STRATEGY IN JOB INTERVIEWS?
A Microethnographic Investigation

PhD dissertation

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DANSK SAMMENFATNING


ENGLISH SUMMARY

In recent years, strategy research has been moving towards investigating strategy as a social practice. This interest manifests itself in the research agenda, Strategy-as-Practice (S-as-P), which sees strategy as something social actors do, and not something an organisation has. As a consequence, a lot of research is generated showing how employees create, interpret, and communicate strategy through their various social practices. Because the research interest concerns strategy, much of the work focuses on formally recognised strategic activities including strategy meeting and workshops, despite the claim that strategy is relevant across all levels of the organisation. However, a new stream of research within S-as-P exists, which has begun investigating strategy in activities that are not usually considered strategic. It is within this stream that I have placed the present research on job interviews. Despite the fact that the job interview is one of the most commonly occurring recruitment activities, its link to strategy is not clear. This interest in strategy and job interviews provides the outset for the present investigation, looking at the job interview as a strategic, social activity.

Towards this end, I have relied upon Microethnography as my methodological framework. Microethnography necessitates the use of audio and video recordings of social conduct to investigate the interaction between social actors, and to explicate the methods they rely on to accomplish their activities. In this respect, I have collected 42 recordings of job interviews in two international companies, constituting approximately 25 hours of sound and video in total. Parts or the entirety of these recordings have been transcribed for the purpose of sequential analysis through which the methods I am investigating, or micro-strategies as I call them, can be observed.

Concerning the research-related findings, the fact that there has been no discernable HR strategy directed at the job interview has been significant. This fact has meant that it has not been possible to document any explicit orientations towards a strategy document, for example. For this reason, I started focusing on the more subtle forms of strategic practices in interviews. This is how I started becoming interested in the micro-strategies that the interviewer (as well as the applicant) draws upon as a guide for to act, and react, in the job interview across instances. In the dissertation’s first analytical chapter, I show how interviewers draw on norms to moralise on and reason about applicants’ employment behaviours and circumstances. The second empirical chapter investigates how the interviewers rely on professional membership categories for the purpose of characterising the applicant according to the existing professions in the industry or organisation in general. The final chapter considers what in HR theory are called “trait questions”, which interviewers rely on to inquire into applicants’ strengths and weaknesses. The significance here regarding micro-strategies is that they exhibit an interviewer’s orientation towards the applicant as being able to self-report their knowledge, skills, and abilities.

These separate analytical findings are used to discuss the ramifications for HR theory, as well as the S-as-P agenda. Concerning HR theory, the analyses contribute by nuancing the otherwise commonly functional understanding of the job interview by encouraging an understanding of it as a social practice. Here,
interviewers and applicants intersubjectively negotiate meanings and orient towards social issues. The contributions aimed at the S-as-P agenda concern how interviewers rely on micro-strategies across instances, possibly constituting an HR strategy as an emergent pattern of actions. Apart from this, the micro-strategies often involve recruitment and organisationally-related matters, which shows that the interviewer makes these kinds of concerns relevant in actual instantiations of the job interview. Lastly, I contribute to S-as-P with a framework for understanding and researching strategy in the job interview. Concerning the methodological implications, I argue that more attention should be paid to interactions if the complexity of organisational life is to be explicated. This is because interaction is one of the premier sites at which social actors reason about what they are doing. Finally, the practical implications concern two issues: first of all, interviewers should take the applicant’s perspective into account when it comes to matters that are considered potentially socially problematic. Secondly, both interviewers and applicants should strive towards substantiating self-reports of traits, because these in isolation probably carry little validity.
CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The winter of 2012 marked the beginning of my academic interest in job interviews. It was then that I travelled to Norway to meet with an informant, an HR manager at a subsidiary drilling contractor, who that day was responsible for a recruitment event where he would host approximately ten applicants. They had applied for an entry-level position aboard one of the company’s offshore drilling rigs. The interviewer’s job not only consisted of conducting the interviews. He also gave a short presentation to the rest of the company in a medium-sized meeting room, and administered a logic test to confirm the results of an online test the applicants had done at home when they applied initially. While these activities were not the focus or purpose of my visit, observing them gave me an insight into the amount of work that goes into hiring a new employee. When applying, the hopefuls not only had to send in their CVs and applications, they also had to complete a logical and a personality test to be used for later evaluation. The interviewer had to conduct the interviews, present to the organisation, and administer and evaluate the tests applicants had completed. Obviously, the post-interview evaluations of applicants are another aspect of the interviewer’s work.

The purpose of my visit was to observe an interview with an applicant who was an electrician by trade and desired a vocational change. The interview itself seemed congruent with my experiences and expectations: the interviewer asked about
the applicant’s motivations for applying, queried into his work style, and had him account for his work history. To each and every question the applicant readily supplied answers. Based on these observations, I concluded that interviewing is contingent on quite a lot of talk about previous work, qualifications, or interests. However, other things happened in the interaction. The interviewer took notes, looked at the applicant’s CV, nodded, smiled and laughed alongside the applicant. So, what in the job interview is entirely dependent on the interactional labour of the interviewer as well as the applicant. An issue stood out involving the applicant’s age: the interviewer insinuated it was comparatively high considering the applicant’s future colleagues and superiors, which may cause issues with instructors and co-workers around him. To me, this suggested that the interviewer relies on norms about what is normal and abnormal concerning age.

After a while, the companies I was in contact with allowed me to record their job interviews using video and audio – obviously, depending on the consent of the applicant. When this data began arriving, the previously mentioned observation became more and more interesting to me: interactions were not always smooth. They were prone to misunderstandings, and in some instances, applicants were unable to answer questions. Other cases showed the interviewer dealing with what seemed to be some fairly sensitive issues about the applicants’ circumstances, including job changes that did not make sense to the interviewer. These initial observations in the data led me to speculate that interviewers and applicants often rely on different orientations and understandings to and of certain topics, issues, and problems, which might cause these interactional issues. In other words, I speculated that some interviewers and applicants have different understandings, and rely on various methods of reasoning to manage the interview, its topics, and the accompanying interaction. This research project thus became a focus towards investigating these understandings, and looking at what resources people make use of when they go about doing the job interview, using Microethnography (LeBaron, 2008a; Streeck & Mehus, 2005) as a methodology.

My research agenda coincides with a recent surge of research investigating the manifestation of strategy as social practice. This literature has led to a significant departure from the way in which strategy has traditionally been conceptualised and studied, by focusing on the practices of organisational actors. Informed by the Practice Turn within the social sciences, the Strategy-as-Practice (S-as-P) research
agenda (see Johnson, Melin, & Whittington, 2003) developed out of a dissatisfaction with traditional theoretical perspectives on strategy (see Chaffee, 1985; Whittington, 1996, 2001 for overviews). Thus, early S-as-P scholars contend that traditional strategy theories are removed from practice and are overly abstract (Johnson et al., 2003). As a research agenda, S-as-P reconceptualises strategy as a social phenomenon, i.e., a social practice; something that practitioners engage in practically. The central tenet of S-as-P is that strategy work takes place at all levels of the organisation (Rouleau, 2013) and involves, as Whittington (1996, p. 732) argues, “all the meeting, the talking, the form-filling and the number-crunching by which strategy actually gets formulated and implemented”. Thus, S-as-P scholars are interested in all social, communicative, and cognitive processes that are at work whenever people engage in strategizing. However, S-as-P has so far mainly been preoccupied with the formal contexts (Golsorkhi, Rouleau, Seidl, & Vaara, 2010) associated with strategizing and strategy formation. The approach can make more of a contribution by expanding its perspective to activities that are not usually considered as formal strategy contexts, to encompass more inconspicuous strategy activities. In this sense, my research is aligned with the S-as-P agenda in that my aim is to show how the job interview is carried out in practice as a form of strategy work. Thus, I aim to investigate the possible links between the job interview and strategy, e.g. HR strategy.

In the present introductory chapter, I will introduce readers to the research reported in this dissertation. This introductory section has already accounted for the topic of my study, namely, how interviewers and applicants manage the job interview. In Section 1.1 below, the central research question informing this research is presented, after which Section 1.2 presents the main tenets of the S-as-P research agenda within which this research situates itself. Then, in Section 1.3, I present the research design of Microethnography and the distinct position it takes within philosophies of science. The introduction is concluded in Section 1.4 with an account of the structure of the dissertation.
1.1 Research Question

I have captured the considerations and interests above in the main research question below. In sum, this question is formulated to attend to the issue of how interviewers and applicants go about conducting the job interview:

How do practitioners practically accomplish the job interview as a form of strategy work?

As is evident this research question is a ‘how’-question. By asking how I am interested in the manner in which various phenomena come to manifest themselves. As Silverman (2013, p. 95) this kind of research question highlights a mechanical puzzle. With regards to activities such as a job interview, a mechanical research question looks into the way in which it is achieved or accomplished.

To go into detail, the term ‘practitioners’ refers to those who participate in and perform the job interview. These are interviewers and applicants. ‘Strategy work’ denotes the strategic research interest and allows for the exploration into the potential links between strategy and the job interview. The phrase ‘practically accomplish’ signifies the practical accomplishment of the job interview via the talk in interaction of interviewers and applicants and the methods they draw upon in doing so. This also relates to asking ‘how’ interviewers and applicants perform the job interview as a form of strategy work as it highlights the various practical resources that the participants make use of and orient towards when they engage in the activity.

I address the main research question in three separate empirical investigations that I report in Chapter 7. Each of these analyses focuses on a distinct aspect of the practical accomplishment the job interview and the research question presented above. I introduce to each of these and conclude upon them in relation to each separate analytical investigation. These findings are then discussed in order to be able to answer the overall research question provided above.

1.2 Strategy-as-Practice

In terms of the theoretical foundations of this research project, it falls within the S-as-P agenda and a small but nascent stream of empirical research therein that has begun
investigating activities that are not formally recognised as strategic (Jarzabkowski, Burke, & Spee, 2015; Maitlis & Lawrence, 2003; Rouleau, 2005). Informed by the Practice Turn in the social sciences (e.g. Reckwitz, 2002; Schatzki, 2001a, 2001b), notable management scholars including Whittington (1996, 2003), Hendry (2000) and Johnson and his colleagues (2003) called for a reconceptualization of strategy as a social practice “achieved by the labour of highly skilled workers” (Whittington, 2003, p. 117). As a consequence, S-as-P made strategy research relevant at the micro-level, utilising a new range of methodologies for studying the minutiae of strategy formation.

This change was sparked by dissatisfaction with traditional theories on strategy that were arguably unable to address, or at least disinterested in, the social aspects of strategy, due to their macro-level focus. Therefore, S-as-P scholars proposed a fundamental shift in the conceptualisation of strategy: they argued it is a social practice akin to any other social practice, such as marriage (Whittington, 2007, p. 1578). It consists of various types of organisational member engaging in practices through which strategy is formed. This conceptualisation is, as mentioned above, a fundamental shift from traditional perspectives on strategy. S-as-P shifted the locus of strategy to the micro-level amongst practitioners interacting in various activities (Jarzabkowski, 2010, p. 529). This change is captured by the gerund form, strategizing, which S-as-P researchers use to indicate the active and constitutive nature of practices that make strategizing and organising possible (Jarzabkowski & Spee, 2009, p. 82). Strategy, however, does not necessarily need to be an overt formal process. The phenomena can be observed retrospectively as a consistent pattern of action (Chia & Holt, 2006; Chia & Rasche, 2010).

The reconceptualization of strategy as a social practice facilitates new research endeavours and methodologies that diverge from traditional strategy research. Authors have investigated the politics and power associated with strategizing (Clegg, Carter, & Kornberger, 2004; Mantere, 2013, p. 1410), whereas others have scrutinised formal activities including strategy meetings (Clarke, Kwon, & Wodak, 2012; Kwon, Clarke, & Wodak, 2014; Liu & Maitlis, 2014), strategy workshops (Hodgkinson, Whittington, Johnson, & Schwarz, 2006; Johnson, Smith, & Codling, 2010), formal teams (Paroutis & Pettigrew, 2007), and strategic episodes (J. Hendry & Seidl, 2003). Another dominant area of study is in practitioners’ use of materiality (Dameron, Lê, & LeBaron, 2015). Here, scholars have investigated the
use of PowerPoint (Kaplan, 2011), pictures, maps, data packs, and spreadsheets (Jarzabkowski, Spec, & Smets, 2013), as well as sketches, illustrations, flipcharts and handwritten notes (Werle & Seidl, 2015). Another significant area of study is the language of strategizing. Scholars have investigated strategy as a Wittgensteinian language game (Mantere, 2010, 2013). Others have studied it using Critical Discourse Analysis (Laine & Vaara, 2007, 2010) or rhetorical analysis (Jarzabkowski & Sillince, 2007; Sillince, Jarzabkowski, & Shaw, 2012). Researchers have also investigated strategizing in real time, focusing on the talk in the interactions of organisational members, using Conversation Analysis (Samra-Fredericks, 2003, 2005).

However, there are some gaps regarding S-as-P that have been raised by scholars, which have motivated the present research. The first issue is that S-as-P still tends to treat strategy on the basis of its so-called formal features (Carter, Clegg, & Kornberger, 2008, p. 91). As a consequence, I argue there is a gap in our understanding of how strategy is relevant in other activities not associated with a formal strategy process. Relatedly, S-as-P scholars tend to focus on a select few organisational members, including the top managers, strategists, and consultants (Jarzabkowski, 2008; MacIntosh & Beech, 2011; Samra-Fredericks, 2003; Whittington, 2006). Yet there is no reason to limit the focus to the strategic behaviour of these organisational members. Indeed, other actors engage in activities with an eye to the future of the firm and its organisation. An example in this regard is hiring and HR managers who utilise the job interview in the staffing process. Furthermore, S-as-P studies focusing on the communicative aspect of strategizing tend to neglect its manifestation in real-time (with the exception of Samra-Fredericks, 2003, 2004, 2005). Expanding the S-as-P perspective to include these other activities and organisational members, and investigating how strategy is done in real-time, will generate greater understanding of the strategy, its formation, and its accomplishment in organisations.

1.3 A Microethnographic Research Design

In order to investigate the practical ways that interviewers and applicants manage the job interview, the analyses ought to explicate their methods as they perform their
activities in real time. Microethnography (LeBaron, 2008a; Streeck & Mehus, 2005) is the methodology that I have decided to use as my research design because its interest is in investigating the practical methods for reasoning in everyday social life. To avoid confusion that may arise around the terms of methodology and concepts such as ‘method’, I will be relying on the word ‘micro-strategy’ to capture the essence of the meaning, and to indicate that these are resources for achieving and accomplishing daily activities.

To avoid a detailed historical delineation, for the moment it will suffice to say that Microethnography draws on Ethnomethodology (EM) (Garfinkel, 1967) and Conversation Analysis (CA) (Sacks, Schegloff, & Jefferson, 1974), among other sources of inspiration (Streeck & Mehus, 2005). The fact that Microethnography draws on EM/CA is important for the following reason: the concept of ‘practical sociological reasoning’ (Garfinkel, 1967, p. vii). The problem that this concept attends to is how social activities come to be produced as orderly:

“Garfinkel’s answer to this question is that, in making sense of the situations they face, ordinary people engage in practical reasoning that is methodical (or accountable) in character. If it were not, others would not be able to follow it. He was drawn to this conclusion through empirical work: in particular, as a result of looking at how jury members went about determining ‘the facts’ in legal cases. Thus, he argues that it is the availability of shared methods for sense-making, rather than the existence of stable substantive meanings, which makes social coordination and communication possible.” (Hammersley, 2003, p. 754 emphasis in original)

Thus, the ethnomethodological interest is in the common sense knowledge and methods that ordinary people (i.e. members) rely upon to interact with each other, and thus accomplish their activities in an orderly fashion. The consequence for the present study is that I am interested in explicating the methods of practical sociological reasoning that interviewers and applicants rely upon to manage the job interview and to determine ‘the facts’.

The ontological perspective EM has on the nature of social reality and order is that it is reflexively constructed by members as they perform their activities
(Coulon, 1995), which means members draw upon already constituted practices of the activity in their particular enactment thereof. In doing so, they simultaneously reconstitute the practices of the activity, by enacting an instance thereof. What you get is, thus, a recursive relationship between practice and concrete activity that constitutes the nature of social order. CA aligns with this interest, but emphasises the sequentiality of talk in interaction as the foundation of social order (Sacks, 1984), because it constitutes the “formal procedures that are used by members in accomplishing everyday social actions” (Psathas, 1995, p. 15). Here, social actions are mainly taken to mean actions such as asking and answering questions, greeting, justifying, accounting, requesting, etc., as they are mobilised during conversations. So what CA enables is the analysis of the underlying procedures for producing actions that are integral for understanding how social actors accomplish an activity, such as a job interview. A lot of conversation analytical research is devoted to explicating the systematics of conversation. Thus, researchers have described and investigated the systematics of turn-taking (Sacks et al., 1974), how people manage their reference to people (Sacks & Schegloff, 1979), or their agreement and disagreement with one other (Pomerantz, 1984a) as intersubjective accomplishments.

My interest is not in the elicitation of the formal properties and systematics of conversational structures. Rather, as mentioned, the purpose of my research is the elicitation of the common-sense knowledge and methods of practical sociological reasoning that interviewers and applicants make use of on a turn-by-turn basis in sequences of interaction. It is for this reason that I have decided to take advantage of both CA and EM, as microethnographers encourage (LeBaron, 2008a), because they enable closer scrutiny of members’ perspectives during their interactions with each other in job interviews.

A brief comment should be added concerning the understanding of communication in Microethnography. The main tenet of EM/CA’s understanding of social action relies entirely on the member’s perspective. To use a simple example, if a turn at talk is to be considered a question, it is only to be considered as such if the members retrospectively orient to it as having had this particular meaning (Sacks et al., 1974). The only way to determine this meaning is to look at the ensuing turn at talk to determine whether or not a recipient member orients towards the prior turn as a question, invitation, or complaint. Communication, in this understanding, is entirely
intersubjective and retrospectively constituted through the interaction between social actors.

“[The] meaning of a single utterance is seen as the result of a meaning attributional process sequentially and retrospectively realised by the utterance(s) following next to a preceding one” (W. L. Schneider, 2000, p. 124).

The single utterance or turn at talk of a speaker cannot be considered communication in isolation, before a hearer reacts to it and provides his or her immediate understanding. What this means is that other conversationalists’ ensuing statements display their understanding of the previous speaker’s turn at talk, and, thus, constitute the meaning of an utterance. Thus, communication happens whenever meaning is intersubjectively and retrospectively constituted in the flux of conversation.

In sum, this research project relies on a microethnographic research design in investigating the various micro-strategies for practical reasoning that interviewers and applicants make use of when they interact in the job interview. The position this study takes in terms of its view on the philosophy of science is further expanded upon in Chapter 2, on the philosophy of sciences associated with Microethnography and its major sources of academic inspiration. Furthermore, the specifics of microethnographic methodology and how they have been utilised in the present investigation are provided in Chapter 6.

1.4 Dissertation Structure

The structure of the dissertation is visualised in figure 1.1 below and is as follows: following this introduction, the thesis proceeds into Chapter 2. This chapter accounts for the research project’s ethnomethodological and conversation analytical ontological-epistemological position within the philosophy of science. Chapter 3 then describes the organisational context of the job interview and the different levels of strategy, including corporate, business, and functional strategies such as human resource strategy. The main reason for doing so is to consider the way in which the job interview is conceptualised within Human Resource Management, and to account for
its organisational context. Afterwards, Chapter 4 reviews empirical studies on job interviews. The purpose of this chapter is to explain the status quo of academic knowledge on job interviews. This chapter proceeds to Chapter 5, where the theoretical framework of S-as-P is presented. The chapter explores the theoretical developments of mainstream strategy theory leading up to the development of S-as-P. Then follows a review of the S-as-P literature, with two distinct purposes. The first is to argue that S-as-P has focused on formal strategizing practices, but needs to expand its interest to include activities where strategy may be relevant. The second argument is that discursively interested S-as-P research has been disinterested in the real-time manifestation of strategy in talk in interaction, often resorting to discourse analyses of retrospective interviews, documents, or texts. If we are to understand how strategies are achieved in practice, we need to expand our focus to its real-time achievement.

Chapter 6 accounts for the methodology of Microethnography, data collection, and the firms in which the data has been collected. The chapter also considers the need for ethnographic investigations into organisational life.

The empirical part of the paper contains three separate analytical investigations each contained in Chapter 7. The first analysis focuses on the presupposed norms about employment circumstances that interviewers and applicants draw upon. I show how interviewers moralise applicants’ employment circumstances and how this occasionally leads to interactional issues between the two conversing parties due to diverging norms. In the second investigation, I investigate the use of professional membership categories and how they are invoked and responded to. The chapter shows how the interviewers make the applicant’s ascription to particular professional categories relevant, by asking them to account for their professional aspirations. In doing so, the interviews assume that applicants are readily able to account for these aspirations. However, in practice, this is not straightforward, as applicants are occasionally reluctant or unable to account for their aspirations within a new industry. The final empirical investigation considers the role of the so-called trait questions that are posed in order for the interviewer to document the strengths and competencies of applicants. In HR literature, these kinds of questions have been criticised for not being able to predict applicants’ future performances. This investigation focuses on the interactional reasons why.

Chapter 8 discusses the implications for theory, methodology, and practice. Theoretical contributions are discussed with regards to S-as-P with regards to the
nature of strategy in job interviews and HR theory regarding how the job interview is understood theoretically. The methodological implications concern S-as-P exclusively by focusing on how best to investigate practical reasoning. The practical implications revolve around a greater practitioner recognition that the job interview consist both of a professional aspect as well as a social one, which is why occasional interactional problems seem to develop. **Chapter 9** concludes the dissertation by answering the main research question and pointing towards potential further research.
1. Introduction

2. Philosophy of Science

2. The Human Resource Management Context

3. Strategy-as-Practice

4. Previous research on job interviews

5. Methodology, Methods, and Data Collection, Treatment and

7. Empirical Investigations

8. Discussion

9. Conclusion

Figure 1.1. – Dissertation structure
The noun phrase, ‘philosophy of science’, refers to a key matter in a scientific inquiry that concerns what reality is and how we are able to investigate it and generate knowledge about it (Moses & Knutsen, 2012). However, it is imprecise to consider the concept in the singular sense, because there are multiple views related to different scientific disciplines as well as modes of inquiry. These views fall into two broad categories: namely, positivism and social constructivism. These two philosophical traditions represent opposing ontological views. Positivism considers the world to be tangible, existent outside human consciousness, whereas constructivists see it as a product of human language and social (inter-)action. The empirical object of natural sciences is the physical world as it exists, ranging from atoms to the observable universe and anything between. The social sciences are not interested in the physical world, but rather the social one, and how it emerges. Social scientists are therefore preoccupied with the issue of social order. While positivism has played, and still does play, a role in social sciences, I shall focus on social constructivism for the sake of brevity as it is the most relevant for this study. With varying degrees of radicalism, social constructivists maintain that knowledge is assembled in social contexts. For instance, Gergen (2009, pp. 21–25) asserts that scientific knowledge can be considered a social construct. Thus constructivists as such are not interested in
objective truths; rather, they are interested in unearthing and changing the social order that people create (Hacking, 2000, pp. 6–7).

This chapter’s purpose is to account for the position of this research project within the philosophy of science, specifically social constructivism. In the introductory chapter, a microethnographic research design was presented that draws on CA and EM. Thus, I subscribe to an ethnomethodologically informed ontological position on the nature of social reality. This position draws on Phenomenology – a social constructivist position. Garfinkel (1967), the main proprietor of EM, was a student of Schutz, a leading phenomenologist whose ideas came to inspire Garfinkel (see Heritage, 1984b for an overview). A phenomenologist is concerned with uncovering how a given phenomenon appears meaningful to its perceiver (Zahavi, 2003) by visual perception, memory, emotion, and – relevant to the purposes of this thesis – by the social interactions and communicative activities (D. W. Smith, 2011) through which a phenomenon like social order can present itself (Zahavi, 2003). Microethnography is therefore interested in the methodical ways people imbue social actions and activities with meaning, intent, and normativity and, thus, create and orient towards the order of their immediate social surroundings.

This chapter is structured as follows: Subsection 2.1 outlines the general onto-epistemological views of Microethnography by accounting for Ethnomethodology (EM). Since Conversation Analysis (CA) is another influential factor in Microethnography, its particular position is described in Section 2.2. The chapter concludes in Section 2.3 with a justification of the appropriateness of this onto-epistemological position as a philosophical background for the present study.

### 2.1 Ethnomethodology: The Study of Practical Sociological Reasoning

EM emerged at a time when mainstream theoretical sociology was preoccupied with systems theory. Theoreticians such as Parsons, who was inspired by the findings in the biological sciences (e.g. T. Parsons, 1970, p. 29), asserted that different kinds of systems structure social actions:
“Reduced to the simplest possible terms, then, a social system consists in a plurality of individual actors interacting with each other in a situation which has at least a physical or environmental aspect, actors who are motivated in terms of a tendency to the “optimization of gratification” and whose relation to their situations, including each other, is defined and mediated in terms of a system of culturally structured and shared symbols.” (T. Parsons, 1951, p. 3)

In fact, Parsons asserted that multiple systems, including the social system as well as the personality and the cultural systems, constitute a system of social action. The significance of starting with Parson’s social theory in an account of EM’s philosophy of science is that it illustrates the break with traditional sociological theory the latter came to have. The problem of social order is central to sociology. As Heritage (1984b, p. 22) argues, Parsons understood action and order “in terms of concepts [that] were almost wholly ‘external’ to the point of view of the actor”. The social actor is socialised by the systems, and his/her actions are a direct cause of this process.

Where Parsons understood social action as externally preconditioned (to the social actor), Garfinkel (1967) took the opposite, internal stance. EM highlights the presumption that social activities are constituted by members’ preconceived expectations (Sidnell, 2010, p. 8). EM is concerned with the study of the methods by which members make meaning and achieve their day-to-day activities (Coulon, 1995). EM provides an interesting and controversial perspective on social order: it is not squarely a theoretical problem, as Parsons would have it (Hammersley, 2003, p. 273). Rather it is a practical problem for people during their everyday lives (ten Have, 2007, p. 6) that they orient towards during their activities in the social world. People construct order and display orientations towards it by drawing on various resources for reasoning in managing the activity.

So the main interest that has since come to define the ethnomethodological endeavour is how members accomplish their work and activities in orderly fashions. Garfinkel explicates this agenda on the very first pages of *Studies in Ethnomethodology* as
“[treating] practical activities, practical circumstances, and practical sociological reasoning as topics of empirical study, and by paying to the most commonplace activities of daily life the attention usually accorded extraordinary events, seek to learn about them as phenomena in their own right.” (Garfinkel, 1967, p. 1)

The interest is in the mundane, whether professional or lay, and the practical methods (or micro-strategies) that members rely upon in managing their activities. With regards to job interviews, an investigation such as the present one is interested in the members’ (i.e. interviewers and applicants) methods for handling a job interview.

By studying and describing practical sociological reasoning, EM builds on phenomenology (Heritage, 1984b). Furthermore, it contributes to a specific and unique understanding of as well as vocabulary for investigating practical conduct. I will first account for EM’s phenomenological sources of inspiration before proceeding to consider its specific contributions in the following sections.

2.1.1 Phenomenology as a Backdrop

Broadly speaking, EM can be considered a Verstehende Soziologie (Peräkylä, 2004) because it attempts to understand social order from the perspective of social actors. By doing so it draws inspiration from Phenomenology – a particular ontological position within constructivist approaches in the philosophy of science. Phenomenology is concerned with uncovering how a given phenomenon appears meaningful to a person (Zahavi, 2003) either via visual perception, memory, emotion, cognition or, relevant to the purposes of this thesis, social interaction (D. W. Smith, 2011).

The philosopher and sociologist, Alfred Schutz, inspired Garfinkel (Heritage, 1984b). Schutz’s (1932, 1953) interests were in the common sense means by which people live and act out the social world by drawing on their biographical experiences, as well as socially distributed knowledge, when dealing with their surroundings. According to Schutz (1953), the individual accumulates mundane knowledge through a process of typification:
“I may take the typically apperceived object [Irish setter] as an exemplar of the general type [dog] and allow myself to be led to this concept of the type, but I do not need by any means to think of the concrete dog as an exemplar of the general concept of “dog” (Schutz, 1953, p. 5 emphasis in original).

What this means is that knowledge accumulates from what is already known and thought to be relevant for the new sensory information being perceived by a social actor. The inevitable result is that social actors presume for practical purposes that objects present themselves “in their mode of typicality” (Heritage, 1984b, p. 52), i.e. an animal with fur, four legs, a snout, and an inclination for barking at passing cars appears to the person perceiving it to be a dog. Furthermore, a typification such as this is highly contingent on the context within which a person viewing it is situated, meaning that it is open to constant revision. One can talk about the creature as being ‘a dog’, but also as ‘a canine’ if you are a biologist, ‘a hunting dog’ if you are a hunter, or ‘a sheepdog’ if you are a shepherd.

The treatment of typification above constructs it as a private, cognitive process. This is not the case. Common-sense knowledge is intersubjective and, for Schutz, intersubjectivity is a practical problem concerning the achievement of common ground. Two idealisations that social actors make use of alleviate this problem, namely, 1) the interchangeability of standpoints and 2) the congruency of relevances (Schutz, 1953, p. 8). Social actors take it for granted that, if they were to swap places, the other’s perspective would become that of their own and vice versa. This is the idealisation of interchangeability. Social actors also assume that until other facts present themselves, differences of understanding and perspective are irrelevant because they have interpreted a situation in the same manner for the purposes at hand, which is congruency of relevances. These two idealisations are integral to the practical achievement of intersubjective understanding:

“It is through a continuous process of adjustment – expressed in the two idealizations – that the actors succeed in resolving the discrepancies in their perspectives which could otherwise throw doubt on the shared nature of their perceptions and cognitions” (Heritage, 1984b, p. 56).
In sum, Schutz’s perspective on intersubjectivity is a practical one, which social actors seek to resolve whenever there is sufficient evidence that their subjective knowledge and typifications differ from that of the other party and thus that these differences might lead to problems for the practical purposes at hand.

The import of intersubjectivity and common sense knowledge for social interaction concerns social actors’ practical reasoning about the activities in which they are engaged. People are competently able, and take it for granted that others are also adequately competent, to engage in activities including participating in meetings, taking phone calls, and making small talk. In the following sections, I shall expand further upon these ideas and their import for EM.

2.1.2 Key Concepts in Ethnomethodology

EM is particularly interested in how social order is achieved as a contingent ongoing accomplishment. To explore this, EM makes use of a specialised vocabulary including concepts such as indexicality, reflexivity, accountability, and the notion of member. These concepts are the focus of this section.

2.1.2.1 Indexicality

A central premise of EM is that social actors make use of their language to constitute the meaning of what they are doing in a situated manner (ten Have, 2002). The issue of indexical expressions is one that has plagued logicians as well as linguistics. An indexical expression is words such as “we”, “you”, and “there”. The problem associated with these kinds of expressions is that if “meaning and action depend upon context, how can any meaning be understood across contexts and be made shareable” (Attewell, 1974, p. 185). Apart from being a theoretical issue for linguistics and logicians, it is also a practical one for members. Garfinkel and Sacks (1970) observe that members formulate their conversations, meaning that they take the time to remedy their understandings of indexical expressions within a given context. They note that “[f]aults are seen by members to occur in the prevalence of demonstratives, pronouns, and tenses” (Garfinkel & Sacks, 1970, p. 350). It is by pointing out mistakes and correcting other members in their use that indexicality can be a way to constitute shared meaning (Rawls, 1989, p. 162). The indexicality of a linguistic
expression is the interdependency of the phrase’s meaning, the context and time of its production, its relation to what it is meant to denote, and the purpose and biography of the person uttering the expression.

