning that what has been said in the earlier interviews can be used in following up areas or themes of interests in the later interviews. It is necessary to have a certain structure in the interview situation and be careful to give the respondents enough room to talk freely about what he or she regards as important to them. According to (Bryman, 2012) the guide should not have too much detailed questions rather more themes of interest and topics to be covered in the conversation. The guide was produced with that in mind and the initial questions dealt with topics that for the most part had the purpose of getting acquainted with each other. This was supposed to work both ways; they would learn something about me and vice versa. Also this was done in order to make them feel I was trustworthy and I would to the best of my ability show them respect.

3.4 Interview guide

When developing the interview guide there was put thought behind developing questions that would answer or shed light on the problem description. This meant formulating the guide after themes. Semi-structured interviews should have a form that is very similar to a normal conversation. This conversation will be done together with an interview guide, consisting of open ended questions which guide the conversation on topics that you want to visit and which are relevant for clarifying the research issues (Malterud, 2011). The job search process can basically be divided into 4 different stages. First there is the actual job search where you look for possible jobs. Then there is the process of recruiting. Like being called in for an interview and after that, the interview and finally being selected and starting your job. These stages were the basis for the interviews and the guide was structured after the different stages of the job search process with emphasis on the three first. The idea of designing the interviews in this way was the idea that through the interviews they would give more emphasis on one or more stages to hopefully give an idea of where the major hurdle in the job search process would lie or simply gain insight to the various stages.

All through these stages encouragement was given to get the participants to talk about some of the more known barriers. Also openness about topics that were not covered by the interview guide was considered positive. In hindsight this open approach led to more comprehensive data but at the same time it brought with it a more challenging and time-consuming analysis that with a more rigid structure would have concentrated the interviews into an easier analysis process. This may be on account of little experience but there was the feeling that after some time one felt more confident when doing the interviews.

When talking with the respondents' thought was put behind making them feel as comfortable as possible and try not to interrupt too much. This was done in order to get the respondents to talk freely on what they considered to be important to them in terms of what they themselves considered the major hurdle for gaining access to desired work.

3.5 Sample

When choosing an appropriate sample for the study a strategic sample was chosen in order to best elucidate what people with disabilities are faced with when participating in working life. (Malterud, 2011) uses the term purposive sampling and mentions that sampling should be

done in reference to the goals of the research and will help the research question to be answered. It is important to choose people who have experience with the actual problem as stated in the problem description. A strategic and purposive way of recruiting is a well-known method for recruiting informants within qualitative research Bryman (2012). Consideration was given as to whether or not to include persons without physical disabilities. This can be done as long as they have knowledge or experience that can aid and shed light to the research. To be included in the study, it was decided that the informants must have experience searching for jobs and participated in at least one interview. Having a job was not seen as important but experience with interviews and general participation in working life was considered to more likely provide deeper knowledge and give richer data. Rich data strengthens the possibilities for doubt and gives more meaning to the material because it can provide nuances and competing results and conclusions (Malterud, 2011). The employer in the study would give such valuable insights since it would be possible to compare the two sides, employer and employees.

Age was not set as a selection criteria and Education level was also not set as a criteria. The informants were to be recruited through the Technical Aid Central [TAC] in Hedmark at Terningen Arena. Two meetings were arranged where the possibility for recruiting informants was discussed with one of the consultants working there. An agreement was made that the TAC would help to recruit participants. The procedure was as explained in the first contact sheet. This resulted in one candidate. Since TAC did not seem to recruit possible candidates for some reason unknown to me due to the fact they said things were going ok. They said they had some good candidates. It was not until several requests by mail and telephone asking my contact at TAC if they were able to obtain any more candidates the decision was made together with the supervisor to recruit participants through contacting three organisations and resulted in two organisations willing to help with recruitment. The Norwegian Association of Disabled (NAD) posted a recruitment advert on their website asking for candidates, while Uloba posted on their intranet, which goes out to people with various disabilities who have personal assistance through Uloba. This organisation is part of the independent living community in Norway. These strategies ended up with 7 possible candidates eligible for participation. Two candidates withdrew when realising they would be taped and one failed to respond to inquiries after first being interested. This left 4 possible candidates. Realising this may result in a rather small sample; four more were recruited through the process of snowballing, which finally led to 8 possible candidates. Snowballing is simply using the

network of the interview candidates who were already recruited if they knew anyone who would be willing to participate in such a study. In this way the final four candidates were recruited. Recruiting participants was a challenging task with having to juggle many balls at the same time. There was a need to be very flexible when doing this.

All of the interviews were scheduled in advance with arrangements for having a quiet place to sit and be undisturbed for the duration of the interview. On hour was set aside for each interview. Four of the interviews were done at their job while two was at done at the candidates' home while the final interview were done in a hotel room. Of the 8 candidates only two females were included in the sample. A gender distribution of 50 per cent would have been ideal but the selection will still be able to point to relevant issues in the study and even though this study is rather small in scale it can give valuable insights to how disabled people think during their search for employment. In qualitative studies the number of informants can vary. Some studies like life story interviews can include just one person while others can have over a hundred informants. In purposive sampling a sample is put together with a purpose that the material has the best potential to shed light on the issue we want to know something about (Malterud, 2011). The employees and the employers may point to different aspects of what they consider important. This may be due to the fact they are on opposites places of the table so to speak and may have divergent opinions on where the problem lies.

3.6 Own role and pre-understanding

Modern research today does reject the notion of the neutral researcher who does not exercise any kind of influence on the development of knowledge Malterud (2011, p. 27). The question then is not wither the researcher does influence the research but in fact how he does it. A researcher is a participant in the field and influences in many different ways wither the material is constructed from conversations or from field notes through observations (Malterud, 2011). Malterud uses the example of a doctor who has experiences with therapeutic conversations who might see many similarities with a qualitative interview and his therapeutic conversations and think he would not need that much training when conducting such an interview. His professional background might influence what might be said in an interview and also influence what is being heard. Also in the start of a project seeking cooperation with others in the field might help in gathering "metapositions".

(Malterud, 2011). This is something that can help opening up to other perspectives then the ones we tend to see with a certain field. This can help in revealing biased opinions and help us be aware of our pre existing knowledge. This was something that not was done specifically but a trial interview were conducted were discussions of some practical considerations were done and it gave a first insight into doing an interview.

3.7 Literature search

With the social model of disability in mind emphasis was put on finding literature that was related to barriers, work and people with mobility issues since this was the population under investigation. Disability and work is the overarching theme of this study. So when conducting the literature review thought was put behind finding the proper articles that would inform the research questions presented earlier. As it turned out the field of disability was a bit daunting at first and felt a bit overwhelming. But after some guidance from my supervisor a literature study was conducted bearing her advice in the back of my mind. The searches included words like disability, work, attitudes, barriers and mobility issues. First this was done using the search engine Oria and going into relevant journals like Scandinavian Journal of Disability, Journal of Rehabilitation and Disability studies Quarterly. The purpose of this literature study was to gain insight into a rather large field of research and to explain and inform on the most important concepts and key contributions such as how disability is understood.

3.8 Reflections on own role

Qualitative research is as mentioned inductive by nature and has this ambition in the purest sense, but every qualitative research is not inductive or totally free of theories or preconceived ideas, meaning the researcher will influence the research being done (Bryman, 2012). The role of the researcher in qualitative research is very much dependant on the researcher's perspective and position, and can very well have a big impact on the end result. Within the philosophy of science the scientist is acknowledged not as a neutral researcher but as a person who helps to shape or influence the development of knowledge (Malterud, 2011). This means that the researcher's professional interests and personal experience are included as a pre-understanding when developing the problem to be discussed. It is not so much as whether or not the researcher influences the process but more precisely how the researcher influences the project (Malterud, 2011). This is something I must take into consideration when doing this project. In the role as a scientist I am a participant in the field I am studying and therefore

may be biased when looking for new knowledge. Throughout the process, the researcher must attempt to seek reflexivity as a means to constantly be questioning their own methods and conclusions and allow time for reflection (Malterud, 2011). There was through out the process put thought behind how interpretation was being done. One way was through conversations with the supervisor, which dealt with these issues.

When doing this research and doing the qualitative interviews, which was very new to me, and something I never had done before. Doing these kind of interviews is difficult and as more interviews were being done I experienced getting better but it was very challenging being neutral and not to let my personal opinions on how people with disabilities should be treated shine through. (Malterud, 2011) says that the researcher most important asset is to make the reader an informed companion and giving the reader insight in to the conditions the knowledge is developed in, often called intersubjectivity. In order for the research to bring forward something new or something other than what is already known it is important with an open mind with space for doubt, retrospective thoughts and unexpected conclusions. Malterud (2011). Throughout the research process there were put aside time for trying to obtain these goals by for instance making notes after each interview and questioning the process. Though notes was not written down after each interview mental notes were being taken in order to later write them down as soon as possible. When doing the analysis an earlier discussion with the supervisor of possible themes may have lead to an easier labelling of the themes since this task of labelling the different meaningful units in a comprehensive and understandable way in relation to the direction of the study turned out to be much more challenging than first expected. It would have helped in giving the study a more specific direction and led to less frustration.

3.9 Collecting data, keeping data safe, ethical considerations

The informants were throughout the process reminded of participation being voluntary and that they at any point could withdraw from the project. Before each interview each participant received an informed consent sheet for signing. All the data gathered through the interviews where handled confidentially. Meaning it will not be possible to be identified in the final report as well as the analysis process. All of participants were given pseudonyms and places and organisations were anonymized during the transcription process. The project was

approved by Norsk Samfunnsvitenskapelig Datatjeneste [NSD] before beginning data retrieval.

When conducting the interviews they were taped using a recorder. In order to protect the anonymity of participants, recordings were kept in the recorder and transferred to the computer as soon as possible, usually within the next day. Then the recordings were then immediately deleted from the recorder. The computer is protected by a password. After each interview brief field notes were taken to address any particular events or important points for further research and possible follow up questions for the remaining interviews. All of the nonverbal information were supposed to be written down during the interviews in field notes but this had a tendency to be done just after the interview since I experienced being very focused during the interviews and may have put this a bit to the side in order to focus on what was being said in the interviews. The transcribing was done chronologically as the interviews were finished. This was very time consuming and in hindsight more time should have been put aside to do this. The transcription was written in plain Bokmål since some of the informants had a very broad dialect and this would not be beneficial in keeping the informants anonymity.

3.10 Data analysis, interpretation and systemizing data

The interviews were analysed using the method described in Bryman (2012, p. 425) The method to be implemented is called Systematic Text Condensation or SCT (Malterud, 2011, 2012). This method is inspired by Giorgi and has been modified by Malterud herself. The purpose of the phenomenological method is to develop knowledge about the informants' lifeworld within a certain field (Malterud, 2011, p. 96). One is searching for the essence or characteristics of the phenomena under study, and it is important to put your own pre-understanding to the side, so-called "bracketing" (Malterud, 2011). This was done having discussions with the supervisor and when finishing each interview some thought was put into writing short memos after each interview. In hindsight looking back to the taking notes part of the project during the interview stage more time should have been put aside to doing the notes part in a more strategic manner, though this happened to some degree it would most likely lightened the work load during the analysis process due to less information being analysed. Throughout the research process there have been continuously thought put into how the collected data is interpreted. This has been done through the use of notes and discussions with

the supervisor. Complete abandonment of own understandings, my preconceptions and influence of my interpretation is according to (Malterud, 2011, p. 97) an unattainable goal but to the best of my abilities there have been put thought behind my own influence on the material being analysed and being as loyal as possible to retell the participants experiences and meaning without adding my own interpretations as the blueprint as Malterud (2011) says in her book. This is something that happens simultaneously and throughout the whole project, both during analysis and in interviews.

The procedure is essentially divided into four steps. First you read in order to get a general impression, then you identify the meaningful units, then you abstract the content in each meaningful unit and finally you summarize the whole thing Malterud (2011, p. 97). When starting the analysis process all of the interview transcripts were read as a whole in order to get a feel for the possible topics. There were a number of pages to read through and the task of knowing what to include was painstakingly slow. The interviews were read a couple of times to try and grasp the true essence in the transcripts. After these first readings there was not taken any notes, just trying to get a feel for the data. After this was done the most common themes were identified and noted down. Examples of themes are adaptations and experience in work. Then began the time-consuming job of sorting the meaningful units who could say something on the various topics from step one. Then after this part was done began the even more time consuming process of coding these various meaningful units. These codes were dynamic, meaning they changed a bit throughout the coding process.

The aim for this process is to identify and classify pieces of text under the same heading or same label. Then the next part of the analysis process is to condensate each meaningful unit. In the further process the material is sorted into subgroups. According to (Malterud, 2011) which subgroups we choose is reflected upon what perspective the researcher has. This was taken into consideration when choosing the appropriate label for the each subgroup. Finally in the fourth step it is time to put the pieces back together and write up the results in the findings chapter.

Example of the coding matrix

Meaningful unit	Condensed	Sub-theme	Theme
yes it's the same with the employer, you know, you arrive and you have a disability. Do you have a wheelchair with you then you have a wheel chair. It is a part of you	You have a disability say you have a wheelchair that's a part of you.	Be honest	
I can take my last employment in which I sent off applications as I do for all other jobs and then I was invited.... because I am very careful when I set up cv'n and job application that I did not mention handicapped.	I sent applications as I do for every job and I am very careful not to mention the handicapped.	Do not mention disability in application	Disclose Disability

3.11 Quality of the study

Quantitative research uses the term internal and external validity together with reliability and objectivity when explaining validity all together. In qualitative research the overall term when addressing these issues are trustworthiness (Malterud, 2011). Quantitative research often has large selections and makes it possible to generalize about the whole population from a representative sample. Qualitative research cannot make the same distinction since the samples are usually small and the nature of qualitative research is considered more unstructured. Qualitative research is also considered subjective and relies on the researcher's assessment of what is important when conducting the research (Bryman, 2012). In order for a study to be valid it needs to be trustworthy. The research interview is open by nature and this can be seen as both a drawback and as an advantage. One must therefore try not making preconceived ideas and general knowledge colour my decisions too much so that I end up getting confirmation on what is already known.

4 Findings

This section presents the findings from the interviews. First the findings from the respondents with a disability will be presented, and then the findings from the employer will be presented in a separate section. This is done to distinguish and clearly separate the findings from the disabled respondents and the employer included in this study and to point out possible similarities and differences in their experiences and perception of what constitutes the main hurdles in finding and keeping employment. The findings are presented in a descriptive manner moving from quotes of what was said to interpretation of what each statement means, and at the same time putting each quote in context. The most important findings are presented and examples are given using direct quotes from the participants with additional comments. This is done to provide contextual details about each participant's circumstances and helps point to relevant findings. Furthermore the more comprehensive discussion will be saved for the specific discussion part later on in chapter six. In order to maintain the anonymity of the participants where direct quote has been used, details that could identify the participants have been changed or omitted. This will for example include names of people and places they have worked, as well as other elements that may disclose their identity. Further, all participants have been given pseudonyms to protect their identity and prevent detection.

In order to protect the anonymity of participants, it will only be disclosed that the participants, except one, have mobility issues and uses wheel chairs to get around, their specific conditions will not be described in detail. Two of the participants have a double diagnosis and one of the participants, who with some help using his arms, as support, is able to walk unaided. All of the other participants said that they wanted to work full time and currently had employment. The representative of the employers in this study does not have any disabilities. He is currently a director of a large-scale business.

4.1 Structure of the chapter

When looking at the data and trying to make sense of the information gathered there were some key areas and themes emerging from the transcripts. The informants recognise that they use various strategies in their surroundings, though the actual term strategies is not expressed directly through interviews but becomes clear through analysis. These strategies are presented

in the following section starting with the results from the disabled participants presented first followed by the themes the employer chose to focus on.

Descriptions of these themes from the different participants as well as the employer are not completely separate, but related to each other and it can be difficult to describe each theme without touching upon others. One has strived for a breakdown of the topics in order to keep the findings section easy to follow and have been separated, divided and systemized under the appropriate heading. The overarching themes presented are predominantly strategies of the participants and the employer focused on areas of recruitment of disabled people he considered to be important to him as an employer.

4.2 Results from the disabled participants

In the following section different strategies will be presented that the participants chose to focus on in their search for employment.

4.2.1 Disclosing of disability

In terms of disclosing the disability Turid tells her experience with a lady whom she was meeting for an interview about a vacant position.

> "She dealt with it very badly, she was like, have you applied for this job
> and not told us you have a disability I said, well look at my CV that is
> what you should be looking at, but I never heard anything at all".