(Mehan & Wood, 1975, p. 366). Whenever a member, e.g. a job interviewer, makes use of words such as “we”, “roustabout”, or “superior”, s/he constitutes their meaning contextually (Day & Wagner, 2008). The interviewer may use “we” to refer to his employer when speaking on its behalf, and likewise rely upon “superior” to refer to an applicant’s potential new supervisor, according to hierarchy. So although these linguistic expressions have meanings that would be relevant across instances, it is in their local production that they get distinct meanings (Coulon, 1995, p. 17). What is essential about indexical expressions is that they are “ordered properties” (Garfinkel, 1967, p. 11) meaning their usage is demonstrably based on consensus with other members. So indexical expressions such as “we” or “superior” get their meaning not only from the context of their use, e.g. a job interview, but also from the larger context wherein other employees ascribe the same meaning to the terms. It is important to recognise that when talking about indexical expressions it is not restricted to linguistic expressions. Rather, it encompasses all forms of symbolic meaning, including “utterances, gestures, rules, and actions” (Coulon, 1995, p. 18). So, although a word may be contextually sensitive, entire utterances can be as well. Thus, a question such as “Why are you here?” might in one context call into question a person’s reasons for being in a particular place, whereas it may also invite an account of the applicant’s motivations for applying in the job interview.

2.1.2.2 Reflexivity

Where indexicality refers to the interdependence of an expression and the context in which it occurs and what has happened, reflexivity refers to the interdependent relationship between concrete doings and practice:

“When EM/CA studies talk of the reflexivity between practice and activity they highlight the practical ways in which people orient to what some practice might consist of, its moral components, identities and asymmetries, in and through the way in which ordinary activities
are produced, how people walk, gesture, glance, talk, and so on”  

Reflexivity is the reflexive relationship between 1) social actors’ orientation to the formal procedures that constitute the activity and 2) the concrete performance of these procedures that in turn creates the formal procedures. To use Garfinkel’s (1967, p. 1) own words, “the activities whereby members produce and manage settings of organised everyday affairs are identical with members’ procedures for making those settings ‘account-able’”. To paraphrase, the implications of reflexivity are such that in engaging in an activity, say a job interview, social actors draw on a distinct set of practices which are also the practices that the social actors themselves would use to describe that activity. Thus, the doings and sayings one might come across in the job interview draw on practices usually associated with the job interview. In performing these doings and sayings, social actors not only enact a concrete occurrence of a job interview, they also constitute what the job interview is, its meanings and its purposes, which make it reproducible. This means whenever a social actor produces an action within the confines of a particular social activity, it projects the social actors’ understanding of that activity, and projects the relevant next actions for another social actor to take (Day & Wagner, 2008). Understanding in this regard might encompass social roles, morality, rights to knowledge and so on. In this sense, drawing on and making relevant particular understandings of the ongoing activity reflexively produce the social order of the activity.

2.1.2.3 Accountability

The penultimate ethnomethodological concept is that of accountability. In Garfinkel’s hands, the term is brought beyond its ordinary and mundane meaning to encompass social actions’ perspicuity (ten Have, 2002). For a social action to be meaningful, it needs to be “describable, intelligible, reportable, and analysable” (Coulon, 1995, p. 25). Thus, the accountability of what a social actor is doing should be proximately intelligible and, if not immediately comprehensible, subject to subsequent description and explanation. It is in this practical sense that accountability relates to reflexivity, because the social actors orient towards the sense and meaning (i.e. the
accountability) of what they and their co-members do when enacting a particular practice.

A social actor only becomes ‘a job applicant’ in the capacity of the social actor acting as such. In practice, this could mean answering questions in a particular manner rather than asking them, willingly revealing weaknesses, and being able to communicate in a professional manner. Thereby, the social actor orients towards the accountability of what he/she is doing. The connection between reflexivity and accountability is that the former refers to the inherent property of human social conduct that facilitates it and makes it describable, i.e., accountable.

2.1.2.4 Member

The final concept is that of ‘member’. It does not refer to a single individual but rather the interdependency of natural language, common sense knowledge, and accountability. The concept is based upon the finding that whenever we witness other people interacting we immediately make sense of what they are doing, for instance, a job interview (e.g. Button, 1992).

“[People] are heard to be engaged in the objective production and objective display of commonsense knowledge of everyday activities as observable and reportable phenomena. We ask what it is about natural language that permits speakers and auditors to hear, and in other ways to witness, the objective production and objective display of commonsense knowledge, and of practical circumstances, practical actions, and practical sociological reasoning as well” (Garfinkel & Sacks, 1970, p. 342).

The crux of the matter of ‘member’ as a concept is that of competence. To be a competent member, social actors must possess the ability “to speak, to know, to understand, to act in ways that are sensible in that society and in the situations in which they find themselves” (ten Have, 2002, p. n/a). Competent members are capable of using indexical expressions, coordinating their activities, and drawing on and constituting their practices sine qua non of their competence as members of a
particular group, culture, and society (Garfinkel, 1996). In other words, members are the people who share tacit knowledge for acting in a given context.

### 2.2 Conversation Analysis

In founding CA, Sacks et al. (1974) drew on many theoreticians within sociology, namely Goffman and Garfinkel. Goffman made the study of social interaction a topic in its own right (Goffman, 1983) and referred to his form of study as the microstudy or microsociology of the mundane (e.g. Goffman, 1971). As Schegloff (1988, p. 94) points out, Goffman insisted that interaction should be studied syntactically, according to the relationship between actors’ social actions, rather than by reference to their psychology. The import of the recommendation is clear in early CA studies such as *A Simplest Systematics for the Organization of Turn-Taking for Conversation* (Sacks et al., 1974) or *Opening Up Closings* (Schegloff & Sacks, 1969). These studies describe the observable properties of the interaction and the relation between turns at talk without reference to the inner states of actors.

CA emerged from EM as a distinct research endeavour from the mind of its chief visionary, Harvey Sacks. He wanted to endow sociology with a research program more akin to the natural sciences (Sacks, 1984). EM had considerable influence on CA in terms of its emphasis on participants’ understandings and the situated production of social order. Conversation hence became

> “the description and explication of the competences that ordinary speakers use and rely on in participating in intelligible, socially organized interaction. At its most basic, this objective is one of describing the procedures by conversationalists produce their own behavior and understand and deal with the behavior of others”

Conversation analysts investigate members’ methods for doing social actions by paying attention to talk in interaction and its organisational capacity for the purpose of explicating the orderliness of talk in different contexts. In doing so, CA employs a
technical vocabulary enabling the elicitation of the structures of conversation and the methods by which conversationalists conduct and make sense of their activities.

2.2.1 The Organisation of Talk in interaction

Inspired particularly by the natural sciences, Sacks’s vision was to create an observational science akin to this for sociology. All scientific studies, he noted, consist of a summary of the findings and an account of the procedure by which the researchers obtained them in order to make study reproducible. What Sacks concluded on this basis was that formal descriptions of human conduct are possible and that this in turn makes the work repeatable across instances (Schegloff, 1992a, p. xxxi). Transferred to everyday conversations and talk in interaction, conversational practices are in Sacks’s view accountable in the ethnomethodological sense. He adds that they can be subjected to formal description by a researcher. Hence, the task of the conversation analyst is to describe the formal procedures social actors rely upon in producing and reproducing talk in interaction. Thus, CA seeks to:

“explicate the ways in which the materials [i.e. talk] are produced by members in orderly ways that exhibit their orderliness, have their orderliness appreciated and used, and have that appreciation displayed and treated as the basis for subsequent action” (Schegloff & Sacks, 1969, p. 290).

It is against this backdrop that CA provides a significant break with traditional sociological positions that at the time had treated the problem of order as a macro-phenomenon of society, institutions, and organisations. Sacks (1984) asserted that traditional sociology had treated these as the only sources of order. Everything else occurring within them was seen as unorganised and subject to chance. Instead, Sacks (1984, p. 22) was convinced that “there is order at all points”, with talk in interaction being the smallest occurrence of order.

This order was explicated in the following studies. Sacks et al. (1974) studied the procedures distributing turns at talk in multiparty settings. Through their investigations they arrived at a set of rules for describing turn allocation including 1) the first speaker selects the next speaker 2) the second speaker self-selects or 3) the
current speaker continues. Another topic of study is how conversationalists handle repair in conversation. Repair involves replacing “an ‘error’ or ‘mistake’ by what is ‘correct’” (Schegloff, Jefferson, & Sacks, 1977, p. 363), and this has been shown to be handled in an orderly fashion whereby conversationalists manage their intersubjective understandings (Schegloff, 1992b). The topic of the sequentiality of social actions remains an important one for the purpose of describing the formal procedures for producing social actions. Sequentiality refers to the fact that one instance of a turn at talk usually follows another, and thus ends up constituting a sequence of actions (Schegloff, 2007b). Sequences usually consist of first pair parts (e.g. a question, request, offer, etc.) and recognisable second pair parts (e.g. answer, grant, acceptance, etc.) in interaction (Levinson, 1983; Schegloff, 1990; Schegloff & Sacks, 1969).

In order to understand the full ramifications of sequentiality, CA’s ontological understanding of social action needs to be further scrutinised. Language does not merely convey information. People use it to perform actions and affect the social world. Conversation analytical scholars focus on cumulatively gathering descriptions of the various actions people do in talk in interaction (Schegloff, 1996). Two distinct and parallel approaches are contrasted in this regard, namely, (1) Searle’s (1965) speech act theory and (2) Sacks’s (1992a) notion of social action. As Schegloff (1992a, pp. xiv–xxvii) argues in his introduction to Sacks’s accumulated lectures, the differences between the two lie in their level of abstraction. For example, creating typologies of speech acts explicating the formal requirements of ‘promising’ and ‘naming’ preoccupied Searle. Sacks’s interest, on the other hand, was in explaining the ways in which people use particular practices to make a particular action interpretable as being ‘a question’ or ‘invitation’ by other interlocutors during the flux of conversation. The concept of social action denotes that the turns at talk of some first speaker are formatted so as to achieve something in the interactional sense, and are, thus, taken by some second speaker to be a ‘question’, ‘invitation’, or ‘greeting’ (Schegloff, 1984). Certain characteristics of a particular FPP, say a question, including syntactical structure, lexical choices, and intonation (Sacks, 1992a, p. 373), will enable the apperception of it as a question. Whenever a first speaker performs any action, it is immediately implicative of what the second speaker is capable of producing in the interaction (Sacks et al., 1974, p. 728). Thus, in creating the SPP to an FPP, such as a question, the second speaker will inevitably
have to orient towards the FPP as a question. It is in this retrospective sense that the meanings of social actions are constituted, and it is *qua* this capacity that social actions are sequentially ordered and come in adjacency pairs (Schegloff, 2007b; Schegloff & Sacks, 1969; W. L. Schneider, 2000). It is also in this regard that the conversation analytical understanding of practice becomes relevant. Here, it borrows heavily from EM to describe the “methods that individuals use to give sense to and at the same time to accomplish their daily actions” (Coulon, 1995, p. 15). Thus, when investigating practice, conversation analysts tend to the ways in which social actors orient toward and practically accomplish the meaning of what they are doing, as described above.

### 2.2.2 Towards an Endogenous Epistemology

In a now famous quote, Schegloff and Sacks (1969, p. 290) observe that “… insofar as the materials we worked with exhibited orderliness, they did so not only for us … but for the coparticipants who produced them”. What is meant by this was explicated additionally some 30 years later by Schegloff (1997), who acknowledged that people are conscious of their own and others’ doings; always orienting towards context. This endogenous perspective relates back to Garfinkel’s initial interest in people’s common-sense procedures for determining practical courses of action. The use of the adjective “endogenous” in the title of this subsection, as an attribute of the nature of knowledge, is qualified by the conversation analytical preoccupation with explicating the means by which people make sense of their activities, interactions, and actions.

CA is preoccupied with generating empirically grounded knowledge about the knowledge and practices ordinary people of society make use of during their daily doings. This implies that the basis on which knowledge claims are made about interactional phenomena is similar to that of members. This implies explicating the knowledge employed in interaction, which is something that is often done with reference to a proof procedure (Sacks et al., 1974, p. 729), which analysts rely upon by grounding their analyses of talk in the coparticipants’ own orientations towards their interactions. To give an example, it is only by producing a second assessment that a first assessment can be said to be an assessment (cf. Pomerantz, 1984a). In other words, it is only in the participants’ mutual orientations towards each others’ social actions that they are intelligible as distinct types of social actions. Then, and
only then, upon making these observations through detailed analyses will a
conversation analyst make generalised claims about these social actions.

This is what distinguishes CA from other discourse analytical approaches, as
is observable in the exchange between Schegloff (1998) and Wetherell (1998).
Conversation analysts (as well as ethnomethodologists) are indifferent to theoretical
preconceptions about social conduct. In a dogmatic sense, conversation analytical
researchers refuse to approach data with any preconceived notion of power
asymmetry, ethnicity, and so on. These concepts are only relevant to the researcher in
so far as the members display orientations towards these issues.

2.3 Summing Up: Justifying the Position

It remains for me to consider why the framework provided by EM/CA that
Microethnography draws upon is relevant for the present dissertation, as opposed to a
positivistic onto-epistemological position. The reason why positivism is irrelevant for
the present purposes can be argued rather quickly. However, the reasoning behind the
particular position taken within social constructivism requires more discussion about
its remits, as a number of other approaches might also have been relevant. Indeed, as
the next chapter will show, research using other methodologies has also been done to
investigate job interviews. Most notable here is discourse analysis.

The present thesis investigates the social grounds on which problems arise in
the interpersonal communications in the job interview. This has to do, to a certain
extent, with the various presuppositions people enter into the interview context with,
and on which they base their interactional contributions and interpretations. The
argument here is that these presuppositions are not culturally based. Rather, they are
locally contingent on the organisational lives of the participants and the knowledge
and standards they have accumulated through this.

This endeavour makes the present thesis, by definition, not positivistic in
that it does not establish truths or presuppositions about the natural world (cf. Moses
& Knutsen, 2012, pp. 48–49). Rather, it seeks to describe the means by which
interviewers and candidates make sense of the interactional job interview project in
which they are engaged, which implies a more experiential and phenomenological
approach to the doings of ordinary people and how they experience situations.
Of course, this also feeds into the reasoning behind a phenomenological position within social constructivism, as opposed to Critical Discourse Analysis a la Fairclough (2010) or Ethnography. The answers to this can be found in the ontological, epistemological, and methodological basics of EM/CA. EM/CA’s ontological view of social order is that the participants perform it methodically, which necessarily underpins any macrolevel discourses that would be highlighted in Critical Discourse Analysis. Epistemologically, as has been argued, conversation analysts do not assume preordained theoretical concepts to be inherent in communication, as critical discourse analysts would. Instead, EM/CA scholars assume an endogenous epistemology by investigating such aspects as power asymmetries, which become relevant in the interaction for the participants. Methodology distinguishes EM/CA from other approaches such as Ethnography in its insistence on documenting naturally occurring data, where, for example, ethnographers would spend lots of time doing participant observation and taking detailed field notes. All these considerations added up mean that it is justifiable to argue that the best ontological, epistemological, and methodological stance to take for this thesis is a phenomenological one, based within social constructivism.
CHAPTER 3

THE HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT CONTEXT

The key interests the present research pursues are the micro-strategies for practical reasoning that interviewers and applicants rely upon in managing the job interview. To qualify this endeavour, it is necessary to consider the organisational context within which it occurs and consider how researchers commonly conceptualise it. To do so means paying consideration to the related corporate discipline and academic area of inquiry known as Human Resource Management (HRM). By speaking of it as a discipline, I mean that practitioners are employed to handle matters related to HRM. By academic area of inquiry, I indicate that scholars engage with HRM as a distinct way to manage employees in the organisation. HRM is a distinct approach to the management of employees and their traits for the general purpose of achieving “a competitive advantage and added value” (Golding, 2007, p. 35) for the company in question. HRM builds largely on the Resource-Based View of the Firm (Barney, 1991; Wernerfelt, 1984) in which the organisation sees its employees as crucial, strategic resources that it can use to achieve certain ends.

The chapter is structured as follows: Section 3.1 defines HRM by contrasting it with Personnel Management, another approach to people management. Then Section 3.2 introduces the concept of strategy, and considers it in relation to HRM.
Section 3.3 examines the subdiscipline of Strategic Staffing, and discusses in what ways staffing can be strategic.

3.1 Human Resource Management

To contextualise the job interview within HRM, an account of its development is required. It emerged during the 1980s from Personnel Management practices that were “devoted to operational servicing and the maintenance of files and records” (Fombrun, 1984, p. 12). The title of ‘Personnel Manager’ refers to a specialist function (Guest, 1987, p. 507) catering to the immediate labour needs of the company (Guest, 1987, p. 507). HRM diverged from Personnel Management in the following ways:

1) It focuses on the long-term planning aspects of managing people (C. Hendry & Pettigrew, 1986, p. 4). Attending to the organisation’s labour needs from an HRM perspective involves a predictive mode of going about personnel management. Thus, practitioners analyse the organisation’s needs in order to determine future needs in terms of the number of employees to hire or make redundant, the required skills, educational needs and characteristics, among other things.

2) It integrates the function of managing employees with management. Personnel Management is traditionally thought of as a specialist function meaning professionals were hired to maintain the function. HRM, however, integrates it with line management (Guest, 1987, p. 507). One of the main drivers of this change is the conviction that the organisation's most valued assets and resource are its employees. In this light, the task of managing people became too crucial and too important to be left in the hands of personnel specialists and professionals (Guest, 1987, p. 504; Keenoy, 1990, p. 3).

3) It sees workers as resources, not a cost to be minimised. This is, perhaps, one of the most salient features of HRM. Where Personnel Management saw employees as a cost to be minimised (I. Henderson, 2011, p. 16), HRM, on the other hand, considers employees to be human resources that can be mobilised to achieve a competitive advantage. This shift coincides with the advent of the Resource-based view of the firm (Barney, 1991; Wernerfelt, 1984). The basic tenet of this theoretical
The perspective is that companies should be managed according to “their resources rather than regarding their products” (Wernerfelt, 1984, p. 179). This entails a greater managerial focus on the internal resources of the firm, including its employees.

4) **It focuses on individuals and not collectives.** The fourth feature, which Hendry and Pettigrew (1986) consider, has to do with a change from a collective to an individual way of dealing with employees. Personnel Management adopted a pluralist perspective, meaning that it sees a conflict of interest as being an inevitable result of the relationship between employer and employee. The reason mainly had to do with the fact that unions mediated the employer's relationship with employees (Beardwell & Clark, 2007, p. 15). However, in the unitarist perspective, where the emphasis is on employee loyalty towards the employer, unions are seen as problematic and competing for “the loyalty and commitment of employees” (Bray, Deery, Wals, & Waring, 2004, p. 21).

Other differences are considered: for example, Henderson (2011) lists differences in recruitment and selection practices. Both Personnel Management and HRM rely upon fairly complex methods for recruiting personnel. However, the former tends to use complex methods for key positions whereas the latter emphasises the use of them for all positions. The methods for recruitment include the testing of candidates, and the practices for assessing candidates include personality tests, cognitive tests, handwriting analysis, biodata, or assessment centre tests (Boselie, Dietz, & Boon, 2005, p. 72; Shackleton & Newell, 1991). Many of these tests are commonly relied upon in HRM practices across positions (Deshpande & Golhar, 1994) as opposed to Personnel Management, which reserves them primarily for key positions (I. Henderson, 2011).

### 3.2 HR Strategy

In the present section, I account for the strategic context of the job interview within the discipline of HRM. The current subsection, therefore, considers the concept of strategy and its relation to three distinct organisational levels.
3.2.1 The Strategy Concept

The etymological origins of the word “strategy” are Greek, with connotations of war planning and tactical manoeuvring on the battlefield (“Strategy,” 2004). Its first usage is accredited to Sun Tzu 500 BC (Grant, 2010, p. 14), whereas its first modern uses in business have been dated to the first part of the twentieth century, and its competitive aspect only to the second half (Ghemawat, 2000, p. 1). It is evident from the amount of textbooks produced on the topic that strategy is a widely popular and important notion for practitioners and scholars alike (Whittington, 2001, p. 1).

Strategy’s prominence is a product of the idea that a company can somehow plan its way towards current and future profitability in competitive market conditions (Johnson, Scholes, & Whittington, 2008, p. 3). In the broadest possible sense, strategy is defined as “the means by which individuals and organisations achieve their objectives” (Grant, 2010, p. 16). These goals may be as simple as ensuring financial survival, or they could involve a vision of industry-wide domination.

However, this definition is only partial:

“Strategy is the direction and scope of an organization over the long term, which achieves advantage in a changing environment through its configuration of resources and competences with the aim of fulfilling stakeholder expectations” (Johnson et al., 2008, p. 3 emphasis in orginal).

This definition refers to corporate strategies and highlights a long-term aspect. Strategy in this view is the meticulously planned and thought-out direction in which a company proceeds in order to attain its goals.

The concept, however, can be explicated even further, as Hax and Majluf (1986, 1996) attempted with a definition encompassing previous ones:

“Strategy
1. Determines and reveals the organizational purpose in terms of long-term objectives, action programs, and resource allocation priorities;
2. Selects the business the organization is in, or is to be in;
3. Attempts to achieve a long-term, sustainable advantage in each of its businesses by responding appropriately to the opportunities and threats in the firm’s environment, and the strengths and weaknesses of the organization;
4. Identifies the distinct managerial tasks of the corporate, business, and functional levels.
5. Is a coherent, unifying, and integrative pattern of decisions;
6. Defines the nature of the economic and noneconomic contributions it intends to make to its stakeholders;
7. Is an expression of the strategic intent of the organization;
8. Is aimed at developing and nurturing the core competencies of the firm;
9. Is a means for investing selectively in tangible and intangible resources to develop the capabilities that assure a sustainable competitive advantage.”

(Hax & Majluf, 1996, p. 14)

This definition both addresses what one would call corporate strategy as well as business and functional strategies. Strategy addresses work in many different parts of businesses, ranging from the broad direction of the company to the individual departments like accounting and HR.

It is evident from the previous definitions that strategy is a complex phenomenon that encompasses both the general course a company sets out on and how it will reach its goal through particular activities. Strategy determines in what industries and markets the company will operate. It involves all levels of the organisation from corporate to business to functional areas. Moreover, it determines how the company intends to thrive financially, and how it will return on the investments of its stakeholders.

To explicate what it is, then, that strategy attends to, the notions of mission, vision, and corporate objectives and goals (Cornelissen, 2008, pp. 9–10) are important. The company’s mission is its overall aim or the purpose of its existence, e.g. Honda’s mission statement, which dedicates Honda to supplying “products at the highest quality, yet at a reasonable price for worldwide customer satisfaction” (Honda, 2015). A vision is the future state which a company or organisation seeks to achieve. Amazon (2013) envisions itself for the future as “the world’s most customer-centric company”. Not-for-profit organisation Oxfam (2015) envisions “a just world
without poverty”. Lastly, corporate objectives and goals include more precise statements of what the company wants to achieve. Hewlett-Packard’s (2015) corporate goals include leading the market by “developing and delivering useful and innovative products, services and solutions.” Setting out to achieve these particular missions requires different strategies both at the broad level, associated with corporate and business strategies, as well as functional strategies, such as HR strategy. For Hewlett-Packard to achieve their mission, the HR strategy might involve recruiting and selecting applicants that exhibit the skills needed to innovate, and the necessary competencies to work individually or in terms of particular projects.

Table 3.2.1 below summarises the core terminology discussed in this subsection. The section below considers first, second, and third order strategies in turn.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Definition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Vision</td>
<td>The desired future state of the company.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mission</td>
<td>The purpose of the company.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corporate objectives and goals</td>
<td>Precise statements of goals to achieve.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strategy</td>
<td>The manner in which the company’s vision, mission, and corporate objectives and goals are to be achieved.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corporate strategy</td>
<td>Defines what industry or market the company will compete in.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business strategy</td>
<td>Defines how the company will compete in particular industries and markets.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Functional strategy</td>
<td>Defines how function areas such as finance, marketing, and HRM will add value to the overall company and its long-term plans.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3.2.2 Three Orders of Strategy

In alignment with Purcell (1989), Purcell and Ahlstrand (1989), Tyson (1995), Hax and Majluf (1996), Verweire (2014), and Johnson, Scholes and Whittington (2008), this subsection rests on the argument that strategies (in the plural sense) are layered according to different levels. Hence, strategies can be first order, second order, and third order. The first-order has the broadest possible scope, dealing with corporate strategy. The second level of strategy concerns identifying where the firm is to compete (Hax & Majluf, 1996, p. 184). This level constitutes business strategy. Lastly, we have the third-order strategies, also known as operational (Johnson et al., 2008, p. 7) or functional strategies (Verweire, 2014, pp. 5–6), which mainly concern how the subcomponents, such as human resources, support corporate and business strategies.

3.2.2.1 The First Order: Corporate Strategy

Corporate strategy is defined by top management “with the long-term direction of the enterprise or the scope of its activities” (Purcell, 1989, p. 70) in mind. Thus, it addresses “how value will be added to the different parts (business units) of the organisation” (Johnson et al., 2008, p. 7). In other words, a first-order strategy has to do with the basic goals a given firm sets out to achieve for the future, how management envisions the future, or what activities a firm should partake in in the future (Purcell & Ahlstrand, 1989).

A number of corporate strategies have been identified by Porter (1996). Concerning multi-businesses, Porter found four types of strategies: 1) diversifying by buying attractive companies, 2) restructuring weak business units, 3) synergising the activities of business units, and 4) sharing skills and activities between business units. Other corporate level strategies include growth strategy (Schuler & Jackson, 1987) aimed at expanding the business or market, and product-oriented strategies (Isoherranen & Kess, 2011) building, for example, customer loyalty, or creating customer value.
3.2.2.2 The Second Order: Business Strategy

Having accounted for first-order of strategy, second-order strategies, or business strategies, are here considered in detail. Business strategies are commonly regarded as one of the most crucial types of strategy. Creating a business strategy means managing a business unit, which is

“[a]n operating unit or a planning focus that groups a distinct set of products or services sold to a uniform set of customers, while facing a well-defined set of competitors” (Hax & Majluf, 1996, p. 43).

A business unit is formed from a product or service that the unit creates or provides, the customers they serve, and the competitors they face in the market. By treating each business unit as a strategically manageable entity, they complement and support the corporate strategy by becoming resources for achieving the future goals of the organisation.

This second order of strategy, according to Johnson et al. (2008, p. 7), concerns the ways in which a multi-faceted company’s business units are to compete in their respective industries, and how they support the first-order strategy. In a multi-business, one would typically be able to find a distinction between the first-order strategy and the supporting second-order strategies. However, in single-businesses, there may be a convergence between the two. Another important aspect of second-order strategy, mainly concerning multi-business firms is, as Purcell (1989, p. 71) argues, its relation to organisational structure. Thus, having decided on a particular corporate strategy, the corporate office has to consider how the business can be organised to realise this strategy via its operating procedures and the different business units. This organisation is also related to whether or not the corporate office ends up allocating resources to the business unit supporting its strategy, what performance measures are in place and what financial targets the business units should meet (Hax & Majluf, 1996, p. 49).

To determine a business strategy for a particular business unit, the purpose and scope of the unit need to be defined, industry factors should be assessed, and the relative position to competitors must be defined (Hax & Majluf, 1996, pp. 47–48). Determining the scope and purpose means defining the product portfolio, the market
the unit competes in and its geographical location, as well as the competencies it possesses. Addressing industry-wide factors means determining the attractiveness of the industry and where potential opportunities are, as well as where challenges lurk. Determining a business unit’s competitive position involves determining what sources of competitive advantage are available within it, with regards to its competitors.

In his seminal book on competitive strategy, Porter (1980) identified three generic kinds of strategy a business can pursue, including cost-leadership, differentiation, and focus. Achieving cost-leadership means producing goods at the lowest-possible expense, and selling them cheaper than competitors. Differentiation involves being unique in an industry, by which a given business seeks to distinguish itself from its competitors concerning its product portfolio and services. With focus, a business targets specific consumer groups and seeks to establish more niche markets for its products.

3.2.2.3 The Third Order: Functional Strategies

Functional (or operational) strategies have to do with “how the component parts of an organisation deliver effectively the corporate- and business-level strategies in terms of resources, processes and people” (Johnson et al., 2008, p. 7). Hax and Majluf (1996, p. 325) group functional strategies accordingly:

1. Financial strategy
2. Human resources strategy
3. Technology strategy
4. Procurement strategy
5. Manufacturing strategy
6. Marketing strategy

Here it can be seen that HR strategies are located as a third order or functional strategy. The topic of how functional strategies such as HR strategies relate to other types of strategy is the topic of the next subsection.
3.2.3 HR Strategies

Where the previous subsection argued that HR strategies are third order or functional strategies, the present subsection considers what this entails. To do so, this subsection examines five different theoretical models that explain how HR strategy and wider strategies interrelate. Then it focuses on Strategic Staffing, a subdiscipline within HRM taken into account for the purpose of discussing strategic HR practices.

3.2.3.1 Models of vertical integration

Much of the early theoretical work on HRM emphasised its integration with strategic management as discussed above. However, this early work often failed in its mission (Golding, 2007, p. 43). Newer theoretical models have attempted to explain the relationship between how integration is achieved between HR strategy and higher levels of strategy. Torrington et al. (2002, pp. 31–34) provide five models of integration between HR strategy and wider organisational strategies. These (shown in figure 2-1 below) are 1) separation, 2) fit, 3) dialogue, 4) holistic, and 5) HR-driven.

The separation model (1) corresponds to the traditional view on the link between larger organisational strategies, i.e. corporate and business, and the people management function. It sees the two strategies as completely separate. According to Golding (2007, p. 49), the separation would in practice suggest the lack of any formal responsibility for HR. Early HRM scholars (e.g. Devanna, Fombrun, & Tichy, 1984; Fombrun, 1984) introduced the fit model (2) encouraging a strong fit between corporate and business strategies and HR strategy. In this model, HR strategy is adapted and derived from the larger strategies. In other words, business objectives are “cascaded down from senior management through departments to individuals” (Golding, 2007, p. 49). The dialogue model (3) proposes a closer relationship between corporate and business strategy, on the one hand, and HR strategy on the other. As Torrington et al. (2002, p. 33) state, what is demanded by corporate and business strategies might not be possible from an HR perspective. Hence, a dialogue commences concerning the viability of different strategic options. In the holistic model (4), all types of strategy are considered intimately related. To a large part, this has to do with the recognition that a company’s employees are not just tools for realising its strategy, but a an important source of competitive advantage (see for example Prahalad & Hamel, 1990). Employees’ competencies become key for
achieving a competitive advantage (Golding, 2007, p. 50) and as a consequence HR and broader strategies become much more closely intertwined. The last model, the HR driven model (5), takes the holistic model to the extreme, with HR being the prime source of strategy, to a large degree informing both corporate and business strategies. This model also builds on the assumption that employees are a key source of competitive advantage, but recognises then that company itself should build on these (Torrington et al., 2002, p. 33).