She had applied for this vacancy and not told them that she was a wheel chair user and the lady somehow got offended but Turid said that she never informed about her disability if she thought it was not relevant to the job. Nina on the other hand made a point out of never disclosing her disability in applications. She even put emphasis on what sort of word she used in order to be perceived as more positive in eyes of the employer. She said that she never disclosed her disability in the written application but if she were called in for a job interview she would say that she was a "wheel chair user" and not simply "sitting in a wheel chair" cause she felt that by expressing herself this way she would appear more assertive and positive in the eyes of the employer. She also would give the proper papers and résumé as early as possible as to say she had everything in order. There seemed to be some agreement

over the fact that there is no need to inform about the disability if it is not specified in the job advertisement, meaning they are looking specifically for people with disabilities. Tim made the point that one always should try to be as honest as possible, meaning that he thought it would be a poor strategy not to enclose your disability from the start.

> " Well I mean that that is important you know, that is really important, and try to ask for a personal meeting so that they can get to know you. Cause they need to get to know you see you in person and hear how you are and so on, because it is a good deal of prejudice out there, well not necessarily prejudice I would say but insecurity".

He continues to mention that though he feels it is important to be honest he still knows people who are disabled and have been trying to get into the labour market for years. This is something he addresses in the following quote

> " It is a shame to say so but some disabled take education that is unrealistic for them to get jobs in because of their disability, like this one person who took a degree in nursing but she would have problems using needles and such because of her disability".

In his comments on why he thinks people are not succeeding in getting employment he says that he believes that one of the causes is inappropriate education or lack of self knowledge about your own disability.

One of the participants [Morten] though he is working 50 % and needs to do so in order to be able to hold a job. He cannot work full time and are dependent on his place of work facilitating this. If not he would not be able to work he says, "I have tried working a bit more but it just turns into nonsense and it messes up my concentration and I also have to say I did not feel safe driving home from work when I had been working a lot of hours". He also said that after he had the accident he was trying to find a job in 50% but that felt almost impossible according to him. He said he got offered a job in 100 % for just half of the year but that was not something he could say yes to. He also tells the story from a possible job he could get through a recruitment agency.

> "They need a guy in 50% the person from the recruitment agency
> said. I said great. So I sent an application and applied for the job.
> Then I talked to IT- Manager and he sounded very positive and he
> said that I fitted the profile perfectly and that I was guaranteed to
> hear from him but he did not have anything more then 50% to offer
> me. I said that is great I am not looking for anything more, and then I
> had to explain why. Then just like that [snaps his fingers] it all got
> quiet. I never heard from them again".

This is an experience others also have had. Participants tell the story of having feelings of discrimination. They share similar stories having the feeling of acceptance and later being rejected from work. They express their disability being the reason for not getting accepted but there is no real way of knowing that for sure.

4.2.2 Dialogue with the employer

Many of the participants express that many of the disabled workers themselves get caught up in discussions or focus on small things that can be changed easily and that there is not enough focus on trying to have a mutual dialog with the employer. For instance what Kai here says in the following quote.

> "I think there are very many [disabled] people who have been a bit
> protected up through their life and they have this self- knowledge
> that they need to get their demands out there by any means
> necessary and not be like… no, we must not get in a dialogue
> [being sarcastic] … they are just like, no I have my demands".

He here addresses the need to having an open dialogue with the employer. Instead of addressing the problem themselves they turn to the employer and say, fix this and that. Kai thinks much of these problems can be dealt with by not just putting the responsibility over to the employer but try to take charge and fix it him self. Simply try to relieve and remove some of the demands that the employer is having. Also to be perceived as a willing and positive employee it is according to the disabled participants important to not put emphasis on small things that easily can be fixed later. You will get a lot further by showing adaptability and get

into a dialogue like Kai mentions in the above quote. Pointing to disabled people can be perceived as problematic when they point out every little thing that in the bigger picture is nothing to bring to focus.

William also addresses the importance of having a dialog. It is important to be honest about your disability from the start and have a good dialog. "It is important to attempt and establish a good and honest dialogue as possible… that is a chance you have to take I think" He is referring to being honest about what you can do and what you need help with. If you start of in an interview setting and try to make yourself look better then you are, saying you can do things you know you cannot this will eventually come back and bite you in the ass. It is important not to mislead the employer through false pretences. He follows up the comments on dialogue saying that people might be afraid to go into a dialogue due to the possibility of conveying some kind of helplessness when asking for adaptations.

William does throughout his interview tell the story of disabled people who are a bit afraid of asking for help, meaning that they are a bit afraid of asking for help with some adaptations. He here is especially referring to people who have recently been injured and ended up in a wheel chair.

> " You need to be secure in what you can do, well that is the problem really, the employer have the responsibility to adapt but if you are using your own resources wrongfully it does not help to adapt here end there so you can drive a wheelchair and get door openers if you are not here [points to head] and that is something that the employer can not do"

He refers to lack of experience with your own disability. If you for instance recently have been injured and are put in a job situation it is not easy to know what you need help with since you have little experience with what you need, or you might have reservations asking for places that need adaptations. It would be fair to say that unless you express yourself the employer would not know what to do in terms of facilitating proper adaptations.

4.2.2.1 Demands at work

Among the participants there seems to be a consensus over what is expected from them in their work commitments. Pretty much all say they have to meet the same expectations and are set to the same standards like everyone else and have the same amount of work to be done in the same amount of time. They want to be part of society and have a meaningful job. They do express that it is important to be aware of what you are able to do when applying for work commitments and when trying to choose what sort of work you want to do both William, Turid, Nina and Stig mention that you might have to be very adaptable in your current work or when you look for work, meaning you have to be willing and able to accept that you might not get to work with what you want the most.

> "You lose a lot of choice, there is no doubt. You must be able to be awfully
> stubborn; otherwise you have no chance at all. There are so many who tell
> you that you will not manage to do that. [William]

He here refers to being stubborn in the hunt for obtaining work and being stubborn in people doubting your capacity for work, not your actual physical capacity but questioning you, saying that will be difficult for you to complete. Later in the interview Stig comments on a similar theme about flexibility in what work you can do.

> "When one have a disability it limits what you can do. I am practically
> inclined and I could perhaps have liked to work in the forest or do something
> practical work but I always have obstacles that make it difficult. You might
> end up not working with what you like the most but if you keep going at least
> you will have some kind of work".

Tim also mentioned that earlier he felt accessibility was poorer but this has changed over time and because of this he did not bother to search for those kinds of jobs that where poorly adapted. "Back then I did not apply for work where I knew accessibility were poor because that was a bit more difficult then". Referring to the fact that he does believe that accessibility has become easier over the years and the rights for the disabled have improved. This also the common story told by the other participants that you lose some choice when you have a disability and they agree

that there still is more to be done to address this issue. Kai does comment on being given jobs for the sake of having a job.

> "I do not want have a job that is made specifically for me. Like
> we created this position for you and give you some pay and then
> you are in employment. If I am going to something I want to do
> something for real. I think it does something to your self worth if
> you get such a position".

4.2.3 Not making a fuss

When looking at what Nina talks about or how she talks about managing pain and possible diseases or illnesses she stresses the need for not making a big deal about it or making this particular area a focus in an interview.

> " I can say that i have some type of pain in my legs but i am not any more absent from
> work because of it. I take my tasks seriously and particular within my field of
> economics it is important to be present at certain dates because of the strict deadlines.
> So it is important to not make the pathological picture too big".

She implies not making a big fuss over things. But feels the need to not take time or sick leave from work due to illness or pain. One participant (Nina) did experience a difficult time when wanting to go to the toilet in one of her jobs. She started her working day with being lifted in to work every morning since there was no adaptations like ramps made for her or other people using wheelchairs to enter the building.

> "I could not enter but then three of the guys who worked there lifted me
> over the three steps each morning. And there was not a facilitated
> handicap toilet and I did not get into the ordinary one so I had to go
> back down the stairs and to the nearest mall to go to the toilet and then
> all the way up again".

She said that she liked working there but this lack of physical adaptation proved to be too much. Especially when winter came and then this task of going to the nearest mall to go to the toilet she felt very drained of energy. Even though she knew she should have said something she did not want to cause any trouble. She stuck with it for some time but felt that this was not a good place to stay and quit this job and moved on to something else. When asked why she did not say something she answered "well you feel like you can be a nuisance sometimes and I did not want to cause any problems". She said that she just did not think about things like that too much because there are always other Employers. On the next job things were a bit different and she met an employer who were more than willing to make arrangements for her wheelchair.

> "It was a position on an equal footing with all the others but the
> employer was very positive towards finding a table with the proper
> height and there was an accessible handicap toilet and a fire escape.
> No more trips to the mall to go to the toilet".

Here she refers to being on an equal footing with the rest of the employees and having an employer who had a positive outlook on wheel chair users and made sure she had the proper adaptations in order for her to do a good job. This seems to be the case for many of the other participants as well, saying that there was no need for extensive adaptations being made since they could get to where they wanted during their everyday work, but it was important to have physical adaptations like ramps in public official buildings for instance. Tim commented on this saying: " there is one thing that pisses me off. That is when you meet physical obstructions that are completely unnecessary, like stairs to shops and handicap toilets missing in public buildings for instance". He further commented on how he felt his work dealt with adaptations and expressed being satisfied with what they did, "at work there are some small things here and there but I usually tell the management and they fix it". Other participants like Kai and Turid also commented on the employers' willingness to facilitate. Kai had contacted the local Technical Aid Centre where he worked at the time in order to customize a truck so that he could use it.

> "When I started at [Company] I contacted the nearest Technical Aid
> Centre and some people were to come by and adapt this fork lift truck
> but somehow they [meaning the company] were not interested in this

and the adaptation got cancelled and then they wanted to use me in the

entrance area, like, look we have employed a wheel chair user…

perhaps a tactical choice from [Company Name]… but okay"."

He stated that he did not know why they wouldn´t accommodate his wishes but he just accepted it and moved on since he was happy to have a job he could go to everyday. This can be regarded, as he did not want to cause any problems and not make any fuss. He also said that though he was a bit angry at first since he felt that they did not take into consideration his wishes he kept with it because he felt loyal to his employer. After some time he was stationed at the entrance to the company were everybody could notice him and he speculated that the company had a hidden agenda.

4.2.3.1 Internet use

Turid mentioned the use of the Internet. "The employer Googles you. It is difficult. I believe that one can be excluded early in the process. The employer can see that you have a disability". William also mentioned something like this under the same topic but in the context of that he himself had been in the media and pointed out what he thought could be unfair treatment of disabled people. He said if the employer gets knowledge of this through social networks like Facebook or searching Google this will not necessarily be positive. Employers are not interested in having people who may be perceived as difficult.

Two of the participants commented specifically on the use of Internet to familiarize them with the building where they wanted to apply for a job. Like Nina said: "In terms of accessibility I sometimes used to check The Yellow Pages [Referring to the Map Function] or Google Maps to look in street View". She also said: "I sometimes take a trip outside the building to see if I can get in", referring to actually going there in person and have a look around a couple of weeks before any applications would be sent. They would use Street View to check for access ramps and try to figure out whether they could enter the building or somehow use other entrances than the main one. They would also ask their friends or use their social network in order to find out the accessibility of the building from people they knew would have been there before. In other words they would do research on the building themselves and in doing so seeing how they would be able to manage their own disability an overcoming this barrier of not having access. Nina mentioned that if she could not find out if she could get in, either through use of the Internet or through her network she sometimes did not bother searching for

a job at that particular place. Other participants also expressed that they sometimes had used their network and people they knew when looking for work.

4.2.4 Experiences

4.2.4.1 Persevering

The participants all express an overall agreement not to focus too much on the physical structures and barriers that would be eminent to think of in a social model of understanding. For instance when asked what they considered to be the main barrier for them in terms of getting paid work, all of them started to mention the need to "keep on going" [Morten] and at the same time not to get "stuck on" [Stig] all the barriers since you would not get anywhere, both physically and mentally. One area that the participants constantly came back to is the ability to endure hardship and not give up when met with adversity.

Being able to keep going, never give up and keep the motivation for long periods of time seem to be the common denominator for the majority of the respondents in order to get employment. One participant [Kai] applied for the same job more than three times before he was accepted. He believed that he could do the job and stuck with it and kept going to finally secure a job he wanted. "I tried applying at [business] three times before they would accept me, before then I just got no no no". He was not satisfied with sitting still and claiming benefits, which he was entitled to do but wanted to be part of everyday society. "I would like to do something right, I'm curious and I want to try things out all the time."

It was clear that he as well as the others wanted to be part of the work force, contribute to society and wanted to have a job they could go to. They all want to contribute to society and not be considered a special kind of group that need special attention other than some minor adaptations. For instance the majority of the participants did not relate well to being called disabled or somehow labelled as such as this this following quote from Nina shows. "I do not feel disabled in that sense. I do not have the ability to use my legs but can pretty much go wherever I want to, I just have wheels for legs and it is the people i meet everyday that somehow feel sorry for me". She here is referring to the fact that she does not have any problems with using a wheel chair and she does not feel disabled, it is when she interacts with other people that she is reminded of this.

All the participants mentioned the ability to continue and not give up after a set back. Like Tim said that he felt he had been somewhat lucky to obtain work. He had been injured for some time before and just finished his education. He then applied for work and mentions that you also have to work hard referring to disabled people may have to work harder but also comments on non- disabled saying " This may be true of non-disabled as well. I may have been a bit lucky and have been somewhat persistent, because in this game you have to persevere". He stressed the point that he felt lucky succeeding in getting a job in spite of being in a wheelchair and felt that he had to persevere in order for him to overcome many of the challenges he was faced with as a wheel chair user. He finished saying that it could be some kind of combination of luck and perseverance's as well. He also commented on his reflections over the period of his working life that back when he started working after the accident and finished the education people would be surprised to hear he had a job and was working "Nowadays it is not like that, now people ask what you do" he said, referring to a more positive attitude from people in general. One other example about persevering is from Turid who expresses the need to work extra hard in order to prove something. She cannot exactly pinpoint what she has to prove but she addresses the following in the statement below.

> "Well I have felt that I sometimes have to work like 120 % while my colleges go and chat in the hallways and sometimes takes a break now and then. I myself have never have done that. I am very conscientious. I don't know if has to do with me wanting to prove myself or something, sick absence and such, like I go to work with fever you know".

It is clear that Turid sometimes exceeds what is expected of her in her job. It is also quite clear from a health perspective it is not good to feel that you have to go to work when you have a fever. Neither able-bodied nor disabled should do this. She does tell the story of conveying some sort of responsibility for bringing her disability in a good light. Though this example does not directly point to the job search process it does imply the need to display work capability.

4.2.4.2 Willingness to facilitate

The analysis process refers to divergent experiences when it comes to adaptations from the employer's side. Most of the participants have a positive experience with employers who are willing to facilitate adaptations for each individual according to their wishes. For instance Turid was allocated a separate office because of her disability. Something this following quote shows, though whether this request was made prior to starting the job or after she started is not clear from the interview.

> "It is very important for me because I struggle a little with
> concentration and disturbances. We with Cerebral Palsy we cringe
> very easy because of sounds and stuff. I was the only one who did not
> have managerial responsibility which had my own office, and that was
> the only adaptation I had".

Other participants in the study also referred to having positive experiences from employers when it came to physical adaptations. At the same time Turid experienced an employer not too keen on doing too much fixing of the physical environment but as she said "Employers don't think too much on such things as doorframes and such small things" At the same time many of the participants stated they did not pay as much attention towards physical adaptations as the employers tended to do during job interviews, meaning many of the participants said they did not actually focus too much on the physical adaptations since they for the most part was able to get to where they wanted and their disability was basically something they had lived with for quite some time so they knew how to get around. Turid for instance said that she really did not need that many adaptations made for her other than her own office. It was the employers who were worried if they were able to perform their daily tasks like William addresses in the following quote when asked in an interview how he would be able to carry stuff.

> He was so concerned about how much I could carry. Carry, what are
> you talking about I said. I can comfortably carry heavier things as long
> as I can have it in a backpack. What if you are moving a big computer
> he said then I said that is no problem cause the people having problems
> they race off to help you out cause they are so interested in getting it
> done and are happy someone came to fix it.

It seems like the employers are having problems in believing or thinking about other ways of doing things might work as well. All they see are problems.