![Figure 3.1](image)

**Figure 3.1.** – Models of integration between organisational and HR strategies (Torrington et al., 2002, p. 32)

To provide a theoretical example to illustrate the relationship between HR and broader strategies, Schuler and Jackson (1987) consider innovation strategies. The distinct purpose of HRM is thus to facilitate
“(1) a high degree of creative behaviour, (2) a long-term focus, (3) a relatively high level of cooperative, interdependent behaviour, (4) a moderate degree of concern for quality, (5) a moderate concern for quantity, (6) an equal degree of concern for process and results, (7) a greater degree of risk taking, and (8) a high tolerance of and unpredictability” (Schuler & Jackson, 1987, pp. 209–210).

The relation between HR strategy and the wider corporate strategy is an integrated one where the HR strategy is derived from the corporate strategy.

### 3.3 Strategic Staffing

The job interview strongly relates to staffing as a subdiscipline, because it is a selection technique (Beardwell, 2007b, p. 207) for selecting and determining which applicant(s) should receive a job offer. Here then, the focus is on but one subdiscipline, and a very small portion of that subdiscipline; i.e. a selection technique. Staffing at large, according to Beardwell (2007b, p. 190), comprises many more practices, however, including workforce planning, job analysis or role analysis, recruiting and selecting employees.

#### 3.3.1 Defining Strategic Staffing and its relation to HR strategy

Practitioners (e.g. Alan F. Lafley in Borucki, 1983) and academics consider Strategic Staffing to be but one area or subdiscipline of HRM that organisations “use to identify and address the staffing implications of their business strategies and plans” (Bechet, 2008, p. 6 emphases in original). In this quote, the approach to staffing in a strategic manner correlates with the fit model described above. Here, lower level functional strategies have to match corporate and business strategies. Thus, staffing in a strategic manner involves manning “an organization in future-oriented, goal-directed ways” (Phillips & Gully, 2015b, p. 24) through workforce planning, recruitment and selection, among other activities, to match the business requirements.

To go further into detail regarding the link between staffing and other strategies, recall the argument of the previous subsection, in which strategies were
distributed across three levels (Tyson, 1995). When deciding on a corporate or business strategy, an organisation is also making a decision to change. As a third-order strategy, HR strategy should ideally then be aligned to support this change. As a subdiscipline of HRM, Strategic Staffing can thus be considered a subdiscipline that addresses the staffing implications of functional HR strategy (Bechet, 2008, p. 9; Phillips & Gully, 2015a, p. 1417, 2015b, p. 53).

For example, a business wanting to increase sales might mobilise a growth strategy. Due to this, the company needs to expand, resulting in increased pressure on labour and thereby a larger demand for additional workers or an altered means of production. Consequently, investments into recruitment, selection, and training the right people to meet the new strategic demands of the business are made (Phillips & Gully, 2015b, p. 47). This means making a number of strategic decisions, including how many people to hire, the skills needed for the job, the values required to be part of the organisational culture, and whether or not candidates are to be recruited from internal or external labour markets.

3.3.2 The HRM Conceptualisation of the Job Interview

Arriving at the area of staffing, where the job interview arguably belongs, I will now account for the conceptualisation that HRM offers of it. Generally speaking, selection involves deciding which applicant for a job best satisfies the company’s employment needs and who can become a valuable resource for fulfilling the company’s goals (Armstrong, 2006, p. 409). How, then, is this done in a strategic manner? A great effort often goes into selection, because the costs associated with a wrong hire are often many times higher than that person’s salary (Phillips & Gully, 2015a, p. 325). The job interview carries importance in terms of staffing as it is one of the most popular ways to handle the process of selecting new employees (Armstrong, 2006, p. 429). Particularly within organisational psychology and psychology in general, which I will consider in the ensuing chapter, there has been a pursuit towards validating the job interview as a method for predicting applicant performance. Such an endeavour arguably inflicts a degree of scientism as well as functionalism in how HRM conceptualises the interview. In the present section, I will consider the different ways in which HRM scholars conceptualise the job interview, in order to pave the way for
a discussion based upon the research in this dissertation, which is founded on an understanding of it as a social practice.

One of the most prevalent ways in which the job interview is seen can be captured in the following quotes:

“Interviewing is universally popular as a selection tool” (Beardwell, 2007b, p. 207).

“Employment interviews are a popular selection technique from many viewpoints” (Macan, 2009, p. 203).

“Due to the differences in employment rates between people with disabilities and without disabilities, it is important to identify and implement selection methods that base decisions on the qualifications of the job applicant irrelevant of any disability that does not interfere with task performance. It is very beneficial to any organization to use a selection method that ensures that applicants with disabilities receive full consideration” (Brecher, Bragger, & Kutcher, 2006, p. 156 emphasis added).

“An interview is a controlled conversation with a purpose” (Torrington et al., 2002, p. 243).

What each of these quotes has in common is a functional understanding of the job interview. By this, I mean that it is defined by the purpose it serves. Conceptualising an object as a tool, technique, or method indicates a purpose directed at a particular outcome. In the previous quotes, this purpose is the selection of a new employee. The functionalist understanding of the job interview has additional affordances. First of all, characterising something as a tool, method, or technique implies that an agent applies it to an object. In the job interview, there is an obvious distinction of roles between the job interviewer on the one hand and the applicant on the other. The job interviewer is the one who applies the method to the object being assessed for the selection purposes at hand. The object here is, obviously, is the applicant. Secondly, and this relates to the previous points, the role distinction between the interviewer and
applicant supposes that the interviewer is the one in control and the applicant is passively subjected to the method or technique. This goes back to Torrington et al.’s (2002) quote, which thus seems to imply that the interviewer is the one in charge and in control of what goes on in the interview, while the applicant sits by passively.

A second point I wish to touch upon relates to the understanding of what goes on communicatively between the interviewer and applicant. In doing so, I will consider the following definition:

“The employment interview is defined as an interviewer-applicant exchange of information in which the interviewer(s) inquire(s) into the applicant’s (1) work-related knowledge, skills, and abilities (KSAs); (b) motivations; (c) values; and (d) reliability, with the overall staffing goals of attracting, selecting, and retaining a highly competent and productive workforce” (Eder & Harris, 1999, p. 2 emphasis added)

The clue here is the phrase “exchange of information”, which implies that what goes on between the interviewer and applicant is the sending and receiving of information from one source to another, which suggests specific knowledge, skills, and abilities are communicated in an almost transition model view of communication (Shannon, 1948) between a sender and receiver.

In sum, HRM’s understanding of the job interview is primarily functionalistic because the object of interest is defined by the purpose it serves. Thus, scholars and practitioners conceive of the job interview as a method designed to enable the assessment of the applicant in an almost scientific manner. Furthermore, the way in which the interviewer-applicant relationship is conceived can be closely related to the transmission model of communication.

3.4 Summing Up

The present chapter has dealt with many closely related topics for the purpose of arriving at an understanding of HRM in general as well as the job interview as a strategically relevant activity. In doing so, a general overview of the different approaches is provided. These informed the people management function before the
advent of Personnel Management and HRM, which have also been compared. The main points of difference between the two include the integration with management, a stronger strategic focus with an emphasis on long-term planning, and a shift from a pluralist to a unitarist perspective. Strategy has been a central topic of this chapter and how it relates to HRM has been accounted for in detail. Three levels of strategy have been considered. The first is that of corporate strategy, which has to do with the overall direction and goals of the company as determined by the corporate team. Business, the second-order strategy, defines how a company is to compete and obtain a market share. Lastly, third-order strategies such as HRM strategy deal with how the company’s resources can be managed to support the first- and second-order strategies. Strategic Staffing was considered as a subdiscipline of HRM, and is ideally aligned with that strategy. As a subdiscipline, practitioners rely upon it to determine the staffing needs of the company. Strategic Staffing has been considered mainly in relation to recruitment, which involves how a company attracts the applicants its needs, and selection, that is, how it distinguishes between those applicants it needs as determined by the HRM strategy and those that it does not. It is in this regard that the job interview is viewed as an activity that practitioners rely upon to select the individuals they determine the company needs for the future. In other words, it is a conversation intended to identify those traits and characteristics that the company needs as determined by its HRM strategy.
CHAPTER 4

JOB INTERVIEW RESEARCH

The purpose of the present chapter is to account for the status quo of job interview research. In doing so I draw on research from various academic fields including Personnel Psychology and communication studies. Personnel Psychology has focused on cognitive and behavioural aspects concerning how various behaviours and applicants’ impression management tactics affect interviewers’ ratings. Within communication studies generally has been on the language related aspects of job interviews. The chapter is structured as follows: In Section 4.1 I account for studies focusing on the cognitive and behavioural aspects of the job interview before going into detail with communication studies in Section 4.2. Section 4.3 argues that more interaction studies are needed to explicate the social dynamics of the job interview. Finally the chapter is summarised in Section 4.4.

4.1 Cognition and Behaviour

Studies on cognition in job interviews within the field of Personnel Psychology investigate the various types of behaviour and impression management tactics that applicants and interviewers make use of and their effect on the post-interview ratings of the other party.
4.1.1 The Effects of Embodied and Verbal Behaviour on Ratings

A significant finding in psychology studies is that certain kinds of behaviour positively and negatively influence raters’ ratings of applicants as well as interviewers. Sterrett (1978) investigated the relationship between different degrees of body language intensities and how they impact ratings on constructs including ambition, motivation, confidence, and intelligence. Male and female interviewers were asked to view videotapes of male actors acting as applicants in a simulated interview situation. The received ratings, however, proved inconclusive. More recently, Stewart, Dustin, and Barrick (2008) explored the effects of handshakes on interviewer ratings in mock interviews. Firm handshakes and eye contact were found to have a positive impact on the suitability ratings interviewers provided after the interview had been completed. Non-verbal behaviour have also been investigated regarding applicants with visible physical disabilities (Wright & Multon, 1995). In this study employers were asked to rate video-recorded and simulated interviews with university students. Employers rated individuals who visually displayed good non-verbal communication skills as more employable than those who displayed less proficiency in non-verbal communication.

The effects of different speech styles were investigated by Galloois, Callan, and Palmer (1992), who asked personnel officers to rate different speech styles in video recorded and simulated interviews. The styles investigated were aggressive, assertive (i.e. confidently and honestly), and non-assertive (i.e. unconfidently). The authors were able to conclude that an assertive speech style is more advantageous for receiving positive ratings. Powerful and powerless speech styles were also investigated in a study relying upon audiotaped and role-played interviews (Parton, Siltanen, Hosman, & Langenderfer, 2002). Both undergraduate and professional interviewers were asked to rate the applicants according to a number of constructs such as likeability, confidence, and literacy. The powerless speech style was associated with hesitation and hedging. This style received less positive ratings than the powerful counterpart in terms of hireability, likeability, and similarity with themselves. Studies have also investigated the degree to which participants in the job interview accommodate their accents. Willemyns, Gallois, Callan, and Pittam (1997) investigated the question of whether or not applicants’ accents converged or differed with that of the interviewer for the purpose of decreasing or increasing social
distance. The study was conducted on what the authors call a “casual research assistant position” at an Australian university (Willemyns et al., 1997, p. 3). These findings have been supported by later studies (Deprez-Sims & Morris, 2010; Rakić, Steffens, & Mummendey, 2011). These kinds of studies are important because they have shown how different kinds of accents trigger specific biases thus affecting interviewers’ ratings.

4.1.2 Impression Management Tactics

The previously mentioned studies are to a large extent interested in how communicative behaviours invoke different biases among as well as receive positive or negative ratings by the raters participating in the study. Another research stream is interested the conscious influencing tactics that applicants rely upon in order to influence raters’ ratings. Impression management can be defined as “the conscious distortions of answers to the interview questions in order to obtain a better score on the interview and/or otherwise create favourable perceptions” (Levashina & Campion, 2007, p. 1639). In a survey based study, Higgins and Judge (2004) investigated applicants’ influencing tactics – specifically ingratiation and self-promotion – and how they impact interviewers’ perceptions of fit. Post-interview surveys asked each applicant which influence tactics they used. Interviewers were asked to rate applicants’ person-organisation and person-job fit. Influence tactics were found to have a positive impact although the authors acknowledge that they “do not yet understand the intricacies of the interactions embedded within the interview” (Higgins & Judge, 2004, p. 629). This is an issue, which I shall bracket now but return to later. In a study relying upon post-interview surveys, Chen, Wen-Fen Yang, and Lin (2010) asked applicants about their impression management tactics. Additionally the researchers asked interviewers to rate the applicants and conducted measures on their affective states. The authors documented a correlation between self-focused impression management tactics and positive affectivity and non-verbal impression management tactics with negative affectivity. It was found generally that impression management tactics worked. However, affective traits (e.g. emotional disposition) seemed to moderate their effect. In a more recent study, Paulhus, Westlake, Calvez, and Harms (2013) investigated the effects of a number of influence tactics and their impact on raters’ evaluations. Also relying upon video recordings of simulated
interviews using students applying for a mock research assistant in a psychology laboratory, the authors asked experts to assess if students were exaggerating their knowledge and the frequency of self-reference and ingratiation. These assessments were used in a second experiment for the purpose of investigating how experts (Ph.D.-students and graduate students trained in personality assessment) and non-experts’ (undergraduate students) rated the student applicants from the first experiment. It was found that students resorting to higher degrees of self-presentation proved to influence ratings. Some studies, however, have suggested that some impression management tactics work (Swider, Barrick, Harris, & Stoverink, 2011).

Focusing especially on overt deception tactics. Schneider, Powell, and Roulin (2015) conducted simulated interviews with 119 students at a Canadian university. Their study focused on deceptive impression management tactics such as exaggerating credentials and dishonestly pursuing social rapport with the interviewer (L. Schneider et al., 2015, p. 183). The authors hypothesized that these deception tactics were reflected in different types of non-verbal behaviour comprising facial expressions and hand gestures as well as verbal behaviour including pauses, speaking errors, and so on. Their findings were that those individuals who were judged as deceitful relied upon controlled facial behaviour for example. In related study Roulin, Bangerter, and Levashina (2015) investigated interviewers’ ability to detect these attempts at deception. Interviewers working in the corporate industry were shown video recordings of mock interviews that utilised deceptive tactics. Detecting attempts at deception however proved difficult.

4.2 Communication, Interaction, and Discourse

As pointed out in the previous section, the psychology literature has focused on the impact of various types of behaviour on subsequent ratings of the applicants. In the present section I will go into detail with research that focus on communication related aspects of the job interview. Researchers who identify as speech communication scholars have directed their efforts towards communicative and language related aspects of interviews in a more detailed manner. This is generally in order to elicit the behaviours of both interviewers and applicants that affect outcomes. Furthermore researchers have begun investigating the interaction of interviewers and applicants
from an ethnomethodological and conversation analytical point of view. Similarly researchers studying discourse have investigated the use of discourses and the way in which they affect the outcome of the interview.

4.2.1 The Interviewer’s Behaviour

Speech communication scholars have investigated a number of different topics: In terms of interviewers’ behaviours topics include 1) the role of questions, 2) interviewers perceptions of applicants’ speech characteristics, and 3) interviewers’ empathetic behaviour.

Einhorn (1981) showed that correct answers are often implied by interviewers when they produce their questions. The interviewers for example base their line of questioning on the requirements outlined in the job description. This is reminiscent of Dipboye’s (1982) proposed model that explains how pre-interview information influences interviewer behaviour during the interview. Another early study on questions explicitly focused on the relationship between question types (open-ended vs. closed questions), whether they were posed as topic initiating or as follow-up questions, and if how the questions were organised in terms of open-ended questions occurring first and closed question occurring second in the interview or vice versa (e.g. funnel vs. inverted funnel sequences) had an effect on the length of applicants’ answers. Tengler and Jablin (1983), utilising screening interviews from an American university’s placement center, wanted to investigate how these variables affected the applicants’ chances of obtaining a second interview. It was shown that open-ended questions proffered lengthier answers although not usually upon a first question due to uncertainty as to what type of answer the question ought to receive. In relation to the applicants that received an offer for a second interview, the analysis showed no differentiation between the cases.

Studies have also investigated the impact of interviewer communicative behaviour on applicants’ perceptions of company appeal. These studies highlight the recruitment aspect of job interviews. McComb and Jablin (1984) investigated interviewers’ listening behaviour and correlated them with interviewees’ perceptions of interviewer empathy. The authors focused on interjected questions and statements in the applicants’ stream of talk, which were interpreted as interruptions, verbal encouragers, response latencies, summaries of the applicant’s previous talk, and
clarifying questions. Particularly, applicants perceived interruptive statements by the interviewer negatively regarding empathetic listening behaviour.

4.2.2 The Applicant’s Behaviour

In terms of applicants’ communicative behaviour, the topics investigated predominantly revolve around applicants’ (honest or deceptive) answers and general behaviour in job interviews. Studies have investigated the communicative competencies of applicants and how they are perceived by interviewers (Mino, 1996; Peterson, 1999). Relying on simulated job interviews Mino (1996) investigated the perceived effect of communicative competencies of applicants answering questions and how it was perceived by student raters with no prior experience. The two competencies investigated were content delivery concerning the substantive aspects of a message and vocal delivery, e.g. conveying enthusiasm. The findings generally suggest that the student raters were “affected by both the quality of the topic of discourse or idea units presented by interviewees and the degree to which each displayed vocal variety and clear articulation while presenting their responses” (Mino, 1996, p. 233). In her questionnaire based study, Peterson (1999) asked professional interviewers to rate the importance of oral communication skills in making hiring decisions. The replies showed that communication skills generally were perceived as an important factor of interview success. Hopper and Williams (1973) and Hopper (1977) investigated the correlation between applicants speech characteristics and interviewers’ perceptions thereof in terms of qualifications. Speech characteristics such as non-standard varieties of American English such as Black English, Spanish influenced English, and Southern white English (Hopper & Williams, 1973, p. 298) influenced interviewers’ perceptions of applicants’ competencies and likeability. Hopper and Williams (1973) found that speech perceptions correlated with judgments of intelligence and competence. This was important for certain managerial positions. However, it did not influence decisions with regards to manual labour positions.

A number of studies have explicitly investigated the differences in speech related to truthful and deceptive answers to questions (O’Hair, Cody, & Behnke, 1985; K. W. Watson & Ragsdale, 1981). With their experimental research design, Watson and Ragsdale’s (1981) sought to investigate the relationship between the verb tenses of questions (e.g. past, present, future, and conditional) and their effect on
applicants’ truthful or deceptive responses. It was found that deceivers for example tended to rely on a large wordage compared to their honest counterparts in their oral and written answers. O’Hair et al. (1985) investigated word stress levels associated with honest and deceptive answers and found that applicants tended to rely on higher degrees of vocal stress when they produced prepared lies.

However considering the role of the applicant in job interviews Tengler and Jablin (1983) showed that the job interview is not all about answering questions. The authors showed that applicants who successfully obtained a second interview spent more time talking than answering questions. This fact seems to suggest that a number of other things than simply answering questions are going on. This could for example be an applicant asking questions. Babbitt and Jablin (1985) showed how applicants ask about one third of the questions in interviews in order to seek information regarding the job, the organisation, or clarification.

4.2.3 Interaction between Interviewer and Applicant

In a small number of studies, ethnomethodologists and conversation analysts have investigated the interaction between interviewer and applicant. Studies relying upon EM/CA are generally rare but provide an interesting analytical approach due to a focus on reflexivity, membership categorisation, and epistemics. As Llewellyn and Spence (2009, p. 1419) argue practitioners “embed and reveal practices, with and for one another, in interaction”. This assertion is based on the presumption that job interviews are designed with a distinct purpose in mind and are thus built on “relevant presuppositions, identities, regular ways of going on, [and] definitions of normality” (Llewellyn & Spence, 2009, p. 1423) that influences how job interview participants display an orientation to the activity at hand. It is thus the task of the analyst to reveal how these underlying phenomena are oriented to when investigating job interviews using EMCA for analysis.

4.2.3.1 Reflexivity

Reflexivity signifies the practices associated with any social activity that at once describe and constitute its social framework (Coulon, 1995, p. 23). What this means is that whenever an actor interacts in an activity s/he simultaneously constitutes the meaning of that activity by drawing on its practices. If we consider the job interview
it is constituted by various meanings determined by presuppositions, roles, logics, identities, and norms (Llewellyn & Spence, 2009). When interacting interviewers and applicants draw upon these and so they simultaneously reconstitute the meaning of the interview. In this sense the job interview "is a product of, and simultaneously a resource for, interaction during job interviews" (Llewellyn, 2010, p. 74).

One of the first researchers to investigate this relationship was Button (1987, 1992) showing how interviewers orient to an interview orthodoxy when asking and assessing questions. He analysed a video recording of a job interview at an English school and observation of the post-interview feedback the applicant was given. Focusing particularly on questioning and answering Button showed how an answer based on a misunderstood question informed a negative decision. The answer was to accuse the applicant for being unable to understand questions (Button, 1992, p. 213). Button argues that in normal conversations there is normally an opportunity for mending misunderstandings. These opportunities are passed on in the interview. This implies that interviewers use applicants answers based on the presupposition that they reveal “personal characteristics, qualities, qualities, and deficiencies” (Button, 1992, p. 227). Both Llewellyn and Spence (2009) and Llewellyn (2010) have built upon the work of Button (1987, 1992) by investigating questions and answer. As Llewellyn and Spence (2009, p. 1425) assert, the purpose of asking questions in interviews is to assess applicants for employment purposes. The practical implication is that questioning practices in job interviews are different from everyday practice. What is counted as acceptable questioning behaviour in the interview would in a dinner party conversation be intolerable. This point is important in the constructivist sense. It shows how participants display their understandings of who is entitled to do what and what is counted as acceptable behaviour. This is because, as Llewellyn and Spence (2009, p. 1433) argue, the job interview is created in such a way that its localized interactional practices “exhibit an orientation to overarching concerns and considerations”. Relatedly Llewellyn (2010) built upon the conclusion that interviewers presuppose that answers provide an exact measure of applicants’ skills and competencies. Llewellyn investigated how interviewers probed applicants’ answers based on presuppositions that achievements and particular qualities ought to be present in answers. What these studies thus show is that question-answer practices build on logics, presuppositions, roles, and responsibilities that structures and is structured by interaction.
A number of studies have investigated intercultural differences in job and screening interviews and shown that applicants from various cultural and ethnic backgrounds cope in different ways (e.g. Akinnaso & Ajibolade, 1982; Auer, 1998; Gumperz, 1992). These studies have generally shown that presuppositions influence the ways in which applicants from different cultures answer questions and that these often conflict with what the interviewer intended. One of the important findings here is that the meaning and purpose of the question at hand are “the prerogative of the interviewer” (Akinnaso & Ajibolade, 1982, p. 127) meaning that the question’s purpose is determined entirely by the interviewer. Diverging understandings of interview questions are thus culturally contingent, which can lead applicants from minorities to be misunderstood.

4.2.3.2 Membership Negotiation

A small stream of study, which counts only one publication, has investigated membership negotiation in job interviews. The central theme here is that interviewers and applicants invoke membership categories. Relying upon Sacks’ (1992a, pp. 40–48) notion of membership categorisation device by which participants in interactions assign themselves and each other to membership categories, Zhang and Li (2014) showed how interviewers and applicants negotiated their memberships. The authors conceptualise the job interview as “a process where interviewers inscribe or invoke relevant membership categories by which [applicants] are categorised and in relation to which the respond” (Zhang & Li, 2014, p. 11). Focusing particularly on the membership category of ‘Chinese journalist’ and ‘university student/graduate’, Zhang and Li investigated how interviewers provided cues to the target category of Chinese journal to the applicants. In doing so they inferred this membership category using a variety of linguistic cues such as stress on particular words and inferring the activities and behaviours associated with these categories. The authors found that successful applicants were tuned into these cues and able to respond accordingly.

4.2.3.3 Epistemic Status

Epistemics relates to knowledge and epistemic status refers to the “relative epistemic access to a domain or territory of information as stratified between interactants such that they occupy different positions on an epistemic gradient” (Heritage, 2012a, p. 4).
Epistemic gradient here basically refers to who has more of knowledge and who has less of it in a given situation. The embodied practices and uses of documents related to epistemics and interviewer applicant asymmetries have been investigated in a number of studies by authors such as Glenn and LeBaron (2011) and LeBaron, Glenn, and Thompson (2007). These studies highlight the rights and responsibilities of interviewers and applicants towards their knowledge.

With regards to multimodal practices LeBaron et al. (2007, p. 2) sought to analyse how interviewers “use files to ask applicants challenging question”. The researchers showed how CVs’ functions go beyond simply supplying information but also mobile social actions, e.g. questions. Another way of using applicant CVs was investigated by Glenn and LeBaron (2011) focusing particularly on how interviewers and applicants negotiate their epistemic authority to particular pieces of information.

Two distinct ways of engaging with CVs were investigated: 1) voicing an interest therein and 2) paraphrasing its contents. Primary epistemic authority was granted to applicants in the first case wherein the interviewer notices something of interest in the CV, which the applicant is then asked to confirm (Glenn & LeBaron, 2011, p. 17). Primary epistemic authority is granted to the applicant. However in glossing and assessing the contents of the CV, epistemic access also belongs to the interviewer. An interviewer may for example reiterate its contents to indicate what he/she already knows that the applicant will have to take into account producing an answer.

4.2.4 Discourse

The concept of discourse as it is used in Discourse Analysis can be understood accordingly: “whenever we produce a description or refer to a place, object, event or state of affairs in the world, we invariably select from a range of possible words and phrases” (Wooffitt, 2005, p. 18). These words and phrases are associated with habitual ways of talking about and understanding topics based on their relation to objects, people, social classes, ideologies, institutions, and so on (Fairclough, 2010, p. 3). Applied to interviews DA studies focus on the discourses drawn upon and how these affect the outcome of the interview. Researchers have mainly focused on intercultural job interview contexts where people rely on different discourses (Campbell & Roberts, 2007; Roberts & Campbell, 2005; Roberts & Sarangi, 1995).
Other studies have focused on the communicative styles employed by applicants from different social classes (Scheuer, 2001, 2003).

4.2.4.1 Intercultural Clashes

A central point made by Roberts and Sarangi (1995) is that success is determined by awareness of rules of the interview game. One of the best examples that illustrate this point is the investigations conducted by Campbell and Roberts (2007), Roberts and Campbell (2005) and Roberts and Sarangi (Roberts & Sarangi, 1995). In the latter study, applicants’ tacit knowledge of “institutional discourses, bureaucratic language, and power structures” (Roberts & Campbell, 2005, p. 47) were investigated. Relying upon a dataset of 60 job interviews wherein white British candidates and black and minority candidates partook, their research showed that a significant percentage of applicants born abroad failed the interview. Going into detail the authors began focusing on the narratives produced during the interviews. The institutional discourse necessitated that applicants produced narratives adhering to the requirements of the format enabling interviewers to document them. It was found that foreign-born applicants generally had problems producing a documentable. This left them at a disadvantage.

In a similar study relying on the same corpus of job interviews, Campbell and Roberts (2007) investigated the ability of applicants to blend personal and institutional discourses. What the authors mean by this is that

“[applicants] have to balance and synthesize, on the one hand, an institutional view of their identity as a team worker, a customer service assistant, and a self-managing individual, with, on the other hand, other self-perceptions and modes of speaking which belong to a life-world outside the workplace, and which themselves draw on a variety of familial, educational and cultural discourses” (Campbell & Roberts, 2007, p. 266)

Again it was found that minority and foreign-born applicants were unsuccessful leading interviewers to perceive them as overly personal. In these instances interviewers’ discourses become institutionalised and de-personalised adding to the
clash between the discourses. The applicants should ideally blend the difference between their professional lives and their private lives in order to appear as “a whole self” (Campbell & Roberts, 2007, p. 266). This is due to western interviewing style dominating the interview, as Roberts and Sarangi (1995, p. 384) also argue, by dictating its rules. Lack of success is explained in the Bourdieusian sense as applicants’ lack of linguistic capital needed to change discursive practices.

4.2.4.2 Communicative Style

Scheuer (2001, 2003) relied upon a corpus of Danish job interviews in his investigations of what he calls communicative style, which can be defined as a particular mode of acting communicatively in the job interview. So, for example, a particular style can be characterised as formal or intimate. In his 2001 study, Scheuer investigated stylistic repertoires and compared them with two applicants’ social backgrounds and educations. The successful applicant relied upon various discursive practices such as narratives, humour, evaluations, and asking indirect questions in responding to a question regarding who she is (Scheuer, 2001, p. 231). The unsuccessful applicants falls short seemingly uncomfortable with the situation and having trouble choosing appropriate topics for her response to the same question, which consequently means that the interviewers end up taking charge of the interview. Scheuer (2001, pp. 238–239) boils these two different ways of responding down to a matter of socialisation. The successful applicant came from the middle to upper classes where work is seen as an end through which the individual expresses him or herself. On the other hand the unsuccessful applicant was judged to be working class where work is seen as a means for enabling private life, which is seen as the primary domain of the working class individual to express him or herself. These ways of seeing work affect the manner in which applicants present themselves to interviewers. These arguments were reiterated by Scheuer in his later when he argued that “[the] career trajectory is inscribed in the habitus, which in turn produce strategies for coping with social life” (Scheuer, 2003, p. 167). This suggests that the mechanisms for coping are acquired during the applicants’ careers. How applicants respond, answer questions, and interact is dependent on their background. This means that they draw upon discourses acquired previously, which are then recontextualised for the purposes of the job interview.
4.3 Towards More Interaction Research

Back in 1992 communication scholars, Ugbah and Majors, asserted that “[most] empirical research on [job] interviewing has been conducted in laboratory settings, ostensibly under strict experimental conditions” (Ugbah & Majors, 1992, pp. 148–149). Not much has changed in this regard if one considers the field of psychology and to a certain degree speech communication studies. Laboratory studies are still widespread (e.g. Paulhus et al., 2013; L. Schneider et al., 2015) although some researchers invite actors from corporate industries for their experiments (e.g. Chen et al., 2010; Roulin, Bangerter, & Levashina, 2014). The justification inferred by Ugbah and Majors (1992) is that as many variables as possible need to be controlled in order to get the most precise measures. However the relentless pursuit for control means other present empirical phenomena are overlooked.

Furthermore there are serious doubts to be had concerning the ecological validity between experiments and actual job interviews. Consider the following justification for relying solely upon audio recording of a simulated job interview by Parton et al. (2002, p. 149): “Because most employment interviews are oral, the messages [i.e. the simulated job interviews] were audiotaped to enhance the ecological validity of the study”. The argued approximation of the simulated and audiotaped interview and the actual interview as a matter of information transfer is naïve at best. Albeit job interviews are in fact verbal, they are also non-verbal including embodied behaviours as well as the use of material artefacts such as CVs and interview guides (e.g. Glenn & LeBaron, 2011). Relatedly that actors and university students are used to replace actual applicants and raters is problematic due to the fact that job interviews are contextually embedded in corporate settings. Practitioners are influenced by organisational factors, knowledge and so on. Restricting analysis to one mode of behaviour and replacing actors is therefore problematic. Thus, if we are to understand the intricacies of interaction in job interviews and how they are conducted as Higgins and Judge (2004, p. 629) desire, then actual job interviews need to be taken seriously.

4.4 Summing Up

Quantitative studies within the fields of personnel psychology and speech
communication on job interviews have generally relied on experiments, simulated job interviews or questionnaire methods in studying communicative behaviour. In comparison to the amount of quantitative studies of qualitative studies are more infrequent. For this reason the opportunity to conduct additional qualitative research into a seldom-investigated practice is likely to yield additional insights into an understudied aspects of a practice phenomenon that cannot be captured by quantitative means.