4.2.4.3 Prejudice

Kai mentioned the fact that he had experienced people in NAV expressing prejudice opinions like this following quote mentions. "I think that they [referring to NAV- consultants] also can be afraid of, will you be showing up at work, will you get up in time and are you reliable and such". He also refers to attitudes from other people " Well there is an general scepticism among people. Before "invalid", was a common expression to use you know and that has been stuck in peoples mind somehow" One of the other participants commented specifically on this topic of prejudices saying

> " Well, the biggest obstacle is elderly people, I was working at
> [Name of workplace] and young people, or young employers they
> have bigger demands so to speak and they are more open to
> accepting people with disabilities then the older ones are. I also
> wanted to check out other stuff as well so I was in another
> department and then this older boss came and he mentioned my
> wheelchair and was like, degrading and stuff".

He points to the fact that the younger employers demand more from him but at the same time they are more likely to hire a person with a disability. Younger employers do not seem to be colored or care about in this case, a wheelchair. He then makes the point that when trying to work in another part of the organisation he met bad attitudes from an elderly leader.

He then continues to mention prejudice experiences he had on some occasions in his current job, although it being in another field.

> " Really when meeting with the customers at [WORK] much of the
> same things happen, I mean I do attend the information desk and
> many older people are like, does not anybody work here and such
> things like that. There are others as well who are foreign who do the

same thing but on the other hand foreign people do sometimes

actually give me a hug and say so good that you are working etc.…".

Here he addresses the same experience as in the quote above and brings in the believed prejudices from another group of people. Other participants mentioned having access to toilet as important, but Kai mentions in one of his experiences with a NAV-consultant at a working conference. He was a possible candidate for a potential job that involved the cleaning of electrical items after fires. The lady he spoke to said that there was no handicap toilet there but it was one situated a floor above at this particular job but there was no elevator there for him to use, then Kai followed up with saying "that I can just use a normal toilet, that works fine" but then the lady said that no that is not possible we have our guidelines that we must follow so he could not take that job in spite of him forfeiting one of his rights so to speak.

4.3 Results from the Employer

These findings in the following section are presented from the employer's perspective and this section will address themes that the employer chose to put emphasis on. The employer reflects a different perspective than the disabled and can thus illuminate the problem and point out possible similarities and differences in helping to further inform the problem at hand. He touched upon some of the themes as the other respondents and gave his insights and experiences on some of the same topics. In order to connect the employers and disabled participants perspectives more clearly I will apply the same or similar headings used in the previous section where they touch upon the same topics. Where the employer talks about topics that cannot be seen as common with the disabled themes presented earlier I have separated these into separate headings. In his interview he drew on insights from an earlier project he started where he employed people with disabilities where the majority of the recruited were wheel chair users.

The employer in this study had a tendency to use a lot of metaphors when trying to give examples. He made valid points but sometimes there was difficult to distinguish between his actual opinions or if he just talked about general considerations. For instance he repeatedly said that there is a need to build down walls and install ramps referring to ramps as an image for disabled people to have access throughout all of society not just physically but as a metaphor on systemic difficulties and he advocated for equal terms for the disabled with the same opportunities as the able bodied and that they too have the same possibilities for

acquiring jobs. He had experience with employing people with different disabilities from his previous projects and focused a lot on how he remembered those events and how he experienced the problems he encountered. Today he is the director of a leading organisation working with communications.

4.3.1 Willingness to facilitate

In his thoughts on adaptations the employer believes it is unreasonable to expect to be able to change and facilitate the entire society like he demonstrates in the following quote.

> " Well you can try and change the whole of society, lower all
> platforms and lower all rails, that is a nice thought but it will
> simply take to much time, it is fantastic that there are people
> willing to fight this cause, but what do we do in the meantime?"

He understands the need for people with wheel chairs to have access but says that one cannot wait for the whole society to be adapted. He believes it is important what we, referring to the employers in general, do while the different organisations advocate for the universal adaptation policy. He understands the need to help and seems to be an advocate for this. When asked whether some employees have disabilities that need adaptation he says, "that there are to the best of his knowledge no disabled employees" He then rephrases himself saying "no visible disabilities. Then I understand you next question. Is it a coincidence or is it because we have a selection process that discriminates?" In his current job where he is one of the leaders in the firm and so has good grasp of what is going on in the company he says that he believes it to be a bit random and he does not know if they receive applications from disabled workers looking for employment.

Further on in the interview he made the point when asked about his thought process around hiring a person with a disability, specifically a wheel chair user and putting that in context with adaptation. He said "Then my assertion is that you have that wheelchair in the back of your mind", meaning that the wheel chair would enter his consciousness and somehow colour his decision referring to employers in general, saying he believes they will somehow

anticipate problems beforehand. The following quote also follows his train of thought on the same topic or theme about willingness to facilitate.

> "That is something we struggle with in this house which is 130 years old. That is a handicap for us, right. There are lots of small stairs and stuff. Most modern workplaces are adapted because they have to be. So it's a smaller and smaller problem really"

Here his point being that the problem with adaptations in not as problematic with newer buildings but is in his case the age of the building makes it more difficult. He further continues to say.

> "But all the other minor practical problems that one should actually be able to disregard that is what makes you come very close to not getting a job. You are a brilliant lady and will be working in the accounting department in [Company Name] and you are considered pleasant and positive but you took that finance education after the accident and you have no experience. That is the problem, that is the official explanation, while the real explanation is the sum of that".

In this rather long quote he touches upon some reasons for not hiring people, like in the quote before the physical building he works in today is hard and difficult to adapt and the reason given for not hiring this person is lack of experience, but actually it is the sum of all the minor things the employer anticipates being a problem that is the real reason for not hiring. All in all it is the sum of all the other uncertainties like what other things is needed like not knowing what the person needs help with or how much adaptation is needed that leads to not hiring this particular person. He also commented on removing such things as what he thought could lead to additional work in terms of taking up to much time like applications and such and technical aids. "you have to remove those things, they have to… they must reassure you that you do not need to think about such things". This was something he felt made a difference as it addressed some of his concerns regarding the small things that together with other small things somehow would end up being too much. The fact that they said that he did not need to worry about such things helped tipped the scale in their favour.

4.3.2 Feeling of Risk

He says further that he gave of his time and trained people with disabilities using wheel chairs referring to his earlier project. His company at the time got compensated through payment from the government. He believes that in order for employers to fully embrace disabled workers, meaning an increase of disabled people in the workforce there should be some kind of incentive to recruit them into various workplaces. He says that any employment is of course a kind of risk whether you have a disability or not but one feels in a way that hiring a person with a disability involves an elevated risk. He refers for instance to the question of cost of payment for the worker which is shown in this following quote:

> ” Starting salary is 550 000 NOK and then you have to multiply that with 1,35 to get the actual cost right… and that is something that you cannot gamble with. Also if I want to hire someone then I must defend that engagement to someone…meaning that we will be making money or get better customer service because of it… cause hiring is a big investment you know”.

He said that there is no getting around that feeling of risk other than "well you can get around it eventually when you see that it is starting to work ". Espen makes a comment about this saying.

> " If a person comes in with a wheel chair it makes him a bit more uncertain so maybe it could be a good idea for a person who needs help in facilitating brings like documents to the employer showing him, look here is what you can get financial support, that does give a bit more feeling of security, and I know that in small businesses the problem is even bigger I would guess. I have never worked in a small private business but I would imagine it would cost more for them.

He here refers to how you can reduce this feeling of risk saying that if you meet an employer who might have some second thoughts about you since you have a wheel chair you should inform this particular employee how this feeling of

economical burden can be reduced by simply showing how you get financial support for your business. This can be support for adaptations and such.

4.3.3 Good will, reduce economical risk

He then continued to use the metaphor of ramps when saying that there needs to be ramps in place otherwise it just comes down to "good will".

> "That is why this ramp must be in place for it to work, or then it is just good will. That is what I hear when the government or organisations yell out. Then it becomes coercion or good will…if the system is not adapted for us. I agree with all these idealists I worked together for more than 15 years… I have had some powerful discussions with them but they [referring to his former organisation he worked for], some think that my thoughts are… well you know, they have ramps figuratively…what we need is system changes.

His point being that organisations and the government keep yelling out that the employers need to hire more people with disabilities. Also here he refers to the organisations themselves just using the metaphor of ramps and not coming up with actual good remedies for increasing the number of disabled in the workforce. If you actually hire more people then it is just because of good will, like to be nice. He feels that there needs to be some kind of combination so that the employers get something in return. This good will thinking he says is too random for increasing hiring of disabled people. If you get help to reduce the economical burden it does help to increase the willingness of hiring people with disabilities. It is as he says when asked about economical support: " it is crucial". He also fills in that " If you are going to get it to work it has to be good for the business financially and not be like we have such big hearts and we are so nice".

4.3.4 People from NAV

He also commented on getting people referred to him by NAV. He was aware of many people looking at these people coming from NAV with other glasses so to speak because they do as he phrased it "come from the loser organisation NAV…

NAV is in itself a sort of handicap you know, it is the losers". NAV. He did express that this was a sort of general feeling and that this comment did not reflect his actual standpoint he just said those things to make a point.

4.3.5 Work experience

In regards to work experience other comments he made about hiring people with disabilities is that though many of them had taken education pretty much all of them lacked the proper actual work experience to get evaluated for a job.

> "Education is always good but at the same time especially as a
> disabled person it is important that you have good references that
> can vouch for you and say he or she is good at working and have
> little absence"

So having good references is good because it helps reduce any doubt the employer may have. Earlier when he tried to get one of his earlier companies up and running he thought he could use disabled people in his work. He thought that he could get as he put It "free" workers referring to that the government would pay the salary and in return he would give them experience and give of his time to teach them everything he knew about computers and things they needed to perform. He meant that this needed to be done in order to give them practical experience witch they later could use to continue in the company or seek challenges elsewhere. " That is fantastic for me and the business and for these boys and girls. Firstly they gain access and meet someone who demands things from them. He said he expected them to show up on time and held them to the same standards as everyone else.

 They have to show up at work, behave themselves and they get prior learning". Which is according to him what he considers the major hurdle for disabled people to get hired. He also said "education alone does not give people jobs". In his experience when doing this project some years back he saw the need for the wheel chair users to gain experience and he then started this project where he would teach them everything they needed to know in order to gain this prior learning experience which he thought to be necessary in order for them to compete against the able bodied workers in the competitive economy, but he needed to keep them for some time in order to be confident they learned what he saw necessary, this

according to him means no less then 2 years because regardless of how good they are they need this amount of time to familiarise themselves with the workplace and he said that "people are not that productive the first year of employment".

He saw that many of the work related tasks did not require the ability to have feet and being able to walk. After some time he did get positive feedback from his customers saying according to him " then we got this unintended effect that our customers when telling them about this project thought we were an organization with a big heart.

4.3.6 Summary

In this previous section there have been presented various strategies that disabled people use in order to seek employment. Also views from the employer side have also been presented. They both see the need to focus on this particular group and understand the need to develop the field further. Both the representatives from the disabled and the employee side see that an willingness to facilitate might need to be present in order for disabled people to obtain work. It is easier to facilitate for people already in employment. Why these specific participants seem to have succeeded in getting work is they have succeeded in making the disability less noticeable and focused on capability rather than what they cannot do. Also focusing on small physical structures in their environment was not their main concern. The employer shares the need to have valid or relevant experience in the particular job you are searching for.

5 Discussion

5.1 Introduction.

In the findings chapter there have been presented different approaches to understanding disabled peoples actions and experiences in the job search process from respectively the disabled participants and from the employer in this study, the following section will discuss these findings and compare to current literature. The research questions presented earlier were about investigating the disabled peoples experiences. The findings have pointed out what the disabled and the employer view as important and what are considered the most important barriers or strategies in relation to the job search process. The points made by both the

employer and the respondents will in be drawn together. The focus is to see how the disabled experience the job search and how these experiences possibly influence their behaviour, meaning that their experience of being in work will influence how they go about seeking employment.

The findings from this study suggest that the participants might use strategies that are influenced by the social and cultural environment they are operating within. Within the social model of disability it might suggest they are seeking jobs in an environment where there is little room to be disabled and that they might be limited in what jobs they pursue due to experiences in the past. They all tell stories about a desire to be seen as ordinary workers without any needs for special adaptations, although some adaptation takes place. A somewhat surprising result from the findings being that the sample consists mainly of wheel chair users suggest that the disabled did not seem to put much emphasis or focus to much on small physical structures that exist in the workplace. Findings may suggest they choose to act in a certain way because this is what is needed in order for them to pursue a position where they have a greater chance of succeeding in finding and gaining employment. This appears in the findings as various strategies related to disclosing of disability, seeking a dialogue with the employer and a desire to not make any fuss. These strategies might not be something they chose intentionally but through analysis these themes emerged and considered as the most important. What sort of implications this might have for the disabled will in the following section be discussed in relation to the job search process, together with the views of the employer.

5.2 Disclosing of disability

The findings suggest that the disabled are hesitant about disclosing a disability when applying for a job or being a bit more apprehensive in when you share it. The findings tell a story from one of the participants mentioning a strategy of not disclosing her disability until being contacted for an interview. She would not say anything about her disability in the application; it would be brought up through conversation, usually in the first telephone conversation if she got invited for an interview. She would say she was an active wheel chair user and at the same time asking if it was possible for her to enter the building. The reason for not revealing the disability was due to a fear of being discriminated against. This is also the reason given in the report by Skarpaas and

Svare (2014) where fear of discrimination is mentioned as a cause for not revealing their disability. The report says Only 19 percent informed about their disability in the application and 46 percent said they informed about their disability in the job interview.

The findings from this study do not show any clear patterns of what strategy is used when it comes to revealing ones disability, but one participant argues for the need of being honest about ones disability when applying for a job in terms of what you can and cannot do. Vedeler (2014b) addresses this by telling the story of a person experiencing negative behaviour towards him when turning up at an interview without sharing his disability beforehand. Vedeler refers to a man being met by an angry interviewer who felt he was "caught off guard". The job applicants reasons for not saying anything was that he wanted to be measured according to his competence, not his impairment which is also the case for the participants in this study. They too want to be measured according to their competence and not their impairment, which would suggest a reason for not revealing their disability in interviews or in applications. If people have the experience of being met by someone being angry at them or behave in a way they see as not pleasant during interviews it would be understandable that they feel the need to be honest and share their disability in their application or in an telephone call when being contacted for the interview.

The findings point to three choices when it comes to revealing your disability. One, share your disability in the application. Two, mention it in the first contact after the application has been sent out, or not say anything at all before arriving at the interview. Revealing your disability involves as Jans, Kaye, and Jones (2012) say in their article a complex personal decision. This can be said for this study as well due to the fact that there are different opinions about this being shared by the participants. The article refers to having a well thought out "narrative" that emphasises what the disabled can do. This is along similar lines that one of the participants does when she applied for work. She does not say anything in the application but mentions it in the first contact after the application has been sent. She also tries to use positive words when talking about herself, like saying that she is a wheel chair user, with emphasis on user, and not sitting in one, as to imply she was not a passive person. This was done in order to be perceived as more positive in the eyes of the employer. She would also put

forward her credential papers as early as possible to try and shift focus to what she actually could do. Focusing on your strengths rather then your impairment is something the literature supports in seeing disability as an asset (Andreassen, 2012).

The employer in the study did not focus much on when to disclose disability, but he commented on the need to know about any disabilities people might have since this would help in facilitating any possible accommodations that might be needed. If people do not share what they need help with the employer cannot facilitate any special needs they might have (Jans et al., 2012; Rusnes, 2010). When asked about hiring a person with a disability, especially a wheel chair user he says that he thinks that the wheel chair might somehow colour the employers decision on whether to employ or not. This would suggest that the employer is a bit uncertain about people saying anything about their disability. Vedeler (2014a, p. 52) addresses something on similar lines in her doctoral thesis then referring to workers in the support system being colored by their understanding of disability, pointing to a medical understanding of disability when advising the disabled towards security benefits in stead of helping them finding suitable jobs. Their focus is directed towards the disabled persons physical shortcomings as a result of their impairment. The consultants would not recognize them as active and employable individuals. In reference to the employer it might be in this example of hiring or not hiring that he also would use a medical understanding of disability not being able to see anything other then the impairment and not see them as something that can be positive for the workplace.

There may be different reasons for not disclosing a disability. The nature of the disability, whether it is a hidden disability and perceived disability- friendliness of an organisation (Jans et al., 2012) are examples of why not disclose. This may be why this particular sample tell a story of not making any fuss and focus on having a dialogue with the employer in stead since that is what has turned out to be a well functioning strategy in work and in an interview. For example not making a fuss in an interview might help getting in a position were the power discrepancy in a job interview setting might shift a bit. Meaning that it is the employer who has all the power in and interview setting (Vedeler, 2014b), and if the applicants do not assert themselves by not pointing anything out that might take away some of the employers

initial doubts cause they show a behaviour of trying to make things work as they are. They give the impression that things are fine.