The present dissertation places itself within the stream of research on job interviews based on the EMCA approach. This is due to an interest in the practical methods (or micro-strategies) and meanings behind how interviewers cope and reason on a turn to turn basis in job interviews. EMCA is chosen over DA because an EMCA approach encourages a reflexive understanding of the job interview, whereas DA emphasises modes of talking in job interviews in a much broader sense, where different ways of communicating are linked to institutions, people, ideologies, and so on. In this sense, practical coping becomes a matter of the discourses drawn upon rather than a matter of how it is sequentially accomplished through talk in interaction.
Strategy-as-Practice (S-as-P) is a research agenda informed by ‘the Practice Turn’ within the social sciences (see Reckwitz, 2002; Schatzki, 2001a, 2001b) consisting of an academic interest in practice related phenomena. Numerous practice theories exist (Nicolini, 2012, p. 1) and as a result, S-as-P is not a unified theory but an agenda attentive to the social properties of strategy work. This is evident from the fact that S-as-P researchers rely on practice scholars like Bourdieu (Chia, 2004; Gomez, 2010), Foucault (Ezzamel & Willmott, 2010), Garfinkel (Samra-Fredericks, 2015), Giddens (Jarzabkowski, 2008; Whittington, 2010), Luhmann (Seidl, 2006), and Wittgenstein (Mantere, 2010; Seidl, 2006).

The purpose of the present chapter is to assess S-as-P’s specific ontological view on strategy. Secondly, it is to review previous research scholars have conducted on strategic activities and the methods for doing so. These purposes are addressed to 1) delineate S-as-P from traditional strategy theories, 2) explicate its theoretical contributions to theory, and 3) review the work conducted on strategic activities and empirical methods for studying strategy practice. Point three is directly related to the analytical efforts of this research, as this is the primary domain wherein a contribution is made. For these purposes, I systematically review the S-as-P literature.

The structure of the chapter is as follows: Section 5.1 accounts for the
review procedure. Section 5.2 outlines the traditional theories and how S-as-P grew from these with a new perspective on strategy thereby accounting for its key concepts. Section 5.3 reviews empirical studies to argue that S-as-P researchers give analytical attention to activities not commonly associated with strategy or strategizing. Section 5.4 reviews the methods by which data is commonly collected. Finally, Section 5.5 summarises the chapter.

5.1 Review Procedure

As the purpose of this chapter concerns S-as-P research, several online databases, including Business Source Complete, Social Sciences Citation Index, ProQuest and Web of Sciences, were used to locate journal peer-reviewed articles within the fields of management and business published from 1990 onwards. I relied upon Aarhus University Library’s search engine to find books. Search terms associated with S-as-P were used, e.g. ‘Strategy-as-Practice’ or ‘Strategy as Practice’, ‘Strategizing’, ‘Praxis’, ‘Practice’, ‘Practitioners’ and ‘Practice Theory’. After isolating citations that identify with the S-as-P agenda, a database was built consisting of a total of 215 citations. These comprise books, and conceptual, empirical, methodological, and review articles. For the individual reviews presented in sections 5.3 and 5.4, I isolated specific empirical articles. Out of a total of 119 empirical articles, 55 were identified as relevant for the present purposes. Identifying these articles meant finding studies dealing with ‘strategic activities’ and ‘episodes’ such as ‘workshops’, ‘meetings’, and ‘committees’. The second review, which is more methodologically oriented, incorporates the articles identified for the first review but also includes studies that are concerned with ‘discourse’, ‘language’, and ‘interaction’ in order to review their methodological basis and the types of data they utilise.

5.2 From Strategy to Strategizing

What binds traditional strategy theories together is their concern with the impact of strategy on the financial performance of a company or its position in the market. Traditional theories are commonly referred to under the headings of ‘the Planning Perspective’ (Ansoff, 1965; Chandler, 1962), ‘the Evolutionary Perspective’ (B. D.
From Strategy…

Regarding traditional strategy theories, the crux of the matter for the Planning Perspective is that, through careful, rational and long-term planning, a company can reach goals such as higher profitability. Alfred D. Chandler, one of the main proprietors of the perspective, provides this definition of strategy:

“Strategy can be defined as the determination of the basic long-term goals and objectives of an enterprise, and the adoption of courses of action and the allocation of resources necessary for carrying out these goals” (Chandler, 1962, p. 13).

In this view, strategy constitutes a meticulously planned effort to achieve an explicit goal (Whittington, 2001, p. 11) through “a tightly controlled process of conscious human thought” (Mintzberg, 1990, p. 175), wherein the firm’s strengths and weaknesses are analysed in order to determine its competencies and the external environment’s threats and opportunities (Mintzberg, Ahlstrand, & Lampel, 1998, p. 26). To achieve the company’s goals a strategist identifies investment opportunities and threats.

According to the Planning Perspective “there is only one strategist [doing the planning], and that is the manager who sits at the apex of the organization” (Mintzberg, 1990, p. 176). Thereby, strategic agency metaphorically resembles military practices: a general analyses enemy threats and tactical opportunities to
direct his troops on the battlefield (Whittington, 2001, p. 15). In a similar manner, the
top manager has oversight over his/her company and on this basis, is able to direct the
flow of activity in order to achieve goals. In this sense, strategy formation is not only
seen as a rational process following on from careful analysis, but also as something
passed down from the apex of the organisation to the lower levels (Mintzberg, 1990,
p. 178). Whereas the Planning Perspective highlights rational planning, the
Evolutionary Perspective is much more pessimistic about the ability to plan
(Whittington, 2001, p. 16). This is mainly because Darwinian natural laws govern
markets:

“By chance and the laws of profitability, competitors found the
combinations of resources that best matched their different
characteristics. This was not strategy but Darwinian natural selection,
based on adaptation and the survival of the fittest. The same pattern
exists in all living systems, including businesses” (B. D. Henderson,
1989, p. 140).

Competitors for the same resources become profitable by their ability to dominate.
Competing for the same resources incessantly means that one actor will inevitably
need to wear the other one out. The strong survive while “the weaker performers are
irresistibly squeezed out of the ecological niche” in the market (Whittington, 2001, p.
16). Survival and prosperity are therefore first and foremost achieved by being
superior to competitors and, secondly, by luck (Alchian, 1950, p. 213). To the extent
that having a strategy is possible, it seeks to manage factors challenging the
company’s position and prosperity. This is done by analysing competitors’ prices of
similar products, the functionality, and customers’ perceptions (B. D. Henderson,
1989, p. 140), mainly to differentiate the company from other competitors.

However, evolutionary strategy theorists doubt organisations’ ability to
create differentiation strategies and to adapt to the market to survive (Whittington,
2001, p. 18). Here, the Evolutionary Perspective resembles the Process Perspective
related to March and Simon (1958), who argued that people are limited by cognitive
rationality (more on this later). Organisational actors are incapable of grasping the
complexities of the market and the organisation and therefore, as Alchian (1950)
argues, luck becomes important. The role of strategy is therefore downplayed in the
evolutionary perspective. Managers instead need to emphasise efficiency in the here-and-now (Whittington, 2001, p. 21).

The Systemic Perspective challenges the notion of strategy itself. Systemicists such as Granovetter (1985) argue that behaviour and action are always embedded in social frameworks and are therefore culturally contingent. The social framework and culture of the company constitute the relations between individuals and the activities they engage in. Strategies are strongly dependent on the socio-cultural environment in which they develop and are used. This is backed by research explicating the “disparate social influences – political, ethnic, domestic and professional – on managerial action” (Whittington, 1992, p. 703). Strategists are influenced and constricted by the “social characteristics and the social context in which they operate” (Whittington, 2001, p. 37). The main repercussion of this concerning strategy is that these contexts and characteristics are also socially embedded. A strategy might work and bring a company to prosperity due to its particular culture or the country in which it operates.

The Process Perspective rejects the notion of rational planning by highlighting the complexity of companies and the limited cognitive capacity of individuals (Whittington, 2001, p. 21). People are restricted by what March and Simon (1958) call the cognitive limits of their rationality. Managers only have partial knowledge of their company’s reality. The entirety of a company is simply too complex for any single individual to grasp. Another point relating to rationality involves the individual as an instrument of the organisation, capable of acting in its best interest. In the pluralist sense, organisational actors “have wants, motives, and drive” (March & Simon, 1958, p. 136), which means that they act with their own self-interest in mind. To create strategies, organisational actors need to coalesce and align goals. Consequently, the strategy formation process is emergent:

“[The] goals of a business firm are a series of more-or-less independent constraints imposed on the organization through a process of bargaining among potential coalition members and elaborated over time in a response to short-run pressures. Goals arise in such a form because the firm is, in fact, a coalition of participants with disparate demands, changing foci of attention, and limited ability
to attend to all organizational problems simultaneously” (Cyert & March, 1963, p. 50)

What can be derived from this is that:

1) The process of goal formation, i.e. strategy development, is a political process wherein social actors negotiate with one another, thus establishing a coalition of interest;
2) Organisational interests vary and change because of actors’ different interests and;
3) Social actors have bounded rationalities, which means that no single individual can grasp the organisation’s complexity in its entirety.

As a consequence, strategy and the strategy formation process becomes less palpable. For example, Mintzberg argued that strategies emerge through patterns “among different actions without conscious intention, of the senior management at least” (Mintzberg, 1994a, p. 25), or as a response to an emerging situation (Mintzberg, 1988, p. 78).

5.2.2 … to Strategizing

The Processual Perspective came to influence S-as-P. It was the first theoretical perspective emphasising the salience of human actors in strategy. The influence is evident in early S-as-P papers. Johnson et al. (2003, pp. 10–11) acknowledge that

“[the Process Perspective] has irrevocably opened up the black box of the organization. Strategy is now recognized as an organizational phenomenon rather than a macro strategy problem detached from the internal dynamics of the organization”.

Because of the Process Perspective, studying how strategies form became a topic in its own right. Another aspect where Johnson et al. (2003) recognise the contribution of the Process Perspective is in terms of its emphasis on human actors and their role in creating strategies. However, in opening up the black box of organisations, the
Process Perspective did not go far enough. Therefore, S-as-P radicalised the concept of strategy by construing it “as a situated, socially accomplished activity constructed through the actions and interactions of multiple actors” (Jarzabkowski, 2005, p. 7). The present subsection considers the dissatisfaction with traditional theories before going into detail with the concepts of ‘Strategizing’, ‘Praxis’, ‘Practices’ and ‘Practitioners’, followed by an overview of the role of the micro-macro distinction in S-as-P.

5.2.2.1 Beyond Traditional Theory

Where traditional theories on strategy are interested in how strategy impacts performance, S-as-P is interested in how practitioners do strategy. Because of the focus on performance, traditional theories predominantly resided at the macro-level, reducing “strategy to a few causally related variables in which there is little evidence of human action” (Jarzabkowski, Balogun, & Seidl, 2007, p. 6). Strategy is therefore seen as belonging to the organisation as a whole. This fact means less analytical attention is paid to practitioners (Johnson, Langley, Melin, & Whittington, 2007; Johnson et al., 2003; Whittington, 2007). If practitioners are scrutinised, it is only top management (Tsoukas, 2010). Clegg and his colleagues (2004) criticize this by relying on the Cartesian analogy of the mind/body split. Traditional theories presuppose that the ‘mind’, i.e. strategic planning, is cut off from the rest of the ‘body’, i.e. the organisation. The process, from analysis to strategic decision and after that, implementation, is rational and, moreover, exclusive to top management (J. Hendry, 2000, p. 958), and is in no way linked to the processes in the body of the organisation. Traditional theories thereby leave out the “labour of strategy” (Whittington, 2003, p. 119) occurring in the body of the organisation (Clegg et al., 2004).

Lastly, some of the traditional theories, perhaps most notably the Planning Perspective, draw on positivistic analyses and only reluctantly engage practically with practice. This is partly due to traditional theories being informed by microeconomic traditions (Jarzabkowski et al., 2007) that rely on statistics (Golsorkhi, Rouleau, Seidl, & Vaara, 2015, p. 1). Empirical studies have thus tended to rely on indirect data that does not capture complexity (Chia & Mackay, 2007, p. 220). The S-as-P interest in strategy, however, is practical. Because strategy is
conceptualised as a social practice, researchers are encouraged to go into organisations. As opposed to traditional theories, then, S-as-P takes a more constructivist stance on the strategy and practice phenomena (Golden-Biddle & Azuma, 2010).

5.2.2.2 Key Concepts in Strategy as Practice

S-as-P relies upon a very specific vocabulary. First of all, the concept of ‘strategizing’ is key in S-as-P and can be defined by the following:

“[S-as-P] can be regarded as an alternative to the mainstream strategy research via its attempt to shift attention away from a ‘mere’ focus on the effects of strategies on performance alone to a more comprehensive, in-depth analysis of what actually takes places in strategy formulation, planning and implementation and other activities that deal with the thinking and doing of strategy” (Golsorkhi et al., 2015, p. 1)

Strategizing involves the actions, cognitive processes, verbal behaviour, embodied conduct and activity involved in doing strategy work, whether it is in the formulation phase, planning phase, implementation phase or beyond. When a practitioner strategizes, that person is “thematicaly aware of desituated properties of occurrent objects of attention” (Tsoukas, 2015, p. 71). This means that practitioners attend deliberately, analytically and consciously to different aspects of the organisation. This brings us to another aspect of the concept that also highlights S-as-P’s strategy interest. Studying strategizing means repopulating strategy with human actors. In doing so, S-as-P theoreticians drew on Practice Theory (Reckwitz, 2002; Schatzki, 2001a, 2001b) and as a consequence, strategy is a social activity employees engage in (Whittington, 2006) and actively perform (Jarzabkowski & Whittington, 2008b, p. 281). Hence, theoreticians began using the gerund ‘strategizing’ to capture the performative aspect of strategy as something that people in organisations do when they perform strategy. S-as-P’s main empirical interests, therefore, revolve around the means and methods by which practitioners strategize (Golsorkhi et al., 2015).
‘Praxis’, ‘Practices’, and ‘Practitioners’ are three important concepts in S-as-P (Golsorkhi et al., 2010, 2015; Jarzabkowski & Spee, 2009; Johnson et al., 2007; Whittington, 2006) borrowed from Reckwitz (2002). Not to be confused with ‘Practices’, ‘Praxis’ refers to what people do (Whittington, 2006, p. 619). It encompasses instantiations of the activities, the actions they perform, and the actual cognitive processes they rely upon whenever they strategize. It can be a concrete strategy meeting at the micro-level (Samra-Fredericks, 2003) or a diffuse activity at the organisational level, involving a merger at the macro-level (Jarzabkowski et al., 2007, p. 9).

‘Practices’, as opposed to ‘Praxis’, are all of the routinized behaviours, methods, resources, etc. that people draw upon when they strategize (Golsorkhi et al., 2010, p. 4). One can talk of practice in the singular when referring to a specific routinized mode of acting that an organisational member makes use of and draws upon when conducting a particular activity, such as a strategy seminar or planning and budgeting (Jarzabkowski & Spee, 2009). For example, most organisations engage in planning or budgeting. Other practices might be exclusive to the organisation as a particular repetitive and recognisable pattern of action (Feldman & Pentland, 2003, p. 95).

As mentioned, the ontological understanding of practice is not coherent in S-as-P. Rouleau (2013) argues that five significantly different conceptualisations of practice exist within the S-as-P literature. These are 1) practice as managerial action, 2) practice as tools, 3) practice as knowledge, 4) practice as organisational resources, and 5) practice as global discourse. The first conceptualisation sees practice as the abstract and general skills and abilities that individuals draw upon when strategizing (Rouleau, 2013, p. 550). With regards to the second conceptualisation, practice is the material artefacts used when strategizing (Dameron et al., 2015; Jarzabkowski et al., 2013). In the third conceptualisation, practice is referred to as the knowledge that practitioners rely upon when doing strategy (Rouleau, 2013, pp. 550–551). Practice as organisational resources is a conceptualisation made at the level of the organisation that presupposes that organisational processes and routines lead to a competitive advantage (Feldman & Pentland, 2003; Rouleau, 2013, p. 551). In the last conceptualisation, practice is a global discourse that society, organisations and individuals are affected by and draw upon (Rouleau, 2013, p. 552).
Lastly, ‘Practitioners’ refer to “the actors; those individuals who draw upon practices to act” (Jarzabkowski et al., 2007, p. 10). Strategy practitioners are defined widely, but most commonly include top managers (Jarzabkowski, 2003) and consultants (Blom & Lundgren, 2013). Other examples of practitioners include “policy makers, the media, the gurus and the business schools who shape legitimate Praxis and practices” (Jarzabkowski & Whittington, 2008a, p. 102). Practitioners are intermediaries to Praxis and Practices by drawing on routinized behaviour during their activities. In other words, the relationship between Praxis and Practices is a reciprocal one, intermediated by Practitioners, through which he/she constitutes or alters the practice through its concrete enactment (Chia & MacKay, 2007; Whittington, 2006).

5.2.2.3 The Micro-, Meso-, and Macro-Levels

Strategizing, Praxis, Practices, and Practitioners are all phenomena that, according to S-as-P scholars, can be investigated at the so-called micro-, meso-, and macro-levels (Jarzabkowski & Spee, 2009). This three-level distinction is a classical one in social theory, introduced by the developmental psychologist Urie Bronfenbrenner in his studies of the social development of children. Bronfenbrenner (1979, p. 21) argued that social behaviour is influenced by the reciprocal interplay between the individual and his or her immediate context, that is in turn affected by the larger surrounding contexts. To capture this reciprocal relationship between individual and context, Bronfenbrenner (1977) introduces the concepts of micro-, meso- and macro levels. The micro-level is the proximal setting or context that an individual experiences in a phenomenological sense. At the micro-level, one finds patterned activities, specific roles, and interpersonal relations, as well as physical and material characteristics that are made relevant in particular contexts and activities (Bronfenbrenner, 1979, p. 22). An example of such a micro-level would be that of ‘family’, constituted by recurrent activities (e.g. dinner), specific roles (e.g. mother, husband, son, etc.), and their interrelations. There are relations amongst contexts and activities at the micro-level including ‘family’, ‘school’, and ‘work’ that in turn constitute the meso-level (Bronfenbrenner, 1979, p. 25). The individual moves between each of these contexts several times a day, which is why it is possible to talk of the micro-levels as being interconnected. In turn, the macro-level encompasses the relevant consistencies
between micro- and meso-levels. Thus, multiple manifestations of the micro-level ‘classroom’ within a particular culture, e.g., the French, will be similar to other manifestations seemingly originating from the same blueprint, that together constitute the macro-level (Bronfenbrenner, 1979, p. 26).

Many S-as-P scholars, but not all, have adopted Bronfenbrenner’s ideas, albeit in an altered manner. The micro-level is constituted by the activities phenomenologically “proximal to the experience” of practitioners (Jarzabkowski & Spee, 2009, p. 74). The organisation itself within which social actors are located is placed at the meso-level, whereas the extra-organisational context is placed at the macro-level (Whittington, 2006). In S-as-P, the micro-level of individual actors and their activities are embedded in the intra-organisational context at the meso-level, which is in turn connected to the wider macro-level, wherein business schools and consultancies figure (Degravel, 2012; Johnson et al., 2007). When strategizing at the micro-level, organisational actors rely upon resources such as discourses, analytical tools, practices, and knowledge drawn from the intra- or extra-organisational context. It thus becomes the task of the S-as-P researcher to identify the links between the micro- and the meso-/macro-levels (Whittington, 2006, pp. 214–215).

At the micro-level, one can study how people draw upon particular practices. Practices can also be studied at the macro-level in order to understand how they manifest themselves across organisations (Johnson et al., 2007, p. 26), or how organisational members through their practical reasoning, interactions, and activities draw on macro-level discourses and material artefacts when strategizing (Chia, 2004; Dameron et al., 2015; J. Hendry, 2000; Johnson et al., 2003; Suddaby, Seidl, & Lê, 2013, p. 330).

### 5.2.2.4 Forms of Strategy Making

A central theoretical framework for the present dissertation is one developed by Tsoukas (2010, 2015). This framework is intended to capture the different kinds of ‘strategy making’ that researchers might come across when investigating strategy as a social practice. He divides strategy making into three distinct categories (here, I am intentionally leaving out a fourth one). The three categories include an emergent pattern of actions, retrospective reframing, and strategizing, as described above. The framework itself can be observed in Table 5.2.2.2 below.
As can be noted in the bottom of the framework, Tsoukas distinguishes between three different types of strategy making. These are ‘emergent patterns of action’, ‘retrospective reframing’, and ‘strategizing’. Associated with these are different kinds of action, i.e. how practitioners act, the intentionality or properties of mental state, and finally, the role language plays.

To go into greater detail, action here refers to the different ways social actors engage with issues, activities, and events. Thus, ‘practical coping’ encompasses non-deliberate action (Chia & Holt, 2006) that can be considered “spontaneous responses to the developing situation at hand” (Tsoukas, 2010, p. 51) for the purpose of accomplishing the activity. The example Tsoukas gives is that of a lecturer using a whiteboard to explain a theory to a class of students. The use of the whiteboard is a spontaneous action for the purpose of achieving the educational goals of the class. This means that social actors do not explicitly pay attention to what they are doing but simply respond to the situation in order get on with it. It is in this sense “mindless” (Chia & MacKay, 2007, p. 233) because it does not require conscious thought. ‘Deliberate coping’ as a kind of action, occurs when the chain of events in a social actor’s daily life breaks down, thus requiring the attention of the social actor. For example, a bike chain hopping off the chain ring requires the cyclist to deliberately attend to the issue to progress with the activity. The final type of action is
that of ‘detached coping’. Here, the social actor places him or herself outside the confines of daily activity in order to reason about them from a disconnected vantage point.

I now turn towards the part of the framework that deals with the practitioners’ intentionality. As mentioned, this encompasses the mental aspects associated with the different kinds of strategy making. Tsoukas (2010, 2015) argues that when engaging in practical coping, a social actor relies on ‘tacit understanding’, i.e., his or her accumulated knowledge required for achieving the activity at hand. These tacit understandings are usually shared among social actors (Rasche & Chia, 2009). However, in being tacit, this knowledge remains in the background and is never explicated. With regards to deliberate coping, the intentionality refers to the ‘explicit awareness’ of the social actor towards the issue at hand. This means articulating the problem and bringing it into focus, and reinterpreting it (Tsoukas, 2010, p. 55). Being faced with a problem that causes a breakdown in daily chains of events, a practitioner would be required to become consciously aware of what the problem is in order to resolve it. Finally ‘thematic awareness’ classifies the type of intentionality associated with detached coping. It encompasses “finding out about, or reflecting on, the abstract properties of the situation at hand” (Tsoukas, 2010, p. 52). This is the kind of coping that one would find in a strategy meeting where practitioners break away from their daily work to ponder on abstract organisational issues for the purpose of creating a plan.

Language is used differently for each type of action. Thus, for practical coping, it is used as a form of ‘situational coping skill’ and non-propositionally, meaning it does not address beliefs or opinions. Rather, language is used for the purpose of getting on with the task. In the two remaining types of language use, it starts to be used propositionally. Here, language is used either to address particular aspects of the situation, as related to retrospective reframing, or to address where the language use associated with detached coping and strategizing is geared towards the abstract properties of the organisation, such as “strengths and weaknesses, capabilities, past strategies, competitors’ strategies or scenario-based threats and opportunities, in order to articulate their strategic intent” (Tsoukas, 2010, p. 56). According to Tsoukas (2010, 2015) the different types of action, intentionality and language constitute different kinds of strategy making. Thus, practical coping creates emergent patterns of actions, whereas deliberate coping encompasses retrospective
reframing, where the past is used for future action. The final kind of strategy making Tsoukas proposes is strategizing, as covered above, which more closely resembles strategic planning.

5.3 From Conspicuous to Inconspicuous Strategizing Activities

When considering the conspicuity of a phenomenon, it is with reference to its obviousness as being of a particular sort. One might consider phenomena that are not obvious and not usually recognized as a particular sort, but nevertheless have some relation to it, entirely or partially. In strategy research it is often the case that some activities are formally recognized as being strategic whereas others are not. A top management strategy meeting is, unsurprisingly given the name, viewed and formally recognized as a conspicuous case of a strategizing activity wherein practitioners develop a strategy (Clarke et al., 2012; Jarzabkowski & Seidl, 2008). However, the methods by which an orchestra attempts to construct a strategy (Maitlis & Lawrence, 2003) is not usually perceived as a context within which strategizing activities occur.

S-as-P research has produced findings about strategizing activities on formally recognized strategizing episodes. However, a nascent stream of research has begun investigating inconspicuous contexts wherein strategizing can be found.

Where one would usually talk about strategizing activities, S-as-P researchers talk of episodes. In their conceptual paper, Hendry and Seidl (2003, p. 176) define ‘strategic episodes’ as events in organisations that practitioners use to “suspend their normal routine structures of discourse, communication and hierarchy [to] create the opportunity for reflexive strategic practice”. Reflexive strategic practice means attending to organisational matters and consciously reflecting on the actions and courses to follow for the organisation. They are activities like meetings, workshops, and committees (Kastberg, 2013, p. 213), wherein organisational actors withdraw from the flux of mundane work activities and attend strategic issues (Kwon et al., 2014), negotiate their views (Samra-Fredericks, 2003, 2004, 2005), create plans for how to achieve future goals (Spee & Jarzabkowski, 2011), and so on, in an almost ritualistic manner (Johnson, Prashantham, Floyd, & Bourque, 2010). As Whittington (1996, p. 732) argues, S-as-P is concerned with “the work of strategizing - all the
meeting, the talking, the form-filling and the number-crunching by which strategy actually gets formulated and implemented”.

In the present section, I shall systematically review the bulk of S-as-P research on conspicuous strategizing episodes, which I have categorized as ‘Meetings’, ‘Strategy Workshops’, and ‘Formal Operating Procedures’. Following this, I shall consider the nascent stream of research that has begun paying attention to other kinds of potentially strategic episodes.

5.3.1 From Conspicuous Strategizing Episodes…

With the use of the description ‘conspicuous strategizing activities’, I am referring to episodes formally acknowledged and recognized as strategic. These are activities consciously detached from the remainder of the organisation and its processes that facilitate reflexive practice as described above (Jarzabkowski & Seidl, 2008, p. 1395). In these episodes, the status quo of the organisation is

“reflexively monitored, not just to identify situations where the existing strategy may no longer be appropriate (i.e. where the changes reflect the environmental changes that call for a change in strategy) but also to realign the organization, where appropriate, with the existing strategy” (J. Hendry & Seidl, 2003, p. 188).

Such episodes of reflexive strategic monitoring include meetings, workshops, committees and formal administrative procedures.

5.3.1.1 Meetings

The most common and widely recognized strategic episode is the meeting referred to as ‘strategy meeting’ (e.g. Aggerholm, Andersen, Asmuß, & Thomsen, 2009; Clarke et al., 2012; Jarzabkowski & Seidl, 2008), ‘management meeting’ (e.g. Denis, Dompierre, Langley, & Rouleau, 2011; Johnson, Smith, et al., 2010), ‘board meeting’ (Clarke et al., 2012; Denis et al., 2011; Kwon et al., 2014), or ‘top team meeting’ (Liu & Maitlis, 2014) depending on what level of the research is conducted at. The empirical articles reviewed here (see table 5.4.1.1 following this subsection for an overview of exemplary articles) are considered in relation to their location in the
strategy process, that is, whether the meetings reported in the studies pertain to strategy development or implementation, as well as the topics the research covers.

Obviously, the general purpose of studying meetings is to understand their role as a strategizing activity. As a conspicuous strategizing episode, scholars have investigated practices primarily related to making decisions and making sense of strategic issues. Related to decision-making, Samra-Fredericks’ (2003) ethnomethodologically inspired study of talk in interaction in meetings showed how practitioners rely on their discursive skills and specific knowledge to negotiate and hence affect the direction in which the company is moving strategically. Similarly, scholars have investigated how practitioners rely upon emotional displays when negotiating strategic direction (e.g. Liu & Maitlis, 2014; Samra-Fredericks, 2004).

Liu and Maitlis (2014) investigated top management team meetings and the interrelatedness of emotional dynamics and the strategizing process. The authors identify five distinct emotional dynamics, which they relate to particular outcomes in the strategy process. One such dynamic is ‘the emotional tug of war’, where both positive and negative emotional displays in meetings compete, seemingly grinding the decision-making process to a halt. Another study focusing on decision-making, or rather a lack thereof, is that of Denis et al. (2011). Relatedly, Jarzabkowski and Seidl (2008) have investigated the meeting practices at a university associated with setting the strategic course. The authors identified eleven practices associated with successive meetings, such as restricted discussion or administrative discussion, that have the potential either to stabilize or destabilize the existing strategy (Jarzabkowski & Seidl, 2008, p. 1401).

The process of generating more tangible products, such as a strategy plan in meetings, has also been investigated. For example, Spee and Jarzabkowski (2011) investigated the discursive construction of a strategy plan as a continuous convergence of text and talk through a process of decontextualization, i.e. distancing the content of meeting talk from its initial context, and recontextualization, i.e. reintroducing the content of talk in another setting. Aggerholm et al. (2012) showed how recontextualization in strategy meetings leads to strategic ambiguity. The resulting ambiguity arises from multivocal viewpoints going through a process of decontextualization wherein they come to be embedded in a strategic plan. Once embedded, the product is seemingly monovocal. Once recontextualized in a new
setting, say in an organisation-wide meeting, the multivocal antecedence becomes relevant again, and can thus lead to strategic ambiguity.

With regards to making sense of strategic issues, a number of studies have investigated how participants in board meetings make sense of the organisations and hence reach a common ground on the nature of what they deem to be strategic issues (e.g. Clarke et al., 2012; Kwon et al., 2014). Meeting participants rely upon various discursive strategies such as redefining strategic issues through new information or viewpoints and reducing the complexity of competing understandings of strategic issues. Similarly, related to sense making on strategic issues, studies of materiality in strategic episodes have demonstrated the affordances of artefacts in the sense making process (e.g. Jarzabkowski & Kaplan, 2015; Jarzabkowski et al., 2013; Kaplan, 2011; Werle & Seidl, 2015). Werle and Seidl (2015) investigated the affordances of materialities such as sketches, illustrations, flipcharts, drawing, and notes in developing new strategic topics in meetings (as well as workshops). Relying on the typological distinction of different kinds of materialities, the authors show how non-objectual materialities, including PowerPoint, affords particular ways of discussing strategic issues in meetings. Vesa and Franck (2013) studied the interrelatedness of strategy artefacts (e.g. budgets, action plans, deliberations, and top management changes), temporality, and strategy. Their overall purpose was to investigate the interrelatedness of strategy and temporality in meetings based upon the assumption that the strategic work of managers involves determining what will happen in the future based on what has happened in the past. The authors understand temporality as vectors from the past and future converging on the present. If meeting participants experience temporality in the same way, e.g. as coherent and uninterrupted, where past and present seem similar, then strategy is conceived of as logical, sequential plan resulting in budgets and action plans.

The studies considered on the preceding pages are devoted to the strategy formation aspect of meetings. Meetings also have a function in implementation and securing the commitment of employees (e.g. Aggerholm et al., 2012; Iszatt-White, 2010; Jarzabkowski & Sillince, 2007). Jarzabkowski and Sillince (2007) investigated the rhetorical practices top managers rely on to secure the commitment of employees at three UK universities. They found that success depends on the historical context, consistency in the use of rhetorics and whether or not strategic change is actually made relevant for the employees. In their study of strategic ambiguity, Aggerholm et
al. (2012) also considered the efforts of top management to secure commitment to a new strategic plan. The effects of the effort to secure commitment to a strategic plan, described previously as multivocal and ambiguous, had three interpretative effects on employees: acceptance, rejection, or confusion about or with the plan. Iszatt-White’s (2010) study investigated practices associated with strategic leadership. The author thus dives into the everyday practices of managers clarifying the strategic position to stakeholders or rehearsing the strategy by “repeating key elements of the strategy, sketching out its implications, considering possible objections, etcetera” (Iszatt-White, 2010, p. 417).