5.3 Not making a Fuss

In the findings chapter there is the mentioning of not making a fuss. This is in relation to managing illnesses and about not wanting to be considered as a "nuisance" and not wanting to "cause any problems". This feeling of not making a fuss might have certain implications for work and the job interview, meaning that not making any fuss would imply not saying anything about your disability in an interview. There is a known fact that disabled people need to work harder because of their disability and need to make an extra effort to get a job (Jans et al., 2012). For example if you somehow embrace a strategy of not making any fuss it might lead you to working harder in order to compensate for the lack of facilitation that you might need to properly do your job, since making no fuss would imply not saying anything.

There was this example in the findings of being lifted into work every morning and having to use the toilet in another building. After some time this turned out to be too much and moved on to find employment elsewhere. This example points out the fact that she does not expect future employers to facilitate and make adaptations for her needs. If she is afraid of losing her job it seems quite clear that she chooses not to say anything, and the fact that she does not want to cause any problems she just moves along and finds employment elsewhere. If people have poor experience with a physical environment it could make people quite unwilling to disclose disability to a future employer. This is consistent with what Skarpaas and Svare (2014) addresses in their report saying that fear of discrimination or other negative experiences in relation to searching for jobs or during work seems to be based on past experiences. (p. 28). If using this as a strategy for being in and finding employment then it just might be a vicious circle were one goes from one employer to the next because your actions seems to be based on fear of being in the way and causing problems.

According to Svalund and Hansen (2013) working with disabled people and having experience with disabled people does lead to more positive attitudes and employment. This is because it gives people who might not have experience with for example wheel

chair users the possibility to get to know the person and the disability. Vedeler (2014b) also addresses this saying that if disabled people address the "issue of disability themselves" they do not become passive objects but considered as more positive in the eyes of the employer. By giving the employer a more positive spin and using positive language about their impairments they "educate" the employers and as a consequence broaden the understanding of each disability. As mentioned in the findings the employers concern is about all the uncertainties that together make up all the "minor practical problems" in a job interview that would result in the applicant not getting hired. Going about and not addressing your disability especially if you have a visible disability like for instance a wheelchair would then be counterproductive since it does not give the opportunity to address any accommodation needs, but by providing information about your disability might take away some of the doubts the employer might have, and at the same time inform the employer about each disability for that particular case or for possible future employees seeking job with the same disability. What using no fuss, as a strategy does not do is changing the environment you are in, and for future employers. It does not give the employers any chance to do anything about the facilitation needs; if nothing is experienced then nothing is learned. Hiding your disability will not make people become familiar with various disabilities and will not contribute to more people having knowledge of possible problems that the disabled encounter.

One further point to address is if the disabled people are dependent on the good will of the employer as mentioned in the findings then not making a fuss is probably a very sensible strategy. Though this situation might not be of a positive nature it would explain why some would not address the disability in interviews or at work. In a way this is a vicious circle. If the employer is not proactive and asks for changes the employer continues to not make a fuss. On the basis of this it seems important to let the employer know of your disability otherwise nothing will ever change. One might ask why this fear of not saying anything. The question then might be, how do you tackle this and break the cycle? Perhaps seeking a dialogue is a good way to go?

5.3.1 Internet

The findings mention that because of their disability they would have to think twice of what kind of jobs they could apply for, meaning they would have to consider if it is easy to get into the workplace or not. In relation to this, the findings point to the disabled going online and using Google maps and the map function in Yellow pages to look at certain buildings to see if it was possible to enter the building, either through the main entrance or to see if it had proper ramps and such in place to get access. If she could not get in she did not bother to search for that particular job and she would move on and would just find employment elsewhere. This moving to find another more suitable job is mentioned in the article by Baumberg (2015) where this was in fact a strategy some used in order to get around constraints in their work environment and moving to another job felt like a choice and can be considered a strategy. Based on the findings in this study, one can argue that moving to a better facilitated job might be the result of not wanting to make a fuss and not an actual strategy. As mentioned elsewhere this is another example that does not contribute to changing the employers' perspective because everything is kept silent.

5.3.2 Dialogue

In the finding there is this example of one of the participants pointing out that he believes having a dialogue is important. According to him, he believes many appeal to the employer too quickly to demand adaptations without attempting to enter into a dialogue first. His point being that in order to be considered as a willing and positive employee it is important to try and engage in a dialogue instead of just demanding stuff. You will as he says get a lot further by showing adaptability. This fits well with what the employer said when he along similar lines expressed he was relieved when the disabled themselves in interviews would say that they would take care of any contact with NAV to sort out any adaptations that might be needed.

If the disabled actively expressed or in some way told about their disabilities and as Vedeler (2014b, p. 607) mention raising "accommodation issues" the reaction from the employer was not with uncertainty but reacted instead with an open mind about the impairment and seeing how the impairment might influence the work tasks and then being able to see how best to adapt. This does support what the findings suggest that the disabled commented on the need to have a dialogue with the employer. Rusnes (2010) says that openness about ones disability may become a dilemma. If one tries to

treat everyone equally and give the impression that everyone has the same value within the working environment it can lead to disability being something one never talks about. The danger then is that there is no room to discuss what it means to have a disability and the challenges it brings forward in terms of what experiences it has given each individual. Also how to best facilitate for the disabled to be integrated into the working environment making it possible to do a good job becomes difficult. Rusnes (2010) finishes by saying that trying to attempt "normalization through not talking about disabilities becomes a problem because it prevents dialogue about how to share experiences between employees and managers or between colleagues with different backgrounds and history" (p. 18, own translation). As opposed to not making a fuss having a dialogue would be considered a positive thins since it enables facilitation needs being met and it gives the employer a chance to learn about various disabilities.

6 Conclusions

The purpose of this study was to gain insight into the disabled peoples experiences related to the job search process. The findings point to various strategies being used in relation to disclosing disability or not, in applications and strategies about not wanting to cause any problems, referred to as not making a fuss. This study also points to the disabled being met with the same amount of work and held to the same standards and requirements as their able-bodied peers. Meeting these standards and demands might be difficult for the disabled but this particular sample appears to meet these requirements and is currently in employment. It is worth mentioning that this particular sample does consist partly of persons who were born before the 1980s. People born after or during this period are the ones who according to (Vedeler, 2009, 2014b) belong to the first generation that grew up with an active integration policy witch might explain why they lean towards seeking employment outside of governmental initiatives. Meaning they may have been forced to rely very much on themselves when trying to enter the job market and possibly in combination with outside pressure.

Looking at the disabled participants statements versus the employers statements, it seems important to work towards increased dialogue and mutual respect when it comes to the job

search process and recruiting more disabled to fulfil the government's goal of intermediate aim of increasing disabled people in work. This will, among other things, lead to more openness about disability, and eventually contribute to greater social changes, such as equalizing the balance of power between employer and job seekers where increased knowledge of adaptations and disability in general will give employers less concern or feelings of risk when employing disabled people. Disabled people and their needs will also be more visible and in this intersection where employers and disabled employees meet, dialogue as a tool will help break down the barriers the disabled are faced with in the application process, and possibly influence everyday work as well.

The findings from this study point to that it is not the physical ramps that seem to be the problem. There are people in positions of power, in this case the employer, who has to work to get the ramps in place. Ramps being a metaphor for the barriers disabled people face trying to get into working life, and are something the employer in this study points out. He states that since we are talking about possible systemic changes in the long term, it is important what we do in the meantime before "the ramps are in place". Therefore, a better understanding of the disabled peoples experience of the job search, along with perspectives from the employer, could contribute to work towards a more inclusive society. This will involve an important factor examined in the study, namely honesty and openness about disability to facilitate dialogue. This study is considered a small study with a small sample. Only one employer was included in the study As opposed to quantitative research qualitative research is focused on giving in depth knowledge and cannot generalise but it does not mean others cannot learn from what emerged in this study. The contributions from this study are meant to complement the whole body of disability studies.

6.1 Future research

On the basis of the results from this study where the participants had limited physical needs it will be appropriate to develop studies that address a large number of different disabilities as a whole. This can provide insight and knowledge about the commonalities that exist across different disabilities. In addition, qualitative studies that go into more depth of each individual disability will be important to obtain more specific knowledge of each specific disability. Also a study on people with more complex physical disabilities in need of more extensive adaptations would give valuable in depth knowledge.