To summarize, the (strategy/board/management) meeting is a spatio-temporally bound episode that suspends organisational processes and allows for reflexive thinking on a strategic level. Research focused on meeting episodes has either been interested in the decision- or sense making properties of meetings, or how they are used to secure the commitment of employees. Researchers have shown how practitioners rely upon discursive skills, emotional displays, and other knowledge to influence the decision-making process in meetings, whereas others have investigated its reflexive affordances and sense-making properties through practitioners’ uses of material artefacts and temporal work. Lastly, meetings have been studied with regards to strategy implementation, particularly focusing on how managers rely on rhetorical practices to secure employee commitment towards particular strategic goals.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Author(s)</strong></th>
<th><strong>Data</strong></th>
<th><strong>Purpose</strong></th>
<th><strong>Findings</strong></th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Aggerholm et al. (2012)</td>
<td>6 management meetings (observed)</td>
<td>Investigate activities and practices leading to strategic ambiguity.</td>
<td>Diverging understandings of the market situation are synthesized into one single strategic formulation of a sales strategy thus shrouding disagreements that are later unpacked.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>1 CEO and HR manager meeting (recorded)</td>
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<td>2 organisation-wide meetings</td>
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<td></td>
<td>12 semi-structured interviews</td>
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<tr>
<td>Clarke et al. (2012)</td>
<td>Monthly meetings (recorded)</td>
<td>Investigate how individuals present ideas in meetings to influence decisions, and how this affected by the wider context in which they operate.</td>
<td>The decision outcome of the meeting was influenced by 1) the logic of argumentation and discursive skill, 2) the invocation of authority, 3) the relevance of the immediate institutional context, and 4) the historical context.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Interviews with team members and stakeholders</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Documents (strategic plans, reports, and briefing papers)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Denis et al. (2011)</td>
<td>68 meetings (observed)</td>
<td>To investigate the practices associated with perpetual indecision in pluralistic settings.</td>
<td>Reification and strategic ambiguity were practices found to lead to perpetual indecision.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gandia &amp; Tourancheau (2015)</td>
<td>22 interviews (recorded)</td>
<td>To analyse the interconnectedness of strategizing and organising practices in the innovation process.</td>
<td>Episodic (i.e. meetings), discursive, and administrative practices are interdependent in both organising and strategizing during the innovation process and affect each other in</td>
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<tr>
<td>Source</td>
<td>Methodology</td>
<td>Sample Size</td>
<td>Research Questions</td>
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<td>Hendry et al. (2010)</td>
<td>111 interviews (recorded)</td>
<td>To investigate governing boards’ strategizing activities at the corporate level.</td>
<td>Boards engage in both procedural (e.g. formally reviewing management’s proposals) and interactive (e.g. board meetings, strategy workshops, and informal conversations) strategizing activities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iszatt-White (2010)</td>
<td>Meetings (observed)</td>
<td>To investigate leadership practices associated with the pre-implementation phase of the strategy process.</td>
<td>The author identifies four practices: 1) clarifying (i.e. clarifying potential confusions of the strategy), 2) rehearsing (i.e. internalizing key aspects of the strategy), 3) upholding (e.g. core strategic aims in meetings), and 4) elaborating (i.e. providing more detail and translating the strategy into practice).</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jarzabkowski &amp; Seidl (2008)</td>
<td>51 meetings (observed) Interviews</td>
<td>To investigate the role of strategy meetings in sustaining or changing strategic emphases.</td>
<td>It is found that particular meeting practices (e.g. initiation, conduct, and termination) of meetings affect strategic emphasis.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jarzabkowski &amp; Sillince (2007)</td>
<td>49 interviews (recorded) 51 meetings (observed)</td>
<td>To investigate how top managers seek to influence the commitment of employees discursively.</td>
<td>The authors find that in securing commitment top managers rely on specific rhetorical strategies embedded within the historical context of the universities. It is found that the degree to which a top manager successfully secures commitment is dependent on 1) the</td>
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<tr>
<td>Researcher(s)</td>
<td>Methodology</td>
<td>Purpose</td>
<td>Findings</td>
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<td>Kwon et al. (2014)</td>
<td>Interviews with senior</td>
<td>To analyse how board members discursively construct shared views on</td>
<td>The author identifies four practices: 1) clarifying (i.e. clarifying</td>
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<td>management</td>
<td>strategic issues in meetings.</td>
<td>potential confusions of the strategy, 2) rehearsing (i.e. internalizing</td>
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<td></td>
<td>6 board meetings (recorded)</td>
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<td>meetings), and 4) elaborating (i.e. providing more detail and</td>
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<td>Documents</td>
<td></td>
<td>translating the strategy into practice).</td>
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<tr>
<td>Liu &amp; Maitlis (2014)</td>
<td>9 meetings (recorded)</td>
<td>To investigate how displays of emotion shape the strategizing</td>
<td>The authors successfully link five types of emotional dynamics (related</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Interviews</td>
<td>practices of a top management team</td>
<td>to positive and negative emotional displays) to different kinds of</td>
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<tr>
<td>Samra-Fredericks</td>
<td>1 meeting (recorded)</td>
<td>To investigate the discursive skills and knowledge practitioners rely</td>
<td>The author shows how a skilful practitioner consistently mobilizes his</td>
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<td>(2003)</td>
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<td>upon in setting strategic direction.</td>
<td>linguistic skill and his knowledge in the flux of the conversation</td>
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<td>Samra-Fredericks</td>
<td>12 month observation and</td>
<td>To investigate how managers make use of emotional displays in the</td>
<td>The author identifies four discursive means by which an actor can seek</td>
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<td>(2004)</td>
<td>recording of managers and</td>
<td>talk in interaction in order to shape the strategic direction.</td>
<td>to influence strategic direction. These discursive means include</td>
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<td>their practices (including)</td>
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meetings) direction. establishing a grand narrative (e.g. of organisational survival) or attempting to evoke recipient sympathy.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Study</th>
<th>Methodology</th>
<th>Research Questions</th>
<th>Findings</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Spee &amp; Jarzabkowski (2011)</td>
<td>25 meetings (5 observed and 20 audio recorded) 11 strategy documents</td>
<td>To investigate how the strategy plan is constructed discursively through a communicative process.</td>
<td>The authors argue that strategy plans are constructed through the convergence of text and talk and their continuous re-/decontextualization. Decontextualization refers to the process by which an actor’s comments and remarks become detached from the immediate setting in which they were uttered in order to be embedded in the strategic plan. Recontextualization, on the other hand, refers to the process by which organisational actors make the strategic plan relevant in a new setting.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Vesa &amp; Franck (2013)</td>
<td>15 top management meetings (observed) 19 interviews (recorded) Various documents</td>
<td>To explore interrelatedness of strategy and time in managerial work.</td>
<td>The authors identify what they call experiential vectors of strategic temporality, which they subdivide into 1) unquestioned experiential, 2) resolute experiential, and 3) fragmented experiential vectors.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Werle &amp; Seidl (2015)</td>
<td>Workshops, meetings, and site visits (observed) Photos Interviews</td>
<td>To investigate practitioners’ use of material artefacts and their affordances in terms of developing new strategic topics.</td>
<td>The authors identify different materialities such objectual and non-objectual material artefacts.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Various
documents and
material artefacts
5.3.1.2 Workshops

Compared to meetings, strategy workshops have received much less empirical attention, despite the common agreement on their strategic significance (Johnson, Prashantham, et al., 2010). There is also agreement that, like meetings, workshops are removed from the ordinary workings of the organisation. Akin to meetings, the strategic episode ‘workshop’ or ‘away day’ is defined as an event “which takes place outside the normal schedule of business meetings in an organisation and which focus[es] explicitly on strategy” (MacIntosh, MacLean, & Seidl, 2010, p. 291). It is a ritualized episode wherein executive managers suspend their everyday work and take time out of their schedule to retreat off-site and consider strategic issues (Johnson, Prashantham, et al., 2010, p. 1). Areas of research interest in the empirical studies of workshops include 1) the degree of their efficacy with regards to their intended purpose (Healey, Hodgkinson, Whittington, & Johnson, 2015; Johnson, Prashantham, et al., 2010; MacIntosh et al., 2010), and 2) their sense-making affordances (Cuccurullo & Lega, 2013; Hacklin & Wallnöfer, 2012; Paroutis, Franco, & Papadopoulos, 2015; Werle & Seidl, 2015).

Studies pertaining to the efficacy of workshops focus on issues such as whether or not they produce the intended results and outcomes. For example, it can be considered whether or not the workshop produces the intended outcome-related strategic change. Johnson et al. (2010) study workshops relying on the lens of ritualization. The authors argue that the outcomes of workshops are contingent on ritualistic dynamics such as a communal experience of taking the initiative, or the suspension of social status during the enactment of the ritual (see Johnson et al., 2010, p. 20). Relatedly, Healey et al. (2015) conducted a large survey-based study with 846 respondents in order to study the efficacy of workshops. From the responses, the authors deduce that workshop characteristics, including the clarity of its purpose, how it is removed from everyday organisational work, whether stakeholders are included, and the preparation put into the workshop, generate organisational, personal, and cognitive outcomes. Likewise, MacIntosh et al. (2010) investigated the efficacy of workshops in bringing about strategic change. Links were documented between its efficacy, the workshop’s length, and seniority of the participants.
Another stream of research focuses on the sense-making affordances of workshops with regards to the use of particular analytical tools and materialities (Hacklin & Wallnöfer, 2012; Paroutis et al., 2015; Werle & Seidl, 2015), and analytical tools (Hacklin & Wallnöfer, 2012). Authors have also investigated the usefulness of particular strategic tools and their affordances for workshops. Hacklin and Wallnöfer (2012) facilitated workshops in order to investigate the usefulness of the business model as an analytical tool. The authors found that in practice the business model is good for analysing the current structure of the organisation, whereas it falls short as an analytical strategizing tool. Practitioners relied on the business model more as a resource for discussion than for actual analysis. Paroutis et al. (2015) investigated strategy maps and their use in constructing new knowledge and meanings concerning strategic issues. A number of patterns of interactions were identified. These include 1) shift, which concerns actors’ purposeful interactions with the strategic tool that changes meaning regarding strategic issues, 2) inertia, which encompasses tool-triggered interactions that steer and control meanings, and 3) assembly, which involves both actors and tools instigating interactions enabling the accumulation of knowledge. More generally, the usefulness of the workshop in complex, pluralistic contexts, such as a university hospital going through a phase of strategic change, has been investigated by Cuccurullo and Lega (2013). According to the authors, pluralistic settings are prone to low manageability of discussion, political games, and the process of creating a common ground among organisational actors, which in turn can hamper the efficacy of workshops. In order to circumvent these issues and hence increase workshop efficiency, the authors argue (Cuccurullo & Lega, 2013, p. 625) that 1) frequent workshops provides a sense of continuity, 2) limiting the duration of each workshop facilitates more focused discussion on topics, 3) the seniority of participants elevates discussion, and 4) facilitators reduce the complexity of strategy thinking. Cuccurullo and Lega’s study (2013) resonates with that of Werle and Seidl (2015), who, as described above, studied the interaction between material artefacts and the exploration of strategic topics in workshops (as well as meetings).

In sum, S-as-P researchers investigate the workshop, like the meeting, as an episodic, analytical, and reflexive practice in which actors suspend the workings of the organisation (J. Hendry & Seidl, 2003; Kastberg, 2013). Research on workshops has focused on whether or not they generate the intended results, as well as the internal
dynamics that affect the end result. Others have focused on the knowledge generating properties of the practice, including the use of analytical tools and material artefacts.
Table 5.3.1.2. – Examples of Empirical Studies of Workshops

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Author(s)</th>
<th>Data</th>
<th>Purpose</th>
<th>Findings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cuccurullo &amp; Lega</td>
<td>124 interviews</td>
<td>Investigate how individuals present ideas in meetings to influence decisions, and how this is affected by the wider context in which they operate.</td>
<td>The decision outcome of the meeting was influenced by 1) the logic of argumentation and discursive skill, 2) the invocation of authority, 3) the relevance of the immediate institutional context, and 4) the historical context.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>87 workshops</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(observed)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hacklin &amp; Wallnöfer</td>
<td>Workshops</td>
<td>By introducing business modelling as a strategic tool, the authors investigate the implications and limitations of its use in strategizing practices.</td>
<td>The business model provides a blueprint for mapping the current structure of the business. As a strategizing tool, it acts more as a discussion facilitator than an actual analytical tool.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(observed)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Healey et al.</td>
<td>Questionnaire</td>
<td>To investigate the efficacy of strategy workshops and the organisational impact</td>
<td>The authors successfully link four types of workshop structures (goal clarity, routinisation, stakeholder involvement, and cognitive effort) to three kinds of outcome (organisational, personal, and cognitive).</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(846 responses)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Hendry et al.</td>
<td>111 interviews</td>
<td>To investigate governing boards’ strategizing activities at the corporate level.</td>
<td>Boards engage in both procedural (e.g. formally reviewing management’s proposals) and interactive (e.g. board meetings, strategy workshops, and informal conversations) strategizing activities.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Authors</td>
<td>Methodology</td>
<td>Purpose</td>
<td>Findings</td>
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<td>------------------</td>
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<tr>
<td>Heracleous &amp; Jacobs (2008)</td>
<td>1 workshop (video recorded)</td>
<td>To investigate how organisational actors construct their perceptions of issues regarding the strategy development process through the use of embodied metaphors.</td>
<td>It is shown how the use of embodied metaphors facilitates reflections on the strategy process.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Johnson et al. (2010)</td>
<td>Retrospective interviews (recorded), 7 Workshop (observed)</td>
<td>To investigate the behavioural dynamics of strategic workshops and their impact on the outcome.</td>
<td>The authors argue that the outcomes of workshops are contingent on ritualistic dynamics such as the suspension of the ordinary workings of the organisation, the prescribed form in which the episode unfolds, the specialists called in to guide the episode, communal experience of taking initiative, the suspension of social status during the enactment of the ritual.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MacIntosh et al. (2010)</td>
<td>99 strategy workshops (observed), 63 interviews</td>
<td>To investigate whether or not and under what circumstances strategy workshops that are intended to produce strategic change actually bring this about.</td>
<td>A correspondence was found between the efficacy of workshops in inciting strategic change and the duration and frequency of the workshops, as well as the seniority of the participants.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paroutis et al. (2015)</td>
<td>1 workshop (video recorded)</td>
<td>To investigate how managers produce knowledge about strategic issues through their interactions with strategy tools in workshops.</td>
<td>It is shown how strategy tools have various affordances in generating strategic knowledge: The affordances include 1) tangibility (making content visibility), 2) associability (relating...</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
contents based on common attributes), 3) editability (modifying content), and 4) traecability (relating contents temporally and structurally).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Werle &amp; Seidl (2015)</th>
<th>Workshops, meetings, and site visits (observed)</th>
<th>To investigate practitioners’ use of material artefacts and their affordances in terms of developing new strategic topics.</th>
<th>The authors identify different materialities such as objectual and non-objectual material artefacts.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Photos</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Interviews</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Various documents and material artefacts</td>
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</table>
5.3.1.3 Formal Operating Procedures

Another smaller stream of research transcending the empirical study of individual strategy episodes considers formal operating procedures. Formal operating procedures are the “habitual and social modes of acting through which strategic activity is constructed” (Jarzabkowski, 2003, p. 26). The strategy process is conceptualized as the interaction “between actor and context” through which strategic practices are constructed over time (Jarzabkowski & Wilson, 2002, p. 356). The research considered here is more processual than it is episodic in the manner explicated above. However, there are important links to strategic episodes considering the type of data used for this research.

Significant attention has been paid to understanding the role of formal operating procedures as sources of both continuity and change in the strategic practices, organisational structures, and interpretations of organisational members at three modern UK universities (Jarzabkowski, 2003, 2008; e.g. Jarzabkowski & Wilson, 2002). As can be observed from table 5.4.1.3 below, the data used in this literature is from observations of strategic episodes such as meetings. Utilizing this data, however, is not a matter of understanding the internal dynamics of meetings, but rather the administrative practices relied upon in committees, board meetings, and advisory groups in order shape or sustain strategic behaviour within the structural context of the organisation (Jarzabkowski, 2003; Jarzabkowski & Wilson, 2002).

Here the main research interest is on how top management teams foster change or encourage continuity in strategic behaviour through administrative practices (Jarzabkowski, 2003; Jarzabkowski & Wilson, 2002) and how top management’s strategizing behaviours shape the organisational context and the interpretations of organisational members (Jarzabkowski, 2008). Jarzabkowski and Wilson (2002) investigated the interplay between top management team’s administrative practice and the organisational structures and processes at Warwick University. The particular practices the authors identified were 1) direction setting (i.e. establishing the organisation’s goals and actions), 2) resource allocation (i.e. the financial support to implementing strategy), 3) monitoring and control (i.e. observing and rewarding behaviour in alignment with strategic goals), and 4) interaction (i.e. the contact between top management actors and members of the organisation for the purpose of achieving commitment) (Jarzabkowski & Wilson, 2002, p. 370).
According to Jarzabkowski and Wilson (2002, p. 376), the administrative practices mentioned above establish “an interpretative framework in which particular goal-seeking behaviours are supported”. For example, with regards to resource allocation, committees assign financial resources by sanctioning and rewarding departments who act congruently with the strategic direction that, in the case of Warwick, includes maintaining the institution’s academic research competencies (Jarzabkowski & Wilson, 2002, p. 364). Jarzabkowski (2003) expanded on this study by including two more universities in order to investigate how the administrative practices mentioned above foster strategic continuity or change. The author concludes that continuity “is constructed through alignment of actors, collective structures and activity, coordinated through the strategic practices” of direction setting, resource allocation, monitoring and control, and interaction (Jarzabkowski, 2003, p. 48). On the other hand, change was associated with changing interpretations among the organisations’ members on the desired strategic activity and the needs of the organisation (Jarzabkowski, 2003, p. 49). In one of the investigated universities, change occurred with regards to dominance over practices shifting from the collective structures of organisational members to the top management team. This resulted from a strategic drift towards commercial activities that was observed to push against the mind-set of academic autonomy that had previously marginalized power. In order to instigate these changes, novel and existing administrative practices are relied upon. For example, poor financial performers who are not aligning with the prescribed strategic activity are given normative sanctions. In the final investigation, Jarzabkowski (2008) investigated how top management members’ strategic behaviour affects the structural context of the organisation and the interpretations of the strategic activity of its members. The types of behaviour she investigated include interactive, procedural, and integrative modes of strategizing. For example, through interactive strategic behaviour, top management team members seek to attribute meaning to the strategic activity, make certain norms relevant, or rely on power to sway people’s interests. Procedural strategizing behaviour involves relying upon particular administrative practices such as penalizing underperformers in order to change strategic activity. Integrative strategic behaviour encompasses the previous two modes. For example, a new administrative procedure can be developed while its meaning is simultaneously being negotiated with organisation members (Jarzabkowski, 2008, p. 631).
In sum, the S-as-P literature on administrative practices attends to strategic activity in a much more processual manner than the previous studies that have been reviewed in the present subsection. Empirical studies have found administrative practices to be significant in sustaining and changing strategic practices.
Table 5.3.1.3. – Examples of Empirical Studies of Formal Operating Procedures

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Author(s)</th>
<th>Data</th>
<th>Purpose</th>
<th>Findings</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jarzabkowski (2003, 2008)</td>
<td>49 interviews (recorded)</td>
<td>One purpose is to investigate administrative practices including 1) direction setting, 2) resource allocation, and 3) monitoring and control and their role in sustaining or instigating change in strategic practices in three UK universities (Jarzabkowski, 2003). Another purpose involves understanding the strategizing behaviour of top managers and how this shapes the organisational contexts and organisation members’ interpretations (Jarzabkowski, 2008).</td>
<td>Jarzabkowski (2003) documents both continuity and change being instigated by practices concluding that 1) continuity results from the alignment of actors, activities, and collective structure whereas 2) change results from changing interpretations of strategic activity and new organisational needs arising.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>51 meetings (observed)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ethnographic data (e.g. shadowing, informal discussion, etc.)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Various documents (including meeting minutes, annual reports, etc.)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jarzabkowski &amp; Wilson (2002)</td>
<td>20 interviews (recorded)</td>
<td>The primary purpose is to understand the administrative practices through which a top management team formulates and implements strategic practices at Warwick University.</td>
<td>It is found that top management team members affect the structural context of the university (including culture and localised routines) through administrative practices such as monitoring and control, interaction, resource allocation, and direction setting.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Meetings (observed)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ethnographic data (shadowing, informal discussion, observation, etc.)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Documents
(annual reports,
databases,
strategic plans,
etc.)
5.3.2 … To Inconspicuous Strategizing Episodes

As can be concluded from the previous review of empirical S-as-P investigations, the bulk of research has focused on formalized strategic episodes and the practices of the so-called managerial elite. However, there are examples of studies of more inconspicuous strategizing episodes and actors. For example, Jarzabkowski, Burke, and Spee (2015) studied the material practices of reinsurers in their allocation of capital in the financial trading context. In a related study, Jarzabkowski, Spee and Smets (2013) investigated underwriting managers’ enactment of strategy through the use of material artefacts in appraising reinsurance deals. Regnér (2003) studied the modes of strategizing for middle managers at the periphery of the organisation. Maitlis and Lawrence (2003) studied the failed attempt of an orchestra at forming a strategy. Lastly, Rouleau (2005) investigated sales managers’ translations of strategy to employees. In other words, the door has been opened to investigations of more atypical studies of strategizing episodes and the strategy work of people within them.

The question that must be considered with regards to more inconspicuous strategizing is: “what and whose work is strategic” (Jarzabkowski et al., 2015, p. 28)? Is it only top managers whose conduct can be considered strategic or are there other individuals and episodes where the study of strategizing behaviour is relevant? In reviewing the studies described above, the present subsection considers the question of what and whose work is strategic in order to conceptualize both job interviewers as strategic practitioners and the job interview as a ‘strategic episode’ as the term is used by Hendry and Seidl (2003), Jarzabkowski and Seidl (2008), and Kastberg (2013).

First, one of the main dissatisfactions with traditional strategy research, which in fact prompted the arrival of S-as-P, is the overemphasis on obvious strategizing individuals such as top managers (Johnson et al., 2003). As is evident from the previous review as well as some critiques (see Carter et al., 2008), the focus is still very much on managerial elites (Samra-Fredericks, 2003, 2004), top management (Jarzabkowski, 2003; Jarzabkowski & Wilson, 2002) or strategists (Dameron & Torset, 2014). A few studies have gone beyond formal strategizing to investigate other potential strategic actors. For example, Maitlis and Lawrence (2003) investigated orchestra members’ failed attempt at creating a strategy. Regnér (2003) relied upon dialectics, the distinction between ‘centre’ and ‘periphery’ in three
organisations, to investigate the different modes of strategizing of corporate management (the centre) and middle managers in peripheral business units and subsidiaries. Neither orchestra members nor middle managers are typically thought of as strategists. Neither are underwriters (Jarzabkowski et al., 2015, 2013) or reinsurers (Jarzabkowski et al., 2015) in reinsurance companies, nor sales managers in department stores (Rouleau, 2005). The idea of strategizing behaviour as somehow restricted and exclusive to the managerial elite is refuted by these studies. The leap to job interviewers is not far in this regard.

Second, Whittington (1996, p. 732) encouraged S-as-P researchers to study the mundane work of strategizing, namely, “all the meeting, the talking, the form-filling and the number-crunching” of formulating and implementing strategy. The empirical research reviewed in the previous subsection very much pursues this call. The problem is that practices such as meetings and workshops, as well as so-called administrative processes, constitute what is formally accepted as strategic (Carter et al., 2008). In this sense, much of the empirical S-as-P research on strategic episodes follows traditional theoretical perspectives on strategy. Understanding the formal aspects of strategizing is important. However, “strategy might happen in different departments, in different circumstances and different contexts” (Carter et al., 2008, p. 92). ‘Strategy work’ is “the organizing work involved in the implementation of strategies, and all the other activities that lead to the emergence of organisational strategies, conscious or not” (Vaara & Whittington, 2012, p. 287). Although this conceptualization is contiguous with the traditional conceptions of strategy considered above, it opens up new research agendas. As mentioned above, there have been studies considering contexts not usually recognized as strategic. These studies have moved beyond the kind of strategy work usually associated with the strategy process. Some research has been conducted into strategy work in the reinsurance sector to study how employees enact strategy (e.g. Jarzabkowski et al., 2015, 2013). Investigating embodied and material practices in strategic episodes associated with capital allocation, Jarzabkowski et al. (2015) video recorded reinsurance managers’ work and their interactions with brokers, through which they negotiate decisions on business deals, and thereby accomplish strategy strategic work. Constellations of embodied, material and discursive semiotic resources mediated the strategic episode and allowed for the fluid transitions between reinsurers’ private work and their interactions with brokers, which were either collaborative or negotiating in nature.
The episodes, lasting between 10-15 minutes, were found to be significant in accomplishing the strategic goals of “(1) progressing resource allocation decisions and (2) preserving key sources of future business opportunity” (Jarzabkowski et al., 2015, p. 30). In collaborative work for example, the actors’ interactional efforts are directed at creating shared meanings and common grounds on, for example, ambiguous information regarding a particular deal. Relatedly, negotiating work allows for the reconciliation of opinions and the progression of a final decision to allocate financial resources. Both forms of work are considered crucial in enacting the insurance company’s strategy (Jarzabkowski et al., 2015, p. 42). In a related study, Jarzabkowski et al. (2013) investigated the affordances of material artefacts used by shadowing reinsurance managers and looking at their efforts to appraise reinsurance deals as the enactment of strategy.

“In the appraisal process, an underwriting manager is evaluating whether to place capital on a deal that would reinsure an insurance firm against a particular peril. This activity is strategic in that each approved deal shapes the underwriting managers overall portfolio targets and enacts the strategic objectives.” (Jarzabkowski et al., 2013, p. 44)

Again, this research moves beyond the orthodox conception of a linear strategy process to consider the ostensible enactment of strategic objectives. These two studies have clearly shown the strategic skills of individuals not usually associated with strategy work, as described above, and their activities that, moreover, show the relevance of activities that are not usually associated with conspicuous practices of strategy analysis and formulation (Johnson et al., 2003).

### 5.4 Methods for Collecting Data

The present section reviews the methods for collecting data S-as-P researchers have relied upon when investigating strategizing. The methods considered here are interviews, commonly used to elicit data from informants, observations, by which the researcher passively or actively experiences strategy work, and audio/video recording
technologies, which are normally used to document the detail of practical work. Recording technology is empirically underused in documenting micro-behaviour, whereas interviews are frequently relied upon because they are ostensibly “unbeatable for capturing individuals’ feelings about events” (Johnson et al., 2007, p. 68).

Many of the studies reviewed in the previous section rely on some form of observation such as shadowing (Jarzabkowski, 2003; e.g. Jarzabkowski & Wilson, 2002), non-participant observation (e.g. Jarzabkowski & Sillince, 2007; Werle & Seidl, 2015), and participant observation (e.g. Aggerholm et al., 2012). Most studies, however, rely on interviews, such as semi-structured (e.g. Rouleau, 2005) or open-ended interviews (e.g. Jarzabkowski, 2003). Insofar as they use other sources of data, these are only secondary. Only a few studies incorporated real-time data such as audio or video recordings of actual strategy work (e.g. Jarzabkowski et al., 2015; Liu & Maitlis, 2014; Samra-Fredericks, 2003, 2004).

The present section reviews empirical S-as-P according to the methods researchers rely upon in investigating the doing of strategy. Firstly, studies which rely on interviews as the primary or sole source of data, or in conjunction with other sources of data, are reviewed in relation to the topics they are used to address. Studies are then considered that utilise observation and audio/video recording.

### 5.4.1 Interviewing Methods

Interviewing is a type of data collection method involving the elicitation of data by asking an interviewee questions. Interviews are often used in S-as-P research in order for the researcher to get practitioners’ points of view, encouraging researchers to use it in their own research: “Given its dominant position in [S-as-P] research, the interview method was the chosen form of data collection” (K. P. Hendry et al., 2010, p. 38). The purpose of the present subsection is to consider the ways in which the interview is used in S-as-P research and its limitations. What I shall focus upon here are two uses of interviews that involve 1) getting insights into the perspective of practitioners and 2) eliciting narrations on their practices.

With regards to organisational members’ perspectives, Langley (2014) studied how strategic ambiguity affects employee perception of strategy discourse, using interviews as primary data. This is also reminiscent of Aggerholm et al.’s
(2012) investigation of employee’s sense making following the board’s presentation of a new strategy plan. Relatedly, managers’ experiences of the strategy process leading to the final strategy plan have also been investigated (Spee & Jarzabkowski, 2011). Others have relied upon interviews to understand the multiple tensions between how strategists perceive themselves and how they cope with the tensions of their strategy work, by analysing their discourse in interviews (Dameron & Torset, 2014). Mantere relied upon a corpus of interviews to investigate middle managers’ self-perception of their own ability to have an impact on strategically important work (Mantere, 2005, p. 298).

The second function of interviews that one can come across in the empirical research literature is to collect reports from practitioners on the concrete activities they engage in when strategizing (e.g. K. P. Hendry et al., 2010; Herepath, 2014; Jarzabkowski, 2003; Johnson, Prashantham, et al., 2010). A good example here is Jarzabkowski and Sillince’s (2007) analysis of top management team members’ rhetorical practices and LeLoarne and Maalaoui’s (2015) study of entrepreneurial practices asking entrepreneurs to narrate the development of their respective companies. Jarzabkowski (2003, p. 30, see also 2005, 2008) relied on interviews to retrospectively explore the strategic actions and practices of top management team members. Similarly, Jarzabkowski et al. (2013) use interviews retrospectively to elicit the underwriting practices from informants. Jarzabkowski et al. (2015) used interviews to obtain reinsurers’ justifications for allocating capital to particular deals. In order to answer the questions of how boards do strategy, K. P. Hendy et al. (2010) relied upon interviews to get board members to discuss their ways of strategizing.

Obviously, interview methodology has epistemological limitations. Some authors note challenges regarding interviewee’s memory limitations (K. P. Hendry et al., 2010, p. 38), others highlight that “interviews obviously reflect more what is said in the interview situation rather than ‘naturally occurring talk’ in the organisation more broadly” (Laine & Vaara, 2007, p. 39). However the issues of the interview run much deeper and are more complex than this. The point that I am here bringing forward is one made by Goffman (1959), who showed that self-presentation is always present when people converse, communicate, and interact with one another. It is therefore justified to question narrations of previous or current actions, opinions, and feelings about topics. People do not confide their opinions, perspectives, or actions without taking into account self-presentation. For example, S-as-P researchers
commonly interview actors in their capacities as ‘board members’, ‘managers’, or ‘strategists’, but these people are likely to want to present the organisation in a positive light and themselves as rational (T. J. Watson, 2011, p. 211). That their answers, for example in terms of how they perceive their role as strategists (e.g. Dameron & Torset, 2014), their concrete strategizing actions (e.g. K. P. Hendry et al., 2010), or their practical means of coping (Dameron & Torset, 2014; Mantere, 2008), somehow reflect reality is therefore a misjudgement. There is, in Mantere’s case, arguably a gap between what the respondents report to be their impact on strategically important work and what it actually is. Relying upon a statement from a nurse in which she asserts that a strategy provides her and her colleagues with a direction and a framework for what to achieve, Mantere (2008, p. 305) concludes that “[strategy] becomes a tool, which is at hand, helpful in everyday ‘practical coping’”. This is a bold statement that begs an empirical investigation into the interconnectedness of strategy and practical coping as they unfold in actual activity. It is an epistemological leap to assume that strategy is actually used for practical coping in real practice based on what is reported in an interview. For that to be the argument, conclusive data that provides direct access is required.