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Appendices

Appendix 1
First Contact

Employees working at the Technical Aid Centre Hedmark at Terningen Arena provide this information.

1. The researcher (SS) will approach organisations supporting people with disabilities to explain what the study is about and to ask for help with recruitment.

2. If organisations agree to provide support, they will be briefed about the study, the inclusion criteria and given information sheets to pass to potential participants. The employee will ask possible candidates if they will consider participating in a student's Master Project at the University College of Hedmark. The project will address attitudes that people with disabilities experience in the job search process.

3. They will be asked if this is something they would like to participate in. They will be informed that it is voluntary and they can leave the project at any time without giving a reason.

4. If they answer no, then they stop here.

5. If they answer yes they are asked if they have been to at least one job interview. If no the request ends.

6. If they answer yes they will be provided with an information sheet and asked if it is ok for the researcher to contact them to make further arrangements for meeting up. The organisation will then pass contact details (telephone number) to the researcher.

Appendix 2

Information letter and consent sheet

Samtykkeerklæring.

Holdninger til å ansette personer med funksjonsnedsettelser.

Dette er et Prosjekt I forbindelse med en Masterstudie på Høyskolen I Hedmark. Selve målet med Prosjektet er å undersøke hvilke holdninger man møter som funksjonshemmet i møte med potensiell arbeidsgiver i en jobbsøkingsprosess. Denne prosessen omhandler det å søke jobb, hvordan finne passende jobb, bli intervjuet og det å begynne i selve jobben. Jeg er interessert i dine egne erfaringer og opplevelser du sitter inne med.

Selve intervjuet vil kunne ta en times tid og det vil benyttes en opptaker som vil ta opp samtalen. Intervjuene vil bli transkribert (skrevet ned) i etterkant. Alle navn inkludert ditt eget vil bli anonymisert og den informasjonen du bidrar med skal kun brukes i den aktuelle studie og publiseres slik at det ikke vil være mulig å kjenne deg igjen. Alle opplysninger du gir vil bli behandlet konfidensielt og vil ikke tilknyttes noe navn.

Etter at prosjektet avsluttes 30. Juni 2015 så vil all data slettes. Det vil ikke være mulig å identifisere deg i resultatene som fremkommer i studien.

Det er helt frivillig å delta i studien og du kan når som helst trekke deg uten å oppgi noen grunn for det. Det vil ikke få noen konsekvenser. Dersom du ønsker å delta så underskriver du samtykkeerklæring. Denne leveres undertegnede før intervjuet tar til.

Dersom du skulle ønske å trekke deg eller har spørsmål kan du kontakte undertegnede.
Det er også mulig å ta kontakt med veileder hvis du skulle ønske det.

Student: Kjell Stian Sellevoll. Telefonnummer: 47032878.
Mail:stians1@yahoo.no

Veileder: Miranda Thurston
Mail: miranda.thurston@hihm.no

Vennlig hilsen Kjell Stian Sellevoll

Samtykke til deltakelse i studien.

Jeg har fått informasjon om prosjektet og ønsker å delta. Deltagelsen er frivillig og jeg er klar over at jeg når som helst kan trekke meg uten å oppgi noen grunn.

……..
Signatur

Jeg bekrefter å ha gitt informasjon om studien

…….
Signatur

Appendix 3

Interview Guide

I start by introducing my self and tell about the project.

Say it is possible to withdraw at any time, no questions asked.

Can you tell a little bit about your self?

- o Are you working at the moment?
    - If yes, ask - Can you tell me a little bit about your work?
    - If no, - how do you spend your week days?
- o Can you tell me about your education?
- o What are your interests and your hobbies

Examples on questions regarding the job search process

- Can you tell me about experiences going about searching for jobs
    - o Where
    - o What do you look for
    - o Accommodations

- Can you share your experiences about being called in for an interview?
    - o Can you share your experiences if you did not get called in
    - o Do you say you have a disability?
        - Why
        - Why not
    - o How do you go about gaining information about the job.

- Back at your latest job interview and can you please tell me about your experiences
- Why did you apply for the job
- How did you get the job you have today
- Can you remember what was the main focus of the job interview
- Have you sent any applications without being called in for an interview

Examples on questions about the employers risk assessment/attitudes

Elaborate on the themes?

- Demands on the job, effectiveness

- Lack of accommodations

- Was accommodations/technical aid addressed

- Do you feel that the employer cared about accommodations

- Do you feel that the employer cared about your education

- How open were you about your own disability

- Did you feel accepted

- What do you feel is important for people with disability/wheel chair users in order to be successful in getting a job

- Do you se any special difficulties for this group

Something you would like to ad that we have not talked about.

Appendix 4

Norsk samfunnsvitenskapelig datatjeneste AS
NORWEGIAN SOCIAL SCIENCE DATA SERVICES

Miranda Thurston
Institutt for idrett og aktiv livsstil Høgskolen i Hedmark, campus Elverum
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Org.nr. 985 321 884

Vår dato: 04.12.2014   Vår ref: 40611 / 3 / LMR   Deres dato: Deres ref:

TILBAKEMELDING PÅ MELDING OM BEHANDLING AV PERSONOPPLYSNINGER

Vi viser til melding om behandling av personopplysninger, mottatt 05.11.2014. Meldingen gjelder prosjektet:

40611	*Attitudes and the job interview*
Behandlingsansvarlig	*Høgskolen i Hedmark, ved institusjonens øverste leder*
Daglig ansvarlig	*Miranda Thurston*
Student	*Kjell Stian Sellevoll*

Personvernombudet har vurdert prosjektet, og finner at behandlingen av personopplysninger vil være regulert av § 7-27 i personopplysningsforskriften. Personvernombudet tilrår at prosjektet gjennomføres.

Personvernombudets tilråding forutsetter at prosjektet gjennomføres i tråd med opplysningene gitt i meldeskjemaet, korrespondanse med ombudet, ombudets kommentarer samt personopplysningsloven og helseregisterloven med forskrifter. Behandlingen av personopplysninger kan settes i gang.

Det gjøres oppmerksom på at det skal gis ny melding dersom behandlingen endres i forhold til de opplysninger som ligger til grunn for personvernombudets vurdering. Endringsmeldinger gis via et eget skjema, http://www.nsd.uib.no/personvern/meldeplikt/skjema.html. Det skal også gis melding etter tre år dersom prosjektet fortsatt pågår. Meldinger skal skje skriftlig til ombudet.

Personvernombudet har lagt ut opplysninger om prosjektet i en offentlig database, http://pvo.nsd.no/prosjekt.

Personvernombudet vil ved prosjektets avslutning, 30.06.2015, rette en henvendelse angående status for behandlingen av personopplysninger.

Vennlig hilsen

Katrine Utaaker Segadal

Linn-Merethe Rød

Kontaktperson: Linn-Merethe Rød tlf: 55 58 89 11
Vedlegg: Prosjektvurdering
Kopi: Kjell Stian Sellevoll stians1@yahoo.no

Dokumentet er elektronisk produsert og godkjent ved NSDs rutiner for elektronisk godkjenning.

Personvernombudet for forskning

Prosjektvurdering - Kommentar

Formålet er å se på holdninger til å ansette personer med funksjonsnedsettelser.

Utvalget informeres skriftlig og muntlig om prosjektet og samtykker til deltakelse. Informasjonsskrivet er godt utformet, forutsatt at kontaktopplysninger også om veileder tas med.

For å ivareta konfidensialitet og frivillighet, anbefales det at forespørselen om deltakelse formidles via Hjelpemiddelsentralen, og at dem som ønsker å delta, deretter tar direkte kontakt med studenten.

Personvernombudet legger til grunn at forsker etterfølger Høgskolen i Hedmark sine interne rutiner for datasikkerhet. Dersom personopplysninger skal lagres på privat pc, bør opplysningene krypteres tilstrekkelig.

Forventet prosjektslutt er 30.06.2015. Ifølge prosjektmeldingen skal innsamlede opplysninger da anonymiseres. Anonymisering innebærer å bearbeide datamaterialet slik at ingen enkeltpersoner kan gjenkjennes. Det gjøres ved å:
- slette direkte personopplysninger (som navn/koblingsnøkkel)
- slette/omskrive indirekte personopplysninger (identifiserende sammenstilling av bakgrunnsopplysninger som f.eks. bosted/arbeidssted, alder og kjønn)
- slette lydopptak