Furthermore, relying on interviews to elicit so-called private opinions is also problematic, even though these are confided to interviewers with promises of confidentiality. The problem is that once uttered, the private opinion becomes public, and the potential consequences always play a role.

“The facts of social life are that real utterances of opinion always are public in the sense that they occur in the presence of others. They never occur in isolation and one must always consider the consequences of having uttered them” (Deutscher, 1973, p. 149)

To assume therefore that public opinions reflect reality is very problematic. There is a real risk that the interviewee want to get the interviews over with and thus may skip crucial parts of what happened or tell the interviewer what he/she thinks they want to hear (T. J. Watson, 2011, p. 211). If we investigate how practitioners discursively cope “with the tensions they face in their strategizing activities” (Dameron & Torset, 2014, p. 312) or argue that strategy is a tool for practical coping, relying on elicited data from interviews is problematic because of the epistemological leap between
what practitioners say they do and what they are doing. Other kinds of data are therefore needed.

### 5.4.2 Observation and Recording

With regards to the data collecting methods of observation and recording, I am referring to the collection of data, usually an activity that transpires at a set spatio-temporal location which the researcher seeks to capture using either observation (captured in field notes) or audio and video recordings. Most S-as-P studies rely upon observational data, although a small stream of research has begun using recording technologies. In the present subsection, I will focus on how observation and recording technologies have been used in S-as-P research as well as their limitations.

In S-as-P, using observation as a data collecting method involves being either a non-participant (e.g. Jarzabkowski et al., 2013) or a participant observer (e.g. Rouleau, 2005) in some activity that practitioners engage in and the researcher is interested in. In other instances, it might involve shadowing participants for entire days, observing what a particular practitioner does during his or her workday (e.g. Jarzabkowski, 2008). The difference between being a participant or non-participant observer generally is the degree to which the researcher engages in observed activities. For the most part, observation is used to document practices or the actual activities which social actors engage in (see for example Kaplan, 2011). Performing observation as a data collection method is intrinsically associated with keeping a research diary wherein field notes are taken during observations in as much detail as possible. Thus, researchers attempt to capture the verbal conduct of organisational actors in research diaries (Maitlis & Lawrence, 2003), whereas others document detailed embodied behaviour such as gesture and posture (Jarzabkowski & Seidl, 2008). Furthermore, some have even tried to capture the intonation contours of produced speech (MacIntosh & Beech, 2011). In some cases, researchers capture observations preliminarily in their diaries in order to write up more detailed accounts of their observations at a later stage. The works of Jarzabkowski (2003, 2008) on formal operating procedures are exemplary in this regard although, as she notes, writing detailed accounts of observations need to be done soon after the initial observations were made.
However, there are practical, cognitive, and sensory challenges for researchers relying on observation. This is also why some S-as-P scholars have begun encouraging the use of audio and video recordings.

“[The] complexity and pace of contemporary work is increasingly stretching the ethnographer as the data collection “instrument”. They are increasingly difficult to accurately record given the natural limitations of human senses and cognitive abilities. Leveraging new technologies, such as high quality, portable video recording equipment, can lift some of the sensory and cognitive constraints” (Smets, Burke, Jarzabkowski, & Spec, 2014, p. 12)

Recording technology allows us to document the full detail of what is going on during work including verbatim expressions, gesture, embodied behaviour, intonation, and so on. It allows us to investigate video recordings and analyse practitioners’ embodied cognition in achieving their purposes (Gylfe, Franck, LeBaron, & Mantere, 2016). Whereas the observer only gets to experience a meeting once and otherwise has to consult the field diary in order to refresh his/her memory, recording technology allows not only the transcribing the transpired events in great detail but also continuous reviewing (LeBaron, 2008b).

There are more and more S-as-P studies accumulating that rely on audio or video recordings as sources of data. The ethnomethodological/conversation analytical studies conducted by Samra-Fredericks (2003, 2004, 2005) represent one of the most significant contributions in terms of relying on recording technology. Her general interest is in the lived experience of strategy, and how practitioners produce particular outcomes via their talk in interaction. Therefore, she studies each strategist’s turns at talk in a strategy meeting and conceptualises each one as a “layer or ‘minor move’ in a succession shaping or ‘producing’ beliefs, opinions, values, assumptions, feelings, perceptions, meanings and so on” (Samra-Fredericks, 2003, p. 152 emphasis in original). Thus via the close analysis of turns at talk captured by recording devices, researchers can elicit the lived aspects of strategy work. In this sense, it is therefore much more epistemologically sound to draw conclusions about practitioners’ means of practical coping and reasoning due to direct observations in data. Although not an ethnomethodological investigation by any stretch, Jarzabkowski et al. (2015) relied
upon video recordings to show how reinsurers construct space to allow for strategy work with brokers in a reinsurance company. Private work, collaborative work, negotiating work and the transitions between them were all found to be associated with particular semiotic resources such as speech, material resources, and embodied behaviour. In the constructivist sense, space for strategy work is literally constructed via semiotic means, thus underlining the practical and lived nature of strategy work. However not all studies use recordings for the same purposes. Beech and Johnson (2005) rely upon various sources of data including a video recording of a strategy discussion at a meeting, a number of interviews, as well as field notes. The purpose of the recorded data here is to extract different narratives from the source material. Johnson, Prashantaham et al. (2010) used audio recordings in conjunction with observation in order to grasp the dynamics of the behaviour in order to study the ritualized aspects of strategy workshops. In line with a constructivist epistemology, they show how the workshop is constituted by fundamentally different behaviour than that of the work place. Using video data primarily, Paroutis et al. (2015) investigated the affordances of strategy tools for creating knowledge about strategic issues in workshops. Their central argument is that strategy tools enable meaning to be negotiated amongst organisational actors.

This is not to say that using recording technology is without its limitations. A recording device only captures data once the record button is pressed. Everything that might transpire before or after is lost. Furthermore, a video camera captures a frame, and not what goes on outside it. Recording technology should therefore not be seen as a direct representation of the reality. Nevertheless, it is safe to say that what actually happens in the video or what is said in an audio recording represents at least a slice of reality (Sacks, 1984).

5.5 Summing Up and Moving On

In the following section, I will sum up the different parts of the present chapter concerning the development of S-as-P, and the distinct perspective it offers on strategy as a social activity. Furthermore, I will conclude on the parts of the chapter that have reviewed conspicuous and inconspicuous strategizing episodes as well as the methods used in conducting S-as-P research. Furthermore, and in building
towards the final discussion of the present dissertation, I will briefly discuss particular aspects where this investigation offers new insights.

5.5.1 Summing Up

The purpose of the present chapter has been to account for S-as-P as a research agenda, its development from traditional theories, and the distinct new perspective it offers. In summing up, S-as-P is part of the general Practice Turn within the social sciences. However it is also a response to the traditional theories on strategy that were informed by microeconomics and generally interested in how strategy affects firm performance. In other words, the phenomenon of strategy is in these traditions investigated at high levels of abstraction at the macro-level. S-as-P scholars felt that the human face of strategy was missing and encouraged an investigation of how people strategize. The main difference between S-as-P and traditional strategy theories is, thus, that strategy is conceptualized as a social activity that practitioners engage in and not something, as traditional theories would have it, pertaining to the organisation at large.

Another purpose of the present chapter has been to review the status quo of knowledge on so-called conspicuous and inconspicuous strategy episodes. It can be concluded on the basis of the review that the bulk of S-as-P research on strategy episodes has focused on conspicuous strategizing episodes. This is despite the mantra that “strategy concerns all levels of the organization” (Rouleau, 2013, p. 548 emphasis added). However, a nascent stream of research has begun looking beyond conspicuous strategy episodes such as meetings, committees, workshops, and administrative processes, towards more inconspicuous forms of strategizing. Indeed, this stream of research has shown that strategy is present in episodes, contexts, and behaviours one would not normally associated with strategy episodes or strategy work. Indeed, inconspicuous strategy episodes have been shown to have an impact on organisations (Jarzabkowski et al., 2015, p. 28). The present dissertation makes two important contributions in this regard: first, it contributes with a new study of uncommon strategy actors – namely, job interviewers. Secondly, the job interview itself represents a previously unrecognized strategic episode wherein strategy work is accomplished. The present research then places itself within a stream of research that investigates novel aspects of strategy work, strategic behaviour, and inconspicuous
strategic episodes. These contributions, then, fittingly lead to the research question: *How do job interviewers accomplish their work in the job interview as a strategically relevant episode?*

The present chapter has also provided a review of the ways in which data collection is handled in empirical S-as-P research. It has been found that interviews dominate the methods by which data is collected, closely followed by observation. Both these methods have not only epistemological but also practical and cognitive limitations when collecting data for research into how people actually do strategy, especially if we wish to consider the ways in which practitioners perform their practices. Using recording technology alleviates some of these limitations, although it does have its own. Thus, another contribution that this dissertation makes is placing itself within a stream of research building on ethnomethodological and conversation analytical methodology and methods including audio and video recording. These types of investigation are uncommon in the S-as-P literature (Samra-Fredericks, 2015) despite the fact that they get the researcher as close as possible to the site of strategy work using recording technology. Furthermore, these types of investigation analytically afford possible insights into the lived nature of strategy work and the practical means of coping that practitioners rely upon in carrying these out.

### 5.5.2 Moving On: Strategy and Job Interviews

In moving on with the present research I will here spend some effort on Tsoukas’s (2010, 2015) framework for understanding how strategy is made. This is because I see it as helpful in considering the relevance of studying the potential relationship between strategy and job interviews, as I will end up discussing in the discussion parts of this dissertation.

If we take Tsoukas’s framework seriously, job interviews cannot be considered strategizing, because they do not involve abstract, thematic awareness about the organisation, nor are they detached from the daily doings of organisational life. Rather, they are arguably a part of it. Furthermore, job interviews do not constitute breakdowns in the chain of events or organisational routines. Rather, they are frequent occurrences in organisations that routinely rely on them when conducting their recruitment and selection processes. What I argue is most relevant at present in terms of understanding the relationship between strategy and the job
interview is via the concept of practical coping. As argued, practical coping encompasses non-deliberating action on the basis of an “inherited background that shapes their actions” (Tsoukas, 2015, p. 71). Here, social actors simply perform their activities in accordance with how they have learned them, and as a result, over time, a strategy develops as a pattern in a flow of actions. Job interviews can be seen in this same manner, where job interviewers conduct the interview relying on their inherited understandings and their experience. As time passes, patterns could emerge on the basis of the decisions made in the wake of job interviews, constituting an HR strategy determining the kind of people usually hired.

There are, however, some potential issues: first of all, it is unclear at which level the concepts of Tsoukas’s (2010, 2015) framework are relevant. What, for example, constitutes a ‘situation’ when talking about language use for situational coping? Some of the examples that Tsoukas provide are located at the macro-level in terms of how organisations react to developing market situations (see Tsoukas, 2015, p. 72). So in this sense, the micro-level of interaction in various organisational activities is not considered. However, this of course opens up space for potential research contributions. The second issue concerns the concept of practical coping itself, which is construed as “mindless” (Chia & MacKay, 2007, p. 233). In the EM/CA sense, considering something as being mindlessly achieved is naïve, due to the fact that activities are considered co-concertedly accomplished via the social actors’ competencies and methods (Atkinson, 1988). A final concern relates to the issue of tacit understandings being shared. This is not necessarily a general concern but one that could relate to the job interview. Tacit understandings are hypothetically not necessarily shared between the interviewer and applicant as they enact the job interview. In this regard, there is an inherent asymmetry between the interviewer and the applicant in terms of their knowledge and understanding of what is happening in the activity.
CHAPTER 6

METHODOLOGY, DATA, AND ANALYSIS

In Chapter 2, I accounted for the ontological and epistemological position of Ethnomethodology (EM) and Conversation Analysis (CA), which has come to influence the development of Microethnography (see LeBaron, 2008a; Streeck & Mehus, 2005) and constitutes the philosophical view on the science that the present investigation adopts. Accompanying any philosophical approach to science is a set of methods able to generate insights and new knowledge on the phenomena of interest based on epistemologically sound investigations. In a similar sense, microethnographers rely on appropriate methods to investigate and provide scientifically sound knowledge about their empirical phenomena, which usually encompasses aspects of social interaction and social order. The present chapter accounts for these methods but also provides a brief overview of the history of Microethnography, its major sources of inspiration, and academic interests. Furthermore, it is argued that more ethnographic studies need to be conducted by academics in order to better understand the nature of the work that is being carried out in organisations. The process of data collection and how data has been treated is also accounted for. This involves the kinds of data used, the ethical concerns associated with informants’ privacy and their participation in the study, how the data is prepared for analysis in terms of transcription and finally how data segments are ultimately chosen for analysis.
The chapter is structured as follows. Section 6.1 accounts for Microethnography's history and argues that additional ethnographic research is needed. Furthermore, its methods are accounted for. Section 6.2 then provides an overview of the data collection, data treatment and data analysis as conducted for the present research. The section also discusses the ethical concerns and methodological issues related to the use of audio and video data. In Section 6.3, NorCo and DrillCo are presented in order to give an overview of their organisational context. Finally, Section 6.4 concludes and summarizes the chapter.

6.1 Microethnography

Microethnography (also known as Video-Based Ethnography or Constitutive Ethnography) was originally conceived by Smith and Geoffrey (1968) in their attempt to describe patterned behaviour in a classroom consisting of lower-class pupils. Later Mehan (1978), who preferred the name ‘Constitutive Ethnography’, argued that the purpose of the programme should instead explicate order-generating practices. In recapturing the programme in this way, Mehan clarified it as one of bridging the micro and macro. This remains an important aspect in contemporary Microethnography, that attends to large societal issues through the close analysis of minute behaviour (LeBaron, 2008b). Microethnography can therefore be characterized as a social constructionist endeavour. In the following, I will provide a brief overview of its historical background and then proceed to account for its view of social reality.

6.1.1 Historical background

Contemporary microethnographers refer to the work of Bateson and Mead (1942) as key. Their study described the practices of Balinese people in their day-to-day activities. The patterns of behaviour, they argued, emerged out of interactions that together constitute the Balinese culture (p. 255). Later, Bateson (1972) developed theories of frame and context under the umbrella “metacommunication”, which is to be understood as the framework social actors create for each other to understand actions.
The Goffmanian effort to construct an ethology of human life (Goffman, 1983, p. 2) has equally been a fount of knowledge for Microethnography (Streeck & Mehus, 2005). Goffman’s conviction of the need to explicate “… the ground rules and the associated ordering of behavior that pertain to public life…” (Goffman, 1971, p. 17) resonates throughout the works of his career. Social life is technically, politically, structurally, and culturally ordered (Goffman, 1959) in ways that determine the organisation’s purpose, how actors act, their hierarchies, and their moral dispositions, and Goffman (1974) considered framing as an integral aspect of actors’ understanding of the context in which they act. Goffman also came to appreciate the role of talk (see Goffman, 1981) and investigated the basic structure of conversation (Goffman, 1976), advocating its analysis relative to social context (Goffman, 1978, p. 794). Similarly, Goffman’s (1979) notion of “footing”, referring to how actors during the course of their talk position themselves and others in terms of social roles such as profession or gender, has become significant.

The third source inspiring microethnographic analyses of embodied behaviour is the work fronted by Scheflen (1967) and developed by Kendon (1990) known as Context Analysis. Scheflen saw language and embodied behaviour as culturally specific practices. His view of organisation resembles a semiotic system. For example, he argues that “… behaviour and its commonality in a group allows it to be meaningful” (Scheflen, 1967, p. 9). He saw communication and the behaviour it involves as being either simple, coordinated activities wherein people conduct activities and use integrating signals that modify, concert, or otherwise clarify simple coordinated activities if uncertainty arises; or ultimately as metacommunicative signals that establish a sense of the activity for the actors (Scheflen, 1968, pp. 49–50).

The basic premise of Context Analysis, as Kendon (1990, p. 15) argues, is that behaviour has no inherent semantic value outside the framework it occurs in.

An integral part of Microethnography is its roots in Garfinkel’s (1967) EM. A rudimentary tenet of EM is the correlation between accountability and reflexivity and their constitutive function in producing social organisation (Heritage, 1984b, p. 119). The function of reflexivity encompasses aspects of the practical realisation of social action and distinguishability of some actions from other actions (Coulon, 1995, p. 23). Reflexivity, in a way, carries with it the sense of the scene covertly, that suggests an implicitness in everyday conduct that only becomes relevant if something is broken, necessitating an account (Garfinkel, 1967, p. 8).
The last source of microethnographic inspiration comes from CA. An underlying presumption found in CA is that social interaction exhibits an intrinsic orderliness (Schegloff & Sacks, 1969, p. 290). It is the purpose of CA to systematically explicate the orderliness of interaction in terms of the distribution of turns (Sacks et al., 1974), conversational repair (Schegloff et al., 1977), sequential organisation (Schegloff, 2007b) and preference organisation (Levinson, 1983; Pomerantz, 1984b). Aspects of these findings, as well as others, have since then been placed within the frameworks of alignment and affiliation (Steensig, 2012; Stivers, 2008; Stivers, Mondada, & Steensig, 2011). Although CA began with an explicit interest in the distribution of talk in interaction, as evidenced in the early lectures of Sacks (1992b), it has since taken a multimodal turn with researchers taking an interest in phenomena such facial expressions (Peräkylä & Ruusuvuori, 2006; Ruusuvuori & Peräkylä, 2009) and gaze (C. Goodwin, 1980; Haddington, 2006).

6.1.2 The Need for Ethnography

Over recent years, organisation and management studies have turned towards an ethnographic mode of investigation (Smets et al., 2014, p. 10). Similarly, ethnography has become of interest to corporate practice (Anderson, 2009). If communication, organisation, and management scholars following the constructivist program wish to learn about organisations and the work that employees do there, we must necessarily do intensive investigations by documenting, observing, or participating in the practices that make up the daily routines in the organisation, in order to be able to address the issues there (T. J. Watson, 2011, p. 204).

In their overview of ethnography’s contribution to organisation studies, Morrill and Fine (1997) highlight the explication of informal work relations as opposed to formal hierarchical structures as an essential part of organisational practice, as well as finding asymmetries between actual practices and claimed practices. Additionally, ethnographers advanced the view that organisations are semiotic systems whose meanings are negotiated ad hoc by its members.

While ethnographies are not necessarily devoid of generalization and abstract theorizing, they do need to be grounded in empirical observation, and, thus, founded in reality (Van Maanen, 2006). It is important, however, that ethnographers engage with both large societal or organisational issues rather than merely relying on
descriptions of the minutiae of social interaction in order to avoid empirical isolationism (Seidl & Whittington, 2014). Thereby, the work will be more generalizable and relevant. This implies that simple descriptions of social practices are unwanted. As Smets et al. (2014) argue, there is an interest in ethnography engaging with practitioners’ problems and catching the complexities of organisational life. The benefit of being there, on site, provides a head start into this endeavour and the methodological means to do it.

6.1.3 Methods

In the present section, I shall briefly consider the methods of Microethnography. Microethnography is particularly informed by the methodological recommendations of Sacks (1984). His aspirations were to create an observational science where empirical observations guide theorising about how social interaction is ordered, and not the other way around. This recommendation is primarily justified by the recognition that theorising prior to observation often leads to prejudicial assumptions about the conduct of social actors and might end up constricting the researcher’s view of what is actually going on. Generally speaking, Microethnography studies do not seek to prove or disprove theories (Sidnell, 2010, p. 28). Rather, conversation analysts seek to document and describe activities that would have taking place regardless of the researcher’s presence. Job interviews would be one such example of an activity in organisations that would take place regardless of the researcher’s presence.

Since the early days of CA, researchers began adopting recording technology that allowed for continuous playback of the phenomena they captured (Sacks, 1984). This technology not only allows the researcher to replay and review his or her data over and over again, it also enables the capture of verbal and embodied behaviour. It enabled CA researchers to create detailed transcriptions capturing the minute characteristics of intonation, the length of pauses, actors’ articulation, their breathing, gestures, and facial expressions, etc. (Hepburn & Bolden, 2013a; Jefferson, 1996, 2004). The main justification for recording is that the reality of social actors is so complex that methods such as interviewing, simple observation, prefabricated examples and experiments are unequipped to capture this density (Heritage, 1984b, pp. 236–237). Initially, audio recording devices were all that was available to analysts. However, as technology became cheaper, studies using video recordings
became more and more frequent and are now more or less the standard in this kind of research. This is not the only reason for documenting by recording technology and transcribing the data. As Microethnography strives to be an observational science, it also needs to be a verifiable one. Achieving this means reproducing data for others to scrutinise (Sacks, 1984).

Microethnography is interested in interactional phenomena and an interactional phenomenon constitutes “talk and action in a situation that may include oriented-to features of the setting as well as other persons” (Psathas, 1995, p. 47). Thus, interaction encompasses members’ interactions with their context and with other members through their senses using language, gesture, posture, facial expressions etc. For the conversation analyst, the interest lies in explicating the way in which this is done in an orderly fashion (Hutchby & Wooffitt, 2008). When looking at conversational material, the primary interest is in what function or purpose a given turn at talk has in the conversation in order to explain how a question is heard as a question or an invitation as an invitation. To do this, the researcher must look at what went on before and after the turn of interest in order to see how the conversationalists themselves orient towards the meaning of their conduct (Sacks et al., 1974). In this sense, it is always the members who determine whether or not something is analysable as a question and not the researcher. The members’ perspectives are always sought after.

As the recordings are made of ordinary people going about their lives in various kinds of settings, data can be sensitive. For this reason, informed consent is always needed, meaning that those who are being recorded, those responsible for the situation in which the recording is made, and/or those who own the recordings should all be given the opportunity to opt in or out (ten Have, 2007, p. 79). This is mainly in terms of 1) being recorded or granting the researcher access to recordings, 2) so that the recordings can be used for research, and 3) so that the recordings can be used for publication and education. In order to attend to the privacy of those appearing in the recordings, great care is taken to anonymise any information that might lead to their identification, whether it is a person or organisation.
6.2 The Data and Analytical Process

Studying the methods of practical sociological reasoning in job interviews, utilising Microethnography methodology, puts various constraints on the type of data used. In the present section I shall describe how data collection, treatment, and analysis has been handled grounded on the previous discussion of the methods of Microethnography. This means explaining how these data, which consist of audio/video recordings, were collected, how they were subsequently treated, the ethical issues related to the data collection and treatment, and, lastly, how the data is analysed.

6.2.1 Data Collection

The process of obtaining data for this research project started back in late 2012 continuing up until the end of 2014. The approach to data collection was open due it proving difficult to obtain access to companies, their job interviews, and recordings. I was able to get access to two organisations through personal contacts. The NorCo office is the regional office of a larger drilling contractor in Norway, whereas DrillCo is the parent company. On a side note I also collected some public sector data by recording job interviews for social worker positions. These are not used in the present study for the sake of continuity. I decided to focus my collection efforts on these two contractors because they were representative of companies in their sector and both dealt with the same kind of issues.

Obtaining the data I wanted from these two companies was far from straightforward: first of all, due to their geographical dispersion and, secondly, due to the sensitive nature of job interviews. My first experience with a job interview, which is recounted in the introduction, was as an observer in the Norwegian NorCo office. Only by gradually gaining trust was I able to first introduce audio recordings and then video. I shall discuss the issue of audio and video recordings momentarily.

Their geographical dispersion proved another practical problem but also an opportunity. It is a practical problem that both companies are located in countries the researcher does not frequent. It is also an opportunity, however, that provides more openings for data. Whereas NorCo is located in a single location in Norway, DrillCo is a parent company with multiple regional offices around the world. The obvious
implication of this was that I was only able to gather data in the Norwegian regional office of NorCo and not others. DrillCo, on the other hand, provided access not only to their headquarters but also to a regional office in the Middle East. As a researcher it was practically, economically, and geographically impossible for me to attend and record every single job interview. This is why I opted to outsource recording to the interviewers themselves. This decision has its obvious advantages and disadvantages: it is advantageous in the sense that I was able to collect a significant number of recordings across geographical locations within the timeframe of the research project, whereas it is a disadvantage in the sense that I was myself unable to experience what went on prior and after the job interviews and thus grasp at the context in which the job interviews occurred. In order to accommodate for this lack of contextual awareness, which is undoubtedly important for a study that investigates practical reasoning in strategically relevant work, I chose to collect other sources of data that would provide me with the context of what is going (LeBaron, 2008a). I have therefore had both informal conversations and formal interviews with managers in both NorCo and DrillCo about their job interviews. I have also collected material artefacts including interview guides and job descriptions. Furthermore, I have collected textual materials that go beyond the single job interview including online news articles, internal news, and presentations of HR strategy.

In total I have collected the following amount of audio and video recordings of job interviews:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Data type</th>
<th>Amount</th>
<th>Total length (hours)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Audio</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>6.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Video</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>19.41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>42</strong></td>
<td><strong>26.39</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A detailed overview of all audio and video data is provided in the appendix (Appendix A: Audio and Video Data Overview). However due to the fact that I attended data collection in an open manner and wanted the interviewers to document whatever came in their direction, a number of job interviews for various positions have been collected ranging from entry-level roustabout positions in NorCo to managerial positions in DrillCo.
The central matter of the data collection process obviously has been the job interviews themselves. However, a host of textual material has also been collected. In total 102 pages of documents were collected from online sources as well as being provided by the interviewers (see Appendix B: Documents Overview). These comprise rig organograms, interview guides, job ads, news articles, applicant CVs, tests, ability scores, and strategy presentations and documents. For the sake of anonymity, none of these data are reproduced in this dissertation. Appendix B does provide a very brief summary of their contents.

6.2.1.1 Reflections on the use of Audio and Video Recordings

Both audio and video recordings constitute the data used in this research. Video recordings have been present in conversation analytical studies for a number of years and especially pioneered by C. Goodwin (1980, 1981) and M. H. Goodwin (1980) but have later become more and more common (Aoki, 2011; Broth & Mondada, 2013; Glenn & LeBaron, 2011; LeBaron & Jones, 2002; Mondada, 2013a; Streeck, 2013). This influx of multimodal conversation analytical research is largely based upon the recognition that conversational phenomena are intertwined with multimodal ones (Deppermann, 2013), imploring researchers to use video recording and justifiably leading them to see audio recordings as inferior. As Sidnell (2010, p. 22) argues, video “allows the conversation analyst to examine not just talk but also the use of body and especially gaze and gesture in the organisation of interaction”. This possibility is lost with audio recordings.

My own justification for relying on audio recordings is based on necessity and adequacy. My data collection process involved gradually gaining the trust of my informants. This meant first observing, then audio recording, and finally convincing the informants that video recording was needed. Video was therefore not available from the get-go of the project. Due to the sensitivity of the data and the difficulties of gaining access, data collecting opportunities had to be followed when they presented themselves. Initially this meant audio recording, and only later, video recording. Furthermore I believe audio recordings are adequate for the present purposes due to the fact that they constitute less than one third of the entire corpus. Thus, video data is more prominent. In this way, audio recordings supplement video. In some instances, the analyses’ primary focus is on the properties of talk and, though video would
provide more contextual information, this does not degrade the information in the audio recordings. It is my conviction that not having access to the context and embodied behaviour in some of the data does not detract from the meaning of what is said. The same conversational phenomena can be observed in both audio and video recordings.

6.2.2 Ethical Considerations

Care should be taken in any kind of study involving people and making recordings of them in sensitive situations. This first of all means informing them about the research, how their recordings are being used, who has access to them, and allowing them the opportunity for opting in or out. In all cases with the organisations I conducted research in, I obtained verbal consent from managers and interviewers enabling me first of all to audio record and later to utilise video equipment. Due to the fact that I was geographically displaced from the locations where data collection was taking place, I was myself unable to personally inform applicants about the project to a degree I was satisfied with as well as being unable to obtain their consent personally. To get around this problem, I designed an electronic information booklet describing all aspects of the research including its topic, how the data is collected, stored, and used, pointing out that the research was removed from the interests of the participating companies, and that their participation did not affect the result. In agreement with HR in the respective companies, this pamphlet was distributed via email whenever they invited an applicant for an interview. Upon arriving, applicants were asked to sign a document in order to opt in and indicate whether or not their recording could be used beyond research purposes, e.g., in education. Unfortunately, due to the busy schedule of the interviewers and HR personnel, the agreement document was on occasion forgotten, meaning they only obtained verbal consent from the applicant. In these cases, the recording and research project is a topic of discussion at the beginning of the job interview. The data in these instances is only used for research purposes and nothing else.

Another integral part of addressing ethical considerations is ensuring the anonymity of the informants (Mondada, 2013b). This was also a precondition of opting in on the recordings. All information that could lead to the possible identification of applicants, interviewers, the employing company, as well as prior
employers has thus been concealed and anonymised in transcripts. This means that names of individuals and organisations have been changed and replaced by pseudonyms. In cases of personal pronouns, I have strived to keep the number of syllables the same. This has not been possible with regards to organisations in a way that would not compromise their identity due to the fact that these constitute some well-established names. For this reason, I have been more permissive with replacement names not being the exact same number of syllables.

6.2.3 Data Transcription and Analysis

The three analytical chapters that follow the present one were sparked by some preliminary investigations or what Psathas (1995, p. 45) calls “unmotivated looking” at sequential patterns in the interactions that stand out (LeBaron, 2008b). Seeing as the job interview largely consists of questions and answers (Akinnaso & Ajirotutu, 1982; Button, 1992; Llewellyn, 2010) my interest revolves around this practice and how it relates to practical sociological reasoning. In relation to question-answer sequences, there are a number of phenomena that one can choose to investigate. The phenomena that came to my attention during the initial process of looking through these kinds of sequences are micro-strategies that include presuppositions and the moralization of applicant employment circumstances, the use of professional membership categorisation, and the interviewers’ orientations towards applicants and questions. Presupposition refers to the underlying presumptions or logic of a social action, for example, with regards to the ease of asking a certain question (Stivers, 2011). Membership categorisation refers to how people, in conversation, categorise themselves and other social actors as members of particular categories (Sacks, 1974; Schegloff, 2007a). The final chapter considers a particular kind of recurrent interview question known as trait question, which in the HR literature is criticized for having low predictive capabilities in terms of calculating applicants’ job performance (Eder & Harris, 1999). Here, orientation is taken to mean the fact that interviewers orient towards applicants as capable of reporting their own traits and the interviewers’ own questions as being able to elicit them.

Once identified, the question-answer sequences are transcribed in order to capture the detailed and complex nature of their production. This is done by utilising conversation analytical transcription conventions (Hepburn & Bolden, 2013a;
Jefferson, 2004). An overview of these is located in Appendix C: Transcription Conventions. Since a lot of the data is Norwegian, it has to be translated. This means using a three line transcription as Hepburn and Bolden (2013a), where the first line comprises the original transcription in Norwegian, the second a word-by-word translation including various grammatical information, and the third the final translation. For conveying grammatical information, I use a selection of grammatical abbreviations and rules for translating (i.e. “The Leipzig Glossing Rules,” 2015). The abbreviations I use are reproduced in Appendix D: List of Standard Grammatical Abbreviations.

6.3 Presentation of Organisations

The data utilised in this thesis stems from, as mentioned, two organisations: NorCo and DrillCo. Both companies are drilling contractors. What this means is that each company conducts drilling operations that enable the extraction of oil from the seabed for their customers. The present section provides descriptions of each of these companies in order to contextualise the data collected in each company. As will be evident, the data pulled from NorCo represents, for good reason, a more coherent data set than that from DrillCo. Each company will now be considered in turn.

6.3.1 NorCo

NorCo is a subsidiary of a large international conglomerate. It is, like DrillCo, a drilling contractor and specialises in deep sea and harsh environment drilling with decades of experience. Its main strategic goal is becoming a major asset in the conglomerate (TD1 NorCo Strategy1). When data collection commenced, NorCo had just initiated a growth strategy (TD2 NorCo Newsletter). This had repercussions for NorCo’s labour demands. It was estimated that a four-figure number of new hires needed to be made alongside completing competency building and succession planning. To support the growth strategy, an HR strategy (TD2 NorCo Strategy) was created. This explicates the manner in which the growth process was to be handled from an HR perspective. This includes branding the organisation in order to attract the right applicants from relevant industries, growing the amount of available talent

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1 Refers to ethnographic document
through internal and external recruitment, building the competencies of those already hired, and introducing new hires to NorCo practices. The majority of the positions being made available are entry-level positions. Higher-level positions also need to be filled, including rig managers.

The majority of the job interviews I gained access to are entry-level positions. As can be seen from the detailed data in the appendix, interviews (1)SCA3–(1)SCA20 are roustabout positions. This type of entry-level position is at the lower end of hierarchies aboard drilling vessels, comprising the most mundane tasks, including cleaning and washing the deck, loading and unloading cargo, painting the hull, and other more specialized tasks associated with other types of positions if needed (TD1 & TD2 NorCo Job Description). The requirement for such a position is to have a certificate within a technical discipline, a basic education in drilling and well technology, the wish to pursue a career in drilling, as well as holding various health and safety certificates. Applicants for this type of position come from various backgrounds, including a drilling background, but also as warehouse operatives and mechanics (information from job interviews).

The selection process is organised accordingly (TD1 NorCo Selection): Applicants respond to a job ad and apply online. In doing so, they also have to do logic and personality tests. Acceptable applicants are selected by HR representatives and invited in groups of 10 to an interview day at the company. Here, they are given a presentation on the company and the job they are applying for. Applicants are then required to do another logic test to verify the results of the first. They are then interviewed individually by one of three interviewers, and at the end of each interview the interviewer discusses the results of the tests. Interviews are conducted using interview guides (TD1 NorCo Interview Guide) that the interviewer generally keeps close to but spontaneously digresses into other matters. Within up to two weeks applicants receive a positive or negative answer. Positive answers means they are invited to go offshore aboard a drilling platform for a trial trip. Their immediate manager then evaluates them to provide the HR representative with a hiring recommendation.

Since the job interview is the primary focus here, considering the interview guide in greater detail is necessary. The guide outlines eight topical frameworks. The first is a general welcome whereby the interviewer makes an introduction to the purpose of the interview and him-/herself. The next phase of the interview deals with
the applicant’s motivations for applying to NorCo, whereas the subsequent phase revolves around the CV. The purpose here is to determine whether or not the applicant is in control over his or her career. In order to determine this, the interviewer needs to ask applicants to motivate their career choices, account for gaps in CVs, and what they learned. In the following phase, applicants are required to account for their aspirations for the future. Afterwards, the interviewer turns to the applicant’s various competencies, including their decision-making capabilities and conflict management skills. According to the guide, the interview concludes with feedback on the tests the applicant has done followed by some additional information questions. As a last point in the interview guide, the interviewer needs to determine the applicant’s fit with NorCo according to three points during the interview. One has to do with career control, whereas the other two involve an international mind-set and being proactive. The outline of the interview guide above is not to insinuate that the interviewers follow it in every single detail.

A senior HR manager who has worked for NorCo a number of years, conducts all the interviews recorded for the present purposes. This is not to say that he is the only one conducting the interviews. In fact, job interviews (1)SCA1 and (1)SCA2 are both for HR positions who would later come to conduct interviews themselves. However, due to them being in training, I was restricted and only allowed to record the interviews of the senior HR manager.

6.3.2 DrillCo

DrillCo is a much younger company than NorCo that nevertheless has become a significant actor in the industry (TD3 DrillCo Strategy). Similar to NorCo, DrillCo extracts oil in deep-water and harsh environments with the overall vision of becoming customers’ first choice (TD2 DrillCo Strategy). DrillCo’s headquarters are located in the United Kingdom with multiple regional offices around the world (TD3 DrillCo Strategy). In NorCo it was straightforward to locate the job interviews in a wider strategic context and there was great similarity between the positions being interviewed for. In DrillCo this represents an issue for a number of reasons: 1) the company was not growing on the same scale of NorCo. Therefore there was no access to any large body of interviews for one type of position, meaning the only data I could get access to was interviews for positions that became available as time progressed,
and 2) for this reason, the positions are much more varied, ranging from entry-level positions to managerial positions. Finally, 3) there was no coherent approach to how job interviews are handled. It is unclear whether there is an HR strategy at all.

One HR manager generally handles the roustabout interviews in NorCo. DrillCo on the other hand relies on board interviews where the hiring manager(s) and an HR representative are usually present. Hence, there are usually two or more interviewers present. This lack of structure is due to the fact that the DrillCo practitioners do not rely on job interviews. However, both HR and hiring managers have questions they usually ask the applicants and things they do during the interviews. Thus, it is possible to observe similar steps in the DrillCo interview as those elicited by the structured interview questions in NorCo. Interviewers will present themselves and the company, ask applicants to talk about their motivations, CV, qualifications, skills, aspirations, and so on. But differently from NorCo, they will also spend some time talking to the applicants about the job opportunity for which the interview is held. Thus, the interviewers end up spending a great deal of time talking compared to the interviewer in NorCo.

6.4 Summing Up

The present chapter accounted for the microethnographic methodology and the methods used for the present investigation into job interviews. This included an account of the history of Microethnography, the need for ethnographic investigations, and its methods for empirical investigations and data collection. The way in which microethnographic methods have been used for this investigation were then accounted for. As Microethnography analysis necessitates audio and preferably video recordings, I needed to collect real-time data of actual job interview conduct. In total, more than 40 recordings have been gathered in a number of different locations, with the primary locations being NorCo and DrillCo. Collecting actual data comprising peoples’ conduct and work involves serious concerns for privacy. For this reason, all data has been anonymised. Apart from this, the warrant for using both audio and video were considered. Since data involving job interviews is incredibly difficult to obtain access to, using audio data is more determined by necessity rather than quality. Not using the collected audio data would undermine the efforts it has taken to obtain
the data, both on the part of me as a researcher as well as the informants who have provided me with their time and confidence. Data analysis focuses particularly on question-answer sequences, meaning these have been identified in the data. These are then, as will be evident from the ensuing analytical chapters, analysed with regards to presuppositions and stance. The final analytical chapter focuses on a particular kind of recurrent question known as trait questions, which in the HR literature is claimed to have a low predictive ability towards the applicant’s performance. In the relevant chapter, I explore the interactional reasons why this might be the case.
CHAPTER 7

EMPIRICAL INVESTIGATIONS OF MICRO-STRATEGIES

In this chapter, I have included three separate analyses. My intention with each of these is to empirically investigate job interview practices and, thereby, explicate the micro-strategies social actors use for practical reasoning. Section 7.1 thus investigates the micro-strategy of using norms to moralise applicants’ employment behaviours, and the circumstances. Section 7.2 considers the micro-strategy of using professional membership categories to document applicants’ professional identity and membership. The final micro-strategy is a practical solution to a practical challenge: how interviewers can obtain knowledge about applicants’ traits. This micro-strategy constitutes the interviewer’s orientation towards his/her questions as being able to elucidate the applicant’s knowledge, skills, and abilities and the applicant being reliable in accounting for his or her own traits. The explication of each of these micro-strategies goes toward answering the main research question, concerning how interviewers and applicants achieve the interview as a form of strategy work.

The explication of the micro-strategies is contingent on the social and interactional context in which they are produced. While the interviewer pursues the professional agenda of evaluating the applicant for employment purposes, the fact that this is done via talk in interaction means other phenomena are crop up and become relevant for analytical considerations. One of these phenomena is that of intersubjectivity (Schutz, 1932, 1953), which I will show is a central aspect of the
moralisations that I focus on in Section 7.1. Intersubjectivity encompasses the practical problem of how two social actors establish a mutual understanding. In Section 7.2, the ethnomethodological concept of membership competence (Garfinkel, 1967) becomes relevant, which denotes a social actor’s competence for engaging with, or being in accordance with, other members of his or her membership community. The final issue concerns what I call self-reports of applicants’ traits in Section 7.3. The reason for highlighting these particular areas is that these highlight the intrinsically social and interactional aspects of the job interview and how they affect the interviewer’s pursuit of the professional agenda. Hence, it is shown how they job interview is not exclusively a selection tool but very much a social practice.

The consequence of this is also that various social issues can develop. Interviewers and applicants might not rely on the same norms, meaning potential misunderstandings become relevant, as well as highlighting concerns of intersubjectivity in the job interview. Furthermore, interviewers and applicants can have different levels of membership competence, meaning that some applicants are less proficient in interacting with the interviewer. Finally, the issue concerning self-reporting is that, interactionally, this practice in most cases involves only accounting for traits without further substantiation. The issue here is that this might have implications for the validity of the traits.

As I mentioned in Chapter 1, each empirical investigation has its own research question that I intend to use to address distinct aspects of the overall research question. The individual introductions to the analyses account for each of the empirical research questions. Finally, Section 7.4 concludes the entire chapter, summarising its arguments and answering each individual empirical research question.

### 7.1 Presuppositions and the Morality of Employment

In *Nicomachean Ethics*, Aristotle (2004 trans. Ross) relates the concept of morality to that of virtue, and considers it a capacity of humans for doing good or bad, right or wrong. The relationship between morality and language is deep-rooted, but has often been a prescriptive one. Early thinkers on the morality of language mainly advised ways of conversing properly, discouraging interruption and encouraging speaking in
turn, for example. As Bergmann (1998, p. 280) notes, modern science has weakened the connection between language and morality and thus enabled the study of each in its own right. As a result, it became legitimate to study not only how conversing properly ought to be done, in a prescriptive sense but, in a descriptive sense, to investigate how in conversation social actors orient towards various moral matters.

Ethnomethodological and conversation analytical research has been especially preoccupied with the topic of morality as a form of common sense knowledge, and investigating this by researching the norms of talk in interaction. For example, researchers have investigated the morality of epistemics in interaction (cf. Stivers et al., 2011), describing the moral organisation of asking questions (Stivers, 2011) and giving advice (Shaw & Hepburn, 2013). In this sense, morality and language are inescapably intertwined. The conversation analytical understanding of morality can be conceived as follows:

"[Morality] is not simply to be connected with norms (or values). Instead, moral statements or moral judgments become insofar as for the actors questions of respect and disrespect are involved […] This means, in a generalized mode, that whenever respect and approval (or disrespect and disapproval) for an individual are communicated, a moral discourse takes place (regardless of the feelings and thoughts of the participants" (Bergmann, 1998, p. 286).

The necessary implications of such an understanding of morality is that, whenever a person through his or her talk conveys an attitude towards another person or his or her circumstances that is approving or disapproving, then, moralising is taking place in the interaction. Disapproval or approval and respect or disrespect are contingent on norms and values (Stivers et al., 2011, p. 19) and, in everyday life, social actors infer these through their common sense knowledge, and reciprocally assume others do the same (Schutz, 1953).

Morality is an intrinsic property of social interaction and social life as constituted by presupposed norms and values (Bergmann, 1998). Social actors are hard pressed to avoid moralizations in their activities. This is no different for job interviews, despite practitioners’ efforts towards objectivity in their practices.
(Campbell & Roberts, 2007, p. 246). In the excerpt below, for example, the interviewer topicalizes the applicant’s previous employment:

IN: Okay so my first question Pete I've noticed you have worked for three different employers until two thousand thirteen.

AP: Yes.

IN: If you can just tell us what's going on there? Or why did you move from one employer to another?

Here, the interviewer considers the applicant’s employment records to be abnormal. This is observable first in his numeration and characterisation of them as “three” and “different” and relation to the year “two thousand thirteen [2013]”. Second, it is in his ensuing turn that his moralization becomes evident. Here, he idiomatically wants the applicant to tell him and the other interviewers “what’s going on there”, thus constructing the employment situation as a circumstance where something is amiss. Third, he makes the applicant accountable by asking him “why did you move from one employer to another?” In so doing, the interviewer presupposes norms concerning, to put it simply, what are a normal number of employers to have, and how often it is normal to move between them.

The purpose of the present chapter is the analysis of presupposed norms and values constituting the moral discourse of the job interview. Presupposition is thus a key concept in this dissertation, but far from a new one in the disciplines of sociology, philosophy, and linguistics. The presupposition of an utterance is a proposition that renders the utterance meaningful:

“Example 1. ‘Saylor killed Taylor’ presupposes that ‘Taylor is dead’.”

(Rescher, 1967, p. 521)

In order for the utterance “Saylor killed Taylor” to be meaningful or true, its proposition “Taylor is dead” must be presupposed by both the utterer and the recipient. However, as noted by Cooper (1966), we also make use of presuppositions when making moral judgments. Whenever social actors moralise, they simultaneously presuppose norms and values about states of affairs. Thus, by moralising what constitutes an abnormal number of employers to have had within a certain time frame, the interviewer presupposes as a precondition of his moral judgment a norm about what constitutes a normal amount of employers to have had.
By taking an ethnomethodological and conversation analytical standpoint, I am interested in the presupposed norms and values that job interviewers and applicants orient to during their talk in interaction regarding the topic of employment, which is often recurrent in the interviews. In analysing these, the present chapter drills into what can be appropriately titled the morality of employment by answering the following research question: “How are presupposed norms about employment oriented to by interviewers and applicants?” Answering this question thus constitutes a first effort towards analysing the methods for practical sociological reasoning in job interviews, eliciting the norms and values that interviewers and applicants rely upon during their interactions. Being that, as Bergmann (1998) argues, morality permeates language use, presupposed norms and values could have been investigated in relation to any other topic relevant to the job interview. But for the sake of simplicity and coherence I have decided to restrict my focus to the topic of employment.

The chapter is structured as follows: In Section 7.1.1 I present analyses of five cases wherein the morality of employment becomes relevant. Each case shows a distinct instance of how norms are presupposed by the interviewer in moralizing the applicant’s employment circumstances and by the applicant in justifying them. Following this, in Section 7.1.2, the chapter concludes and considers the implications.

### 7.1.1 The Morality of Employment

The analysis is structured around five cases that exhibit moralising discourse in job interviews. Each case shows how, concerning the topic of employment, both interviewers and applicants presuppose different norms. Case I is thus an example of how the decision to apply for the job the applicant is being interviewed for is susceptible to moralization under certain employment circumstances. Case II comprises the example used in the introduction and thus considers how the number of employers an applicant has had is subject to moralization. Cases III and IV relate to the internal coherence between employment and the moral aspects thereof. Lastly, Case V analyses the moralization of the temporal aspects of applying for the job being interviewed for. All cases consist of analyses of the interviewer’s initial moralizations followed by the applicant’s responses thereto. Thus, the analyses explicate the norms and values that both interviewers and applicants presuppose when they discuss the topic of employment in the job interview.
7.1.1.1 Case I: Presupposed Norms about Job Searching and Employment

The first case of this analytical chapter is found in a job interview for an HR recruiter position at NorCo. This interview was one of the first recorded for this dissertation and is therefore an audio recording. Despite the obvious downfalls of an audio data source, this segment provides some important insights concerning the morality of employment and how morality is used as a resource for practical reasoning by the interviewer in the respective case. Before reading the excerpt, it is worth knowing that the applicant (AP) at the time of the interview works in an administrative position in a bank. However, she stated early on in the interview with reference to the HR position she is applying for that she wants to work with people, thus inferring that that is what one does as an HR recruiter. This motivation thus constitutes one of the reasons for her current application to NorCo. At the time of the interview, she is enrolled in an HR related course that she confesses her current employer is paying for early in the interview. Around the six-minute mark, the interviewer (IN) topicalizes the applicant’s occupational and educational circumstances:

Excerpt (1) – (1)SCA1:AUD@05:42 – Paid Studies

1 IN: Veldig bra.
   Very good
   Very well

2 AP: ↑M[m.

3 IN: ↑↑Mm.

4 (1.5)

5 En ting som eg s-
   A thing that I p
   A thing that I p-

6 (0.7)

7 jah altså ikke stusset litt på men eg s- som
   Yeah well not puzzle.pst little on but I th- that
   yeah well not puzzled over a little but I th- that

8 eg s- (. ) gjerna vil >veta litt om;
   I th- ADV want know.inf little about
   I th- would like to know a little about

9 IN: .h[h Asså arbeidsgiveren din har betalt studiene
   ADV employer.sg.def your.2sg has paid study.pl.def
   So your employer has paid the studies

10 AP: [Mm_

11 ↑↑Mm.=

12 IN: =for deg.
   for you.2sg
   for you

13 AP: ↑Mm.
And then you're on your way to apply yourself in a way out of there.

Out Yes
Out Yes

How What do they think of that
How how th-thinkPRS they about that

No
No

A number of characteristics in this sequence are interesting in analysing the interviewer’s orientation towards the applicant’s circumstances as morally problematic. The first characteristic worth noting is his attempt at being objective and unprejudiced. Note here l. 5-8, where a particularly interesting repair occurs in the pre-expansion (Schegloff, 2007b) to his question in l. 21. Repair is defined as the “temporary suspension of a turn or sequence in progress in order to attend to an emergent trouble of some kind” (Hutchby & Wooffitt, 2008, p. 59). What we see in l. 5 is that the interviewer says “En ting som eg s-/” where at the end he produces a cut-off which immediately halts speech production (Hepburn & Bolden, 2013b). This is then followed by a 0.7-second pause after which he performs a self-initiated repair (Schegloff et al., 1977) in l. 7. Here, he changes “jah altså ikkke stysset litt på men”/“yeah well not puzzled over a little” to “men eg s- som eg s- (.) gjerna vil >veita litt om;<”/“but I th- that I th- would like to know a little about”. Here, he changes his wording from something that he was puzzling over to something he wants to know more about. The difference is stark in that by puzzling over something one infers that the source of puzzlement constitutes something suspicious, out of the ordinary, or confusing. On the other hand, referring to the source as something that one would like to know a little more about is a less prejudicially-laden formulation.

In l. 9-12 and l. 15-16, IN explicates the source of his puzzlement and interest by juxtaposing fact 1) that her employers are paying her studies with fact 2)
that she is searching for a new job. First, IN asserts “Asså arbeidsgiveren din har betalt studiene”/“So your employer has paid the studies” (l. 9), which he completes in l. 12 with “for deg.”/“for you”. AP confirms this assertion (l. 10 and l. 13) after which IN asserts in a juxtaposed manner “Å så du (.) på vei å søke deg (0.3) på en måte ↑ut (0.2) derifra.”/“And then you’re on your way to apply yourself in a way out of there” (l. 15-16). With the juxtaposition of these two facts, which AP has confirmed, and in the light of IN’s previous repair, it is clear that IN orients towards the moral problematics and dilemma of the circumstances. On the one hand, the applicant is receiving a considerable financial benefit from her employer, and on the other hand, she is leaving them. Thus, that which is presupposed here is a norm regarding the loyalty of employees towards employers in situations where one party is receiving a substantial reward from another party. Usually, when employers build on the competencies of their employees, it is with the long-term prospects of the organisation in mind. Thus, investing in competencies is directed towards retaining the employee and building their commitment (Beardwell, 2007a, p. 176; Phillips & Gully, 2015b, p. 30). Looking to find a new job can therefore be seen in a human resource sense as breaking the reciprocal loyalty of the employee investment that the employers have strived to create by investing in their employee. This becomes especially evident in his question, “Køss te- tenker de om det?”/“What do they think of that” (l. 21), which implies their knowing and thus capability to approve or disapprove about her looking for new employment. Evidently IN implies, as is also evident from his laughter, that her employers are unlikely to condone her looking for a new job. In this regard, it is obvious that IN’s interest is not in what AP’s employers actually think, because there is no way of knowing. Rather, it is done in an empathetic sense, to learn what she thinks on the matter of breaking her reciprocal commitment to her employers which they have aimed at establishing.

Additional evidence for this analysis can be found in the analysis of what happens next in AP’s responses in excerpts (2) and (3) below:

**Excerpt (2) – (1)SCA1:AUD@05:59 – Paid Studies**

20 AP: 
21 IN: [Køss eh HehHeh [Køss te- tenker de om det? How høw th-think.prs they about that 
What What do they think of that 
22 .h
In her immediate SPP in l. 25, AP answers, “Men det vet de: hhHehHehHeh”/“But they know it” followed by laughter, thus implying the employer’s knowledge of and consent to her finding a new job. By laughing, she orients towards the laughable nature of her employers knowing and being fine with her looking for a new job, given the circumstances of paying for her education. That this is an attempt at humour is evident from the fact that she changes her answer, negating their knowledge in l. 26 and later in l. 30. Thus, she confesses acting without their knowing. This is before she then provides an account of her reasons for doing what she is doing, which therefore exhibits an orientation towards IN’s question as an inquiry into her justification for going behind their backs. Her response is rather lengthy, so here I focus on but a small portion of it:

Excerpt (3) – (1) SCA1:AUD@06:11 – Paid Studies

36 AP: Æhh Sansynnlligheten for en (0.2) sti- HR stilling Chance.SG.DEF for a pos- HR position The chance for a pos- an HR position

37 hos oss er liten fordi at det har vært mye with us is small because that it has been much
with us is small because there has been a lot of

38 utskiftning.
replacement
turnover

39 (0.5)
40 IN: Ja_
Yes
Yes

128
And I

What shall we say is little on what shall we say am a little on that I

don’t want to wait for

The main gist of her justification is that the chances of her obtaining an HR position with her current employer are slim because “det har vært mye utskiftning.”/“there has been a lot of turnover” (l. 37-38) in their HR department. Thus she implies the unlikeliness of there being new positions in the HR department within the foreseeable future due to recent turnover. She then, in l. 46, states that she “ikkje har lyst te å venta”/“don’t want to wait”. Furthermore, recall that previously in the job interview, she talked about her desire for working with people. What she is then presupposing here, which morally justifies her looking under the delicate circumstances topicalised by the interviewer, is that her own professional desires lie elsewhere than what her employer currently can provide for her. Furthermore, given her explication of the circumstances in the HR department, she infers in effect that her education is meaningless in her current position.

In conclusion, what norms are presupposed in the present case? With regards to how the interviewer topicalizes the applicant’s circumstances and asks her for an account, he presupposes a norm about employee loyalty towards the employer which becomes especially relevant in situations where the latter receives a substantial financial benefit from the other. The applicant in response to the interviewer’s topicalization and question presupposes another norm concerning following personal professional aspirations as a justification for searching for new employment under the given circumstances.
7.1.1.2 Case II: Presupposed Norms about Number of Employers

The presupposed norms in Case 1 revolved around employee loyalty towards the employer in circumstances where the latter seeks to change employment. In Case 2, an applicant’s previous decisions to change his employment, as opposed to the present decision (in the previous case), are moralised by an interviewer (I') in DrillCo. By presupposing what is and is not a normal number of employers to have had, I' moralises the three changes the applicant has made between employers in the past.

The present case also exemplifies how moralization is related to textual documents.

The position being interviewed for is as a roving subsea superintendent. This position involves being a rotating technical expert overseeing projects aboard drilling rigs.

**Excerpt (4) — MID7:VID@01:13 — Three Different Employers**

1  I': {0|kay_ .hh So my first question: Pete i've {noticed
2       {((#1))
3       {((#2))
4     you have worked
5     (0.5)
6   for three different employers >until
7     two thousand thirteen<?=
8  AP:
9     =Ye[s_]
10  I'
11     {If you can: just tell us what's going on there?
12        (0.3) (    ) (0.2) Or why did you move from one-
13     {((#3))
14     employer to another;
15       {((#3))

Characteristics that infer I’’s moralization of AP’s employment decisions are as follows: In l. 1-5 I’ topicalizes AP’s employments. He does this first of all by looking at and touching AP’s CV placed on the table in front of him (see frame #1). Upon his production of “noticed” (see frame #2), I’ then returns his gaze to AP after which he states that AP has worked for what he characterises as “three different employers >until two thousand thirteen<?” which AP subsequently confirms. Similar observations were made by Glenn and LeBaron (2011), who found interviewers will visually display an orientation towards the source of their information in order to have it confirmed by the applicant. The present excerpt mirrors this pattern. The characterisation is crucial in the numeration “three”, the characterisation “different”, and the temporal allocation “two thousand thirteen” for the norm he is presupposing, and which becomes evident in the questions he produces following AP’s confirmation (l. 6). In l. 7 I’ idiomatically asks AP to tell him and the other interviewers “what’s going on there?” with “there” anaphorically referring back to the three different
employers. By stating that something is “going on” he is inferring that something, which is referred to by the adverbial “there”, is amiss. Thus, by referring back to what he has previously and explicitly numerated, characterised and temporally localised as something where something can be said to be going on, he orients towards having “three different employers until two thousand thirteen?” as being out of the ordinary.

I\(^1\) then adds the question “Or why did you move from one employer to another?”, which is interesting for a number of reasons: first of all, I\(^1\) assumes that AP has agency in the matter and that changing between employers was his decision. Secondly, I\(^1\)’s choice of wording with regards to “move” suggests that the changes are not necessarily a career step up but hierarchically flat in moving from “one employer to another;”. Being that I\(^1\) is inquiring into the “why” of the changes between employers, he is at the very least inquisitive as to the motivational sources underlying AP’s decision to change jobs. Arguably, this question is a repair upon the prior one as he heads it with the conjunction “Or” that in this context seems to directs AP’s attention to an alternate focus, namely why he decided to change work. Thus, I\(^1\) repairs the prior question, which insinuated that AP’s employments were problematic, to an alternate formulation that focuses on AP’s reason for changing jobs. In making this repair, I\(^1\) repairs the potentially face-threatening question to a less problematic one.
The issue with regards to AP’s reason for changing his jobs is also what the applicant himself picks up on in his ensuing answer:

**Excerpt (5) — MID7:VID@01:25 — Three Different Employers**

10 AP: Okay,
11 (0.7)
12 Well i was uh working for (.) u::h
13 (0.8)
14 _asian¹ i think (0.2) until

((10 lines omitted during which AP accounts for when he was working for his prior employers))

24 ➔ I left them: because i was _offered a: (.) >shore_
25 based position;<
26 (0.9)
27 #u:h# (0.2) from royal³ (0.3) in: korea_,
28 I¹: "Ye[ah_"
29 AP: ➔ [.hhh Which was in my my view a step forward from
30 a rig based #u:h#
31 (0.7)
32 subsea engineer. .h[hh I mean #i:# i had worked
33 I¹: [Mhm_
34 AP: onshore with asian before_

((Eight lines omitted during which AP accounts for a period of time he worked onshore for Asian on a rig construction project. This

² Asian is a pseudonym for a previous employer of AP.
³ Royal is another employer pseudonym.)
project he followed until completion, which also meant going offshore for a significant amount of time))

42 AP: continuity to the project...h But after that year was
43 over (. ) #i: fe:lt# (0.4) #u:h# (0.2) "you know" (0.4)
44 wanted to move on so (0.2) i was looking for a shore
45 based position. hhh

46 I1: ["Mhm"

47 AP: Asian didn't have anything that (0.2) was: suitable so
48 and royal (. ) #u:h# (.) did #so:# i moved to there
49 (0.2) "uh uh in korea",

50 (0.4)

51 I1: Yeah so: w- w- why do you wanna (. ) change your
52 current job at the moment.=

It can be observed that AP prefaces his answer with an “Okay,” (l. 10). Okays can, sensitive to the context in which they occur, be ascribed different functions. Here, arguably, it is used for displaying an orientation towards the prior sentence as having been heard, and marking a transition into the relevant next action (Beach, 1993), which presently is producing an answer. He then transitions into what Schegloff and Lerner (2009) call a “well-prefaced response”. As pointed out by Pomerantz (1984a), “well” can in some sequential environments be an indicator of disagreement although this is not the case here. As Schegloff and Lerner (2009) argue, “why-questions” (which is what I1 produces l.8-9) prefer responses that are headed by “because”. In the excerpt above, a “because” is not produced until l. 25. By process of elimination, the well-prefaced response does not mark an incipient disagreement. Rather, what can be observed is that the applicant starts accounting for when he was working for the prior employers (omitted from the transcript) before providing the justification, “because i was offered a: (. ) >shore based position;<" (l. 24-25). Thus, the well-prefaced part of his turn at talk is more likely used to indicate that he performs a slight digression before attending to the core matter of I1’s question.

In getting to the crux of his response to I1’s question, he attends to one of the employment changes which he characterises as being “in my my view a step forward from a rig based #u:h# (0.7) subsea engineer”. In designating that this change is something that, in his view, constitutes a step forward, he presupposes that shore-based positions are valued over rig-based positions. A rig-based position would mean spending weeks aboard drilling rigs, whereas a shore-based position would constitute a more regular kind of job. He then accounts for the fact that he, while working for Asian, did have something that could be considered a shore-based position that nevertheless encompassed a significant amount of offshore work, and only lasted a
short period (see l. 42-43). After this he states he “wanted to move on so (0.2) i was looking for a shore based position” (l. 44-45). Again, here he invokes the presupposition that a shore-based position constitutes a progression. In l. 47-49 he then states that his former employer, Asian, could not accommodate his wishes, but that another employer, Royal, could. Thus, the reason he chose to change from Asian to Royal is based upon the fact that the latter could provide what the former could not in terms of the presupposed more desirable position. Seemingly, 1\textsuperscript{1} accepts this response as sufficient since he changes the topic to AP’s more recent reasons for applying for the current job.

In conclusion, the norms and values that are invoked by the interviewer and applicant through their presuppositions about employment are as follows. By topicalizing and characterising the applicant’s employment circumstances in the way that he does, and orienting to them as circumstances where something can be said to be going on, the interviewer presupposes a norm concerning the number of employers an applicant has had, and changing between them. Thereby, he also infers that the applicant’s moving between them constitutes an abnormality that is amiss. Especially his lexical choice of “move” to characterise the change between employers suggests that he does not see the changes as career steps or at the very least as moves that make sense, which is also evident in the fact that he is inquiring into the applicant’s underlying motivation for making the changes in his career. In meeting and responding to the interviewer’s moralization of his employment decisions, the applicant invokes a presupposed value that shore-based positions are preferred over rig-based ones. Furthermore, it was also shown how the interviewer repaired his question from a potentially face-threatening one to one that is more neutrally formatted.

7.1.1.3 Case III & IV: Presupposed Norms about Employment Records

By employment record I mean the chronological organisation of a person’s work history in a textual document, i.e. a curriculum vitae, usually sent to prospective employers by an applicant in order to present an overview of the work he or she has held. The present section shows what norms exist constituting what an interviewer or applicant the logical coherence between employments in terms of the applicant’s motivations for changing jobs. Cases III and IV are thus considered in unison as they
represent two parallel examples of how presuppositions about employment are invoked, oriented to, and what their interactional consequences are. Both cases are from the NorCo interviews and involve in the interactional sense a topicalization of the applicants’ employment records, wherein the interviewer orients towards some illogicality in the relationship between the employments that the applicants have held.

In the NorCo corpus, the topic of employment is key. The interview guide for example explicates that interviewers ought to evaluate the career logicality and the degree to which the applicant is in control of the events in the career (TD1 NorCo Interview Guide). It is evident from the analyses below that the interviewer presupposes certain norms regarding what job changes are supposed to be motivated by, which informs how he sees logical coherence between employments. Case III exemplifies a situation where the applicant does not share this norm, which results in a lack of understanding on part of the interviewer due to the fact that the applicant relies on another presupposition that is seemingly incoherent. Case IV, on the other hand, is less problematic as the applicant’s answer is produced within the premises of the interviewer’s question.

7.1.1.3.1 Case III: Presupposed Norms about Career and Income

The applicant in the interview from which Excerpt (6) below stems is currently working as a warehouse operative at a medicinal company, Medico. Previously, she has worked as a process operator at a pulp and paper company, Scandi Woods. A few minutes into the interview, when the applicant’s employment history and her various responsibilities as an employee are usually discussed, the interviewer topicalizes a circumstance in the applicant’s employment history; namely, that she has worked for Scandi Woods. In doing so, the interviewer differentiates the two employments, thus revealing his presupposed norms concerning what motivates change in the employment records:

**Excerpt (6) - (1)SCA5:VID@08:59 – From Process to Warehouse Operative**

1 AP: So it’s very precise
2 IN: Yes and then were you process_operator at
3 ▲Ja; .h Å så ▲var du prosessoperator hos Medico. That is, you were a process_operator at Medico.
scandi woods? scandi woods Scandi Woods

AP: ↑Ja_ Yes Yes

IN: Det jo litt annet øhh It ADV little different That’s a somewhat different

yrke hade eg nesten sagt? profession had I almost said
profession I had almost said

AP: Ja(.) det er det_ Yes that is it Yes that it is

IN: Ka: ka bragte deg fra scandi woods What what brought you from Scandi Woods

IN: {til til medico, to to medico to to Medico

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In l. 1, of the transcript AP concludes a previous topic, the skills required for her current job as a warehouse operative at Medico. In overlap with her conclusion, “Så: det veldig nøye_”/“So it’s very precise”, IN breaks eye contact with her by shifting his gaze to her CV on the table and produces an audible in-breath. The in-breath occurs at a place of transition relevance (Schegloff & Sacks, 1969), which is a
location in the stream of talk where a speaker change is potentially relevant. This means that he is preparing for a speaker change to occur. However, IN does not take the conversational floor due to the fact that AP continues her talk. In effect, IN does not produce anything until after AP has completed her turn at talk with her conclusive assessment, where he produces an agreeing “↑Ja;”/“Yes” (l. 3). The significance of this is that already at this point IN is orienting towards the applicant’s CV as being the source of the next topic. He does this by looking at the CV (see frame #1), while saying “Å så ↑vær du prosessoperator hos scandi woods?”/“And then you were a process operator at Scandi Woods”. Eye contact is established here at the very end of this turn constructional unit (Schegloff, 2007b) in overlap with “scandi woods?” (see frame #2). Thereby, the interviewer displays verbally and through the use of his gaze that the source of his information comes from the CV. This turn constructional unit carries an upward intonation contour, thereby proffering a confirming response by AP, which she produces in l. 5.

What then becomes interesting are the exchanges from l. 6-12. Here, it can be noted that IN characterises and categorises her previous job as a process operator as slightly different from her current one. He says, “Det jo litt annet ø:::h (0.8) yrke hadde eg nesten sagt?”/“That’s a somewhat different profession I had almost said”, whereby he implies that her work as warehouse operative is categorically different from being a process operator and vice versa. In other words, he is implying an inherent illogicality in the relationship between the two by presupposing a norm that employments ideally display some coherence. Interestingly, he apologetically adds “hadde eg nesten sagt?”/“I had almost said”, by which he seems to orient towards his characterisation as potentially socially problematic.

A similar orientation does not seem to be present in AP’s ensuing agreement with his characterisation (l. 9), after which point a significant pause occurs (l. 10). The pause is long enough to infer that something in the conversation is not quite the way it should be at this moment (Pomerantz, 1984a). What I am arguing here is that IN treats AP’s agreeing response as an insufficient reaction to his prior turn at talk. This analysis is further substantiated by the fact that during the pause IN moves his hand towards AP’s CV (see frame #3), thus returning to the subject matter at hand. At the beginning of IN’s post-pause turn at talk, both participants are thus perceptively orienting towards the CV (see frame #4). In other words IN is returning to the CV again and directing AP’s attention to it. He then produces the question, “Ka: ka bragte
deg fra scandi woods til til medico,”/“What what brought you from scandi woods to to medico”. In frame #5, which overlaps with “fra”, IN extends his hand. This embodied display visually demonstrates the progressive steps of going from one thing to the next, i.e. from Scandi Woods to Medico. Thereby, he is visually indicating a stepwise transition through his use of gesture. The verbal and embodied behaviour coinciding in l. 11 is thus testament to the fact that IN’s interest is not merely in characterizing her previous employment as different than the current one, but that the progression from one to the other is incongruent and that it needs to be accounted for. It is also in this sense that IN’s orientation towards characterizing AP’s previous job as different is a matter of some delicacy, because he would risk insinuating that she had not given sufficient thought to her employment or career.

Thus, the norm that is being presupposed here by the interviewer is one that revolves around the fact that employment changes ought to make sense. The question, then, is in what way it should make sense. The interviewer’s orientation towards this as a matter of some delicacy, and AP’s lack thereof, is evidence of what I aim to show are two entirely discrepant orientations towards what the motivation for moving between employments is presupposed to be. On the one hand, IN presupposes that occupational changes should be motivated by career, as represented by conscious career-oriented choices, whereas, on the other hand, AP presupposes employment to be a matter of simply having a job and a steady source of income (focusing on IN’s turns in l. 42, and 52-55 and AP’s turns in l. 49-50):

Excerpt (7) - (1)SCA5:VID@09:25 – From Process to Warehouse Operative

13 (0.5)
14 AP: .mt .hhh Nei altso så jeg ville jo forsette
   No well so I wanted ADV continue
   No well so I did want to continue

15 inneførhh ø:hm
   within

16 (0.2)
17 .mt .hh Ja sånn som ø:h hhh Hva ska jeg kalle
   Yes like so    What shall I call
   Yeah like so    What shall I call

18 deht, .hhhhh #Eh# (0.2) HH
   it
   it

19 (0.5)
20 farma- Altså industri da generelt,
pharma- Well industry generally
pharma- Well industry then generally

((Twenty-four lines omitted during which AP talks about her motivation to work in industry before accounting for her looking for a job. At the time only Medico were hiring, so she applied there and got a job. IN inquires into whether or not she had completed her apprenticeship during her time at Scandi Woods. AP disconfirms stating she only worked there for a year.))

44 AP: \( \rightarrow \) {Så:: Men så vart det jo lagt ned,
So But then was it ADV shut down
\}

45 IN: \( \rightarrow \) .hhh {Det ble lagt ned [ja, Selføl- Derfor
It became.PST placed down Yes Of cour- Therefore
It was shut down yes Of cour- Therefore
\}

46 AP: \{Ja:_
Yes
\}

47 Ja_= Yes
Yes

48 IN: =For ( ) det var nemlig øh det klarte eg ikkje
Because it was really that managed I not
Because that was really I did not manage quite to

49 helt å så se [ka som bragte deg fra
quite to then see.INF what that brought you.2sg from
see what brought you from process operator
\}

50 [Åh nei_ No
Oh no

51 prosessopera[ter å (over til .hhh [til ti:1
process_operator and over to to to
over to to to
\}

52 AP: \{Okay_
Okay
\}

53 \( \rightarrow \) [Det vart jo: lagt
It was ADV shut
It was shut

54 ned da så: hh jeg var jo på en mate tvung-
down then so I was ADV on a way forc-
down then so I was in a way forc-

54 \( \rightarrow \) tvinget til å (0.4) finne en ny jobb, (0.3) [Så_
forced to fInd.INF a new job So
forced to find a new job so

55 IN: \{Ja.
Yes

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AP’s turn at talk in l. 44 proves to be a significant turning point in this sequence for IN’s understanding of the relationship between AP’s employments in Scandi Woods and Medico. In l.44, AP asserts that Scandi Woods was shut down. Upon receiving this information, IN overtly marks it as a change of state in his knowledge (Heritage, 1984a) by saying, “Det ble lagt ned ja, Selføl- Derfor”/“It was shut down yes Of co-Therefore” (l. 45). This change of state is not only marked verbally but also through his embodied displays. Note that during the turn in l. 45, the two still have eye contact (see frame #1). However, upon learning the underlying reason for AP’s change from Scandi Woods to Medico and verbally marking it, he breaks eye contact with AP and looks to her CV, which means that her gaze follows (see frame #2). Moreover, IN drops his hand to the table creating an audible thump in the video. In the turns following, IN reiterates (l. 48-51) his lack of understanding of what caused the change from Scandi Woods to Medico. Here again, he visually marks the transition using his embodied behaviour including hand gestures and changing posture (see frames #3 and #4). Thereby, he again multimodally orients towards AP’s transition between employments.
As argued previously, the reason why confusion emerges at this point has to do with the fact that both IN and AP presuppose different norms in terms of what motivates transitions between employments. Evidence for AP’s presupposition can be found in l. 54, where she states that she was “vinget til å (0.4) finne en ny jobb,”/“forced to find a new job”. At this point it is relevant to consider the fact that AP lives in a fairly small and rural area of Norway, meaning that jobs are far from plentiful. This means that having a steady job is more important than having a job coherent with the tenet of career progression. That IN attends to the issue of AP moving from Scandi Woods to Medico based on a different presupposition is overt in l. 56-60, where he states that he had trouble understanding “karrieresteget”/“the career step” between the two. Seeing the transition from Scandi Woods to Medico as a career step involves seeing it in terms of progression, i.e. the next job following the current job should ideally be a step up or at least a logical transition in some regard.

In sum, Case III exhibits an example where the interviewer and the applicant presuppose two different norms regarding the logical coherence between employments. The interviewer, on the one hand, presupposes that employment changes are based on the norm of career progression. Thus, each new employment
should ideally serve as a step up for the employee. Contrarily, the applicant presupposes the norm that an income is necessary, and that employment serves that function. The two presupposed norms result in a problem of understanding for the interviewer due to the fact that he, as dictated by the interview guide and his own presupposition regarding career, is searching for the career motivation that the applicant oriented to in applying for the job. Her motivation, as mentioned, is not informed by career aspirations but by the need for a steady income.

7.1.1.3.2 Case IV: Presupposed Norms about Career and Income

Case IV carries many of the same traits as Case III. However, a different problem of understanding seemingly occurs. In a similar manner as previously, the job interviewer topicalizes something that sticks out and is incoherent with the remainder of the applicant’s employment history. The interviewer topicalizes something he has noticed in the applicant’s CV, six months the applicant spent on land during an employment history that otherwise revolved around the fishing industry, which is typical for the village the applicant hails from. As a result of employment histories ideally constituting coherence and logical progression, this becomes a topical issue in the interview. The main difference between this and the prior case is the response that the applicant produces, which contextualises the six months on land as a temporary digression from the fishing industry and a financial necessity, forced upon him by various contextual circumstances. This is seemingly coherent with the interviewer’s presupposed norms, as will be shown on the ensuing pages.

Excerpt (8) - (1)SCA16:VID803:28 – Six Months on Land

1 IN: {Men du har hatt et år på:øh
But you.1SG have.PRS had a year on
But you have had a year on
{#1

2 (0.8)

3 et halvt år
a half year
A half year

4 AP: {#M[m_#
{#2

5 IN: {på på land og som tømrer,
on on land og som tømrer
 on on land also as a carpenter
In topicalizing the six months that AP has had on land (l. 1), IN orients visually to AP’s CV through his gaze (see frame #1). A self-initiated repair (Schegloff et al., 1977) occurs in l. 3, where IN changes his temporal estimate that AP has had an entire year on land as a carpenter to half a year. AP confirms the repair in l. 4 verbally with “#Mm_#”, and by nodding (see frame #2). In overlap with AP’s confirming response IN adds “på på land og som tømrer,”/“on land also as a carpenter”, thereby completing the topicalization of the employment circumstances he wishes to discuss. IN’s use of “og”/“also” arguably adds that not only has AP worked on fishing vessels at sea but that he has had additional work on land as a carpenter. This can be interpreted as a preliminary orientation by IN towards the six months as a carpenter as something added or extra. Again, we see AP confirming the facts that IN has recounted for him in topicalizing the circumstances. Like the previous case, it can also be observed that IN orients towards AP’s previous answer(s) as insufficient, which is evident from the fact that a considerable pause (l. 7) occurs between AP’s two turns (l. 6 and 8). Arguably, IN is here leaving room for AP to produce a more substantial answer.
However, AP does not produce more talk and, thus, IN resorts to producing a question in l. 10. Here, IN asks “Koffer det liksom plutselig;”/“Why that like suddenly”. This question indicates that he thinks this employment sticks out in AP’s employment records. Using and emphasising the anaphoric reference “det”, referring back to AP’s six months on land, and the adverbial “plutselig”, IN orients towards AP’s working as a carpenter as out of place and unexpected given his employment record, which previously revolved around working on fishing vessels. Thus, like in Case III, we see IN orienting towards the apparent illogicality of the relation between the applicant’s employments. However, in the present case there is no overt orientation by the interviewer towards career, neither in the way that he designs his topicalization of the employment circumstances nor in what happens in the ensuing interactions, unlike in the previous case. However, in that case, there was a misunderstanding, which necessitated overt treatment. The present case, on the other hand, is one where there is no misunderstanding. Therefore it is arguably safe to assume that the same presupposition regarding career is relevant for the present case. This can first of all be observed from the fact that AP produces an answer that is arguably coherent with this presupposition.

The talk that follows from IN’s question (l. 10) is, compared to the previously investigated case, unproblematic because it is coherent with what AP presupposes regarding employment. As can be observed, AP produces a response which is immediately accepted by IN, showing no orientation towards a lack of understanding with regards to the relationships between AP’s employments on onshore and offshore. AP’s answer revolves around some basic arguments for taking the carpenter job:

**Excerpt (9) - (1)SCA16:VID@03:37 — Six Months on Land**

((Two lines omitted containing a false start))

13 Nei:uhm (.) .mt (0.3) Eg hadde snakk med et nytt No I had talked with a new
No I had talked to a new

14 rederi då om å få meg ny jobb?
company then about to get-INF me new job

15 (0.5)
16 IN: Ja
Yes

Yes
(0.5)

18 AP: Å det skulle eg få?
And that would I get
And that I would get

19 (0.3)
20 Men jeg måtte vente;
But I had wait
But I had to wait

21 (0.6)
22 → hh #Èhm# (0.3) Å så: Å samtidig så var
And so And meanwhile then was
And so And meanwhile there was

det en anna en (0.3) .mt kom der et
it an other an came there a
another

23 det en anna en (0.3) .mt kom der et
it an other an came there a
another

24 byggfirma
construction_company
inn i bildet också som
into the picture also who

25 lurte på om eg hadde lyst å (0.3) .hhh å
wondered on if I had desire to
wondered if I wanted to to

26 jobba med dei,
work with them

27 IN: Mm,

28 AP: → .mt Å: så hadde eg akkurat fått meg (0.2)
And then håd I just gotten
And then I had just gotten

29 .hh øh hadde gifta [meg å det_
wondered if I wanted to to
had married me and that

30 IN: [°Ja°
Yes

31 (0.8)

32 AP: Etablert meg litt så:
Established me little so
Established myself a little so

33 (0.8)

34 IN: ↑Ja_
Yes

35 (0.4)
36 AP: Det ble
It became
That became
The first thing that AP states during l. 13-20 is that he had been in contact with another fishing company about a job, which he had been guaranteed but had to wait for. In stating that he had to wait, he implies that the waiting period would have left him without a steady income. Thus, very early on in the interview, AP construes the six months as an intermezzo in order for him to be able to continue working in the fishing industry. In this sense, he establishes the coherence between his employment previously in fishing, the digression to carpentry, and then back to fishing. Furthermore, what he justifies the digression with is lack of a steady income. The opportunity of a job to fill the temporary gap is therefore welcomed. This connects with another part of his argument that a carpentry company invited him to come and work for them as a carpenter (l. 22-26), which in turn, again, connects with an argument presented in l. 26-29, wherein he articulates that he had just married. Here, he presupposes that a marital engagement comes with additional financial obligations. The job he was offered by the carpenter company and that he ended up taking, as is evident, is thus justifiable because it resolved a temporary financial pickle. The presupposed norm that AP thus relies upon closely resembles that of the applicant in the previous case in terms of seeing employment as a source of income and changing between employments as resolving the continued need thereof. The difference between the two cases is that in Case IV the change is only temporary, and is therefore fully coherent within the remits of what IN presupposes concerning career. That AP’s answer is accepted by IN can be supported by his slight topical shift in l. 39. Here, IN changes the topic to the issue of AP not wanting to work within carpentry anymore. In other words, there is no overt orientation by the interviewer towards AP’s career digression as not making sense or being incoherent. AP’s
response therefore seems to be produced in a manner coherent with IN’s presuppositions related to career.

In sum, Case IV constitutes another example concerning the presuppositions of employment. Here again, we see the interviewer orienting towards previous circumstances in the applicant’s CV as being illogical, where the motivation for changes between employments are not immediately inferable. The present case is less problematic due to the fact that the applicant’s answer contextualises six months of carpentry work as an intermezzo in an otherwise coherent employment record constituted by fishing work. In doing so, in the same way as the applicant in the preceding case, the applicant transitions between employments as a means of sustaining a source of steady income rather than as a career step, as the interviewer would presuppose.

7.1.1.4 Case V: Presupposed Norms about Qualifying for a Job

In the previous cases, the norms are in terms of job searching, number of employers, and coherence in employment records. Case V also has to do with employment records but considers them in relation to a more normative presupposition revolving around the temporal relationship between obtaining a qualification needed for the job and actually applying for the job. In Excerpt (10) below, the interviewer problematizes the temporal duration that occurred between a qualifying exam related to a drilling course that the applicant obtained some years prior to when the interview was conducted, when he finally applied for a roustabout position at NorCo in 2014.

In topicalizing and problematizing these circumstances, IN creates a juxtaposition wherein he presents the circumstances and then calls for an account by the applicant. In his topicalization, IN orients towards the temporal gap as being unusually large. Thereby, he presupposes in a normative sense that once qualified one should under normal circumstances apply for the job. The way in which AP responds is by invoking another qualification criteria, which he, at the time, did not possess.

**Excerpt (10) – (1)SCA6:VID@01:37 – Drilling Class**

```
1 IN:  \{Ø::h Borrekurs  totusinnå\}svv (0.2)  \{[å
Drilling_class two_thousand_and_seven and
Drilling_class two_thousand_and_seven and
\}
#1
\}
#2
```
så s:ø:h me er her først nå, then we are here just now
then here we are just now

(0.2)

Yes
Yes

(1.5)

Køffer det, Why that
How come

For jeg hadde vel ikkje fagbrev
Because I had not skilled_worker_certificate
Because I did not have a skilled worker certificate

på den tiahh.=
at that time
at the time

=Nei=
No

=Nei så det tok eg i mai >i fjor<?
No so that took I in May in last_year
No so I completed that in May last year

Tok fagbrev mai i fjor
Took skilled_worker_certificate May in last_year
Completed skilled worker certificate last year

ja.
Yes
yes

{=Ja_
Yes

(0.4)

Som anleggsmaskinfører.hh.
As construction_machine_operator
As construction machine operator

Ja
Yes

(1.5)

.mt .hh

(2.2)

{.h}hh
22 AP: [Å det vel først etter det det har på And it well first after that it has on And it is only after that it has in

23 en måte løsnet det ( ) a way solved it a way solved it

24 IN: .hh Ja_ Yes Yes

25 AP: .hja Yes Yes

26 IN: → Det jo:åh .hh det et kvalitets {ø:h eller det eth It ADV it a quality or it a It is obviously a quality or it is a

27 kvalifikasjon[skriterie (.)] [nå så de:t qualification_criteria now so that qualification criteria now so that

28 AP: [Ja_ [.hja Yes Yes Yes Yes
While looking at his interview guide (see frame #1), IN topicalizes the aforementioned drilling class AP partook in by saying “Børrekurs totusinnå↑syv”/“Drilling class two thousand and seven” (l.1). Looking up at AP (see frame #2) he then adds “å så:xø:h er me her først nå,”/“And then here we are just now” referring to AP’s application for a roustabout position and his participation in the job interview they are now engaged in. The interview takes place in 2014 so some time has passed since AP took the qualifying class. In juxtaposing the time of completion and the present day, IN orients towards the time it has taken for AP to apply for a relevant position as being unusual. Thereby, he presupposes a norm concerning the time that should ideally pass between qualifying and applying for a job. Again, under normal circumstances, one would usually apply for the job once qualified. This
analysis is especially transparent in IN’s use of the adverbial “først”/“now”, whereby he displays an orientation towards the application as taking a long time to transpire.

After IN’s problematization, AP confirms (l. 5) the circumstances IN has made relevant. This is followed by a 1.5-second pause in l. 6, which is a lengthy pause to have between turns. In l. 7, the interviewer then asks “Koffer det,”/“How come”. In his asking why, it can be argued that he orients towards AP’s confirming response in l. 5 as an insufficient answer. This is also evident from the fact that he allows additional space for AP to expand, as is observable in the preceding pause. It is also in asking this question and making AP accountable that IN orients towards the circumstances recounted and problematized in l. 1-3 as being unusual. AP answers “For jeg hadde vel ikkje fagbrev på den tiahh.”/“Because I did not have a skilled worker certificate at the time”. By providing not having a skilled worker certificate as an explanation for the gap, AP implies that it is a requirement for the roustabout position, and, thus, a necessary thing to obtain before being able to apply. IN confirms this fact later (l. 26-27), which is also information that is available in the job description (TD1 NorCo Roustabout Description). In l. 11 AP finally adds that he obtained his skilled worker certificate last year, presupposing his eligibility for applying for the position. Thereby he in effect nullifies the norm IN presupposed and made relevant, as he moves his obtained qualification to a temporally adjacent position in the year prior to when the interview is being held.

In the immediately ensuing turn, IN recycles part of AP’s answer, “Tok fagbrev mai i fjor ja.”/“Received skilled worker certificate last year yes”. Upon recycling AP’s response, IN orients towards the CV and starts taking notes (see frames #3 and #4), thus treating this information as file-able. The note-taking continues across the next few turns and pauses at l. 21, where IN starts orienting towards AP’s CV. IN and AP obtain eye contact again once the interviewer iterates that a skilled worker certificate is a criterion for the job (l. 26-27). Following this, IN changes the subject. Both through his note-taking and his iteration of the condition of the certificate, it can be argued that IN accepts AP’s explanation as sufficient in accounting for the gap in the timespan between the course and the application.

In conclusion, Case V has shown the norms of job qualification, in terms of the temporal span between obtaining the qualification and applying for the job one is now qualified for being presupposed by both the interviewer and applicant. The interviewer makes this presupposition relevant in relation to the applicant’s qualifying
course, which the applicant nullifies by introducing a second qualification criteria: obtaining his skilled worker certificate. This he obtained the year before the interview was held. Thereby, his actual qualification is moved to a temporally closer spot to the job he is applying for. Thereby, the applicant is adhering to the requirements of the norm that the interviewer is presupposing.

7.1.2 Summing Up

The present section summarises this chapter, whose purpose has been to answer the following research question: “How are presupposed norms about employment oriented to and used by interviewers and applicants?” The analyses of the present chapter has shown both interviewers and applicants rely on subjectively presupposed norms about issues related to employment. In the ethnomethodological sense, the presupposed norms are micro-strategies for practical sociological reasoning, in that they enable reasoning about matters that are by disposition oriented to as being either normal/abnormal, loyal/disloyal, wrong/right, desirable/undesirable, and so on. On the part of the interviewer, a presupposed norm regarding a preference for career-motivated occupational decisions as opposed to financially driven choices enables reasoning in instances that conflict with what is preferred. Thereby, they enable the interviewer to moralise the applicants’ employment circumstances. However, applicants themselves also possess presupposed norms that they rely on for the purpose of reasoning about their own employment-related circumstances, as well as to justify them towards the interviewer’s moralization. Therefore, the matter of the moral nature and presupposed norms is not solely a matter of subjective understanding but of intersubjective negotiation. Indeed, one of the cases showed how the interviewer and applicant relied on different understandings of what motivated decisions about occupational change. Here, the interviewer presupposed that choices were made on the basis of an orientation towards career, as opposed to the applicant, who clearly displayed an orientation towards financial necessity. These two different subjective orientations were both introduced into the interaction and lead to a problem of understanding on the part of the interviewer. This then lead to an intersubjective negotiation wherein the nature of the applicant’s occupational change became a topic of the interview. The same phenomenon can be found in other cases, although they do not necessarily result in a problem of understanding. Rather, the interviewer displays
his subjective understanding and moralises the applicant’s employment circumstances. The applicant subsequently justifies these circumstances. In addition, I have documented a number of instances where the interviewer oriented towards the matter of moralising the applicant’s employment circumstances as potentially problematic. Interviewers hesitate and pause, repair their talk and provide reformulations of questions whereby they often downgrade the potentially morally problematic aspects of the applicants’ employment circumstances and behaviours. What this shows is that the job interview is not simply about evaluating the applicants but rather a complex social situation wherein the potential socially sensitivity of the topic is managed.

7.2 On the Problematics of Professional Categorisation in Job Interviews

Strategic staffing is not just about employing people for work. Rather it encompasses the acquisition, deployment, and sustainment of “the right number of employees with the appropriate talents to effectively execute [company] strategy” (Phillips & Gully, 2015b, p. 24). This is done by planning and analysing the company’s labour needs and then identifying the kinds of employees that are needed in order to effectuate the strategy (Torrington et al., 2002). From a recruitment and selection perspective, this means locating those individuals and assessing whether or not these individuals are capable of doing what the company needs. In other words, this means that in practice the process of recruitment and selection is conducted in order to be able to identify “those [applicants] who can do the job and those who cannot” (Beardwell, 2007b, p. 214). In this regard the job interview plays an important role in enabling the interviewer to conduct this identification.

Identifying the individuals who can perform the job being interviewed for and those that cannot refers to the practice of categorisation. Categorisation is a fundamental social practice that involves the common sense and taken-for-granted knowledge about the social world through which social actors characterise themselves and each other (Sacks, 1974, 1992a). For example people can be characterised as:
“[Men], women, Protestants, minors (or miners), professors, goalies, adults, cellists, conservatives, vegetarians, merchants, murderers, 20-year olds, cat-people, technicians, stamp collectors, Danes, ‘looky-loos’ (people who slow down on the highway to stare at an accident), lefties (both politically and handedly), surfers, Alzheimers, etc.” (Schegloff, 2007a, p. 467)

A job interviewer making the categorisation ‘person who can do job’ versus ‘person who cannot do job’ is no different than the person categorising someone as a ‘Dane’, or any other categorisation, for that matter. In the job interview, the categorisation of someone as a person who can do the job versus someone who cannot are really the kinds of categories that end up determining the outcome of the job interview in terms of which applicant is hired.

However, one might with good reason suspect that there are other categorisations being made relevant when hiring a person for a given job: is the person an engineer? Is s/he someone with a managerial interest? Does the person want to work in drilling, maintenance or engineering aboard the drilling rig? These kinds of considerations and questions are important, especially when considering the issue of staffing an organisation with the long-term prospects of the applicant in mind. This is particularly the case for entry-level positions where the applicant is being employed at the bottom of the organisation in order to progress through the ranks in their career. Identifying what the applicant’s interests are is therefore important in order to determine which direction the applicant is likely to veer in within the organisation. If one assumes that determining whether or not an applicant can be categorised as a person with an interest for drilling or maintenance aboard a drilling rig is just a matter of asking him or her, then that assumption would be right. I have decided to call this kind of categorisation ‘professional’, as it mainly revolves around categorising the applicant according to professional disciplines such as those mentioned above. However, practice shows that doing so is not unproblematic.

What I aim to do in the present chapter is show how professional categorisation works in the job interview and how it is subject to interactional issues. By ‘interaction issues’ I mean those instances where the task of categorising the applicant is subjected to problems, such as the applicant not knowing. In order to show this and explain the source, I wish to introduce the concepts of ‘member’ and
‘membership categorisation’ before proceeding to the analyses. Both the conceptualisations I offer are ethnomethodological in their understanding.

The notion of ‘member’ is one of the most important ones in Garfinkel’s (1967) writings and relates closely to that of ‘competence’:

“I use the term “competence” to mean the claim that a collectivity member is entitled to exercise that he is capable of managing his everyday affairs without interference. That members can take such claims for granted I refer to by speaking of a person as a “bona-fide” collectivity member” (Garfinkel, 1967, p. 57 n. 8).

What Garfinkel here explains are the connections between ‘a member’, ‘a collectivity’ and ‘competence’. In order to be considered a member of a collectivity, the member must be competent in terms of possessing and using the common sense and taken-for-granted knowledge pertaining to the collectivity in question. Consider job interviewers. They are members of their respective organisations and possess a great deal of taken-for-granted knowledge concerning their organisation and its structure, the industry, their work and so on. This is consequential for how an interviewer might categorise an applicant. Thus, the interviewer can seek to categorise an applicant as ‘a drilling person’, ‘a maintenance person’, or ‘an engineering person’, and successively be able to determine in which area of the organisation the applicant is likely to pursue a career. This then links straight to the concept of membership categorisation, which is the social practice through which people invoke and ascribe themselves and others to categories in situ during interactions with each other (Housley & Fitzgerald, 2002).

It may seem a straightforward task in job interviews to ascribe the applicant to a particular category. But, as I aim to show, the practice is wrought with problems, due to issues concerning membership and membership categorisation being largely an unconscious practice that interviewers engage in whether they want to or not. Categorisation arguably serves a practical purpose in the organisation. Indeed, as the NorCo interviewer admits in one of his interviews, NorCo’s labour demands aboard drilling rigs are greater in some areas than others. Thus, they have a greater need for people who wish to work in drilling. These are some of the considerations that I wish
to consider when answering the following research question: “How are professional categories used and oriented to by interviewers and applicants?”

In order to answer this research question, I am focusing on sequences of talk in interaction wherein the interviewer enquires into the applicant’s professional aspirations, and the ensuing interaction developing from questions such as the following:

**Excerpt (11) – SCA11:VID@05:15 – The Path**

1

IN: Offshore. (. ) Kor ser du veien liksom Offshore where where see you road.DEF.SG like Offshore Where do you see the road  

2

(...) gå? Ka: Har du sett deg någe mål. go.INF What have you set you some goal What Have you set yourself some goal?

The chapter is organized according to the sequential structure of these kinds of sequences: in Section 7.2.1, I will be analysing the ways in which interviewers formulate questions regarding applicants’ professional aspirations. This section is divided into two parts, where the first considers instances where these questions are produced without issue. The second subsection then considers examples where questions are imbued with orientations towards other categories. Subsequently, the ways in which applicants respond to these questions are considered in Section 7.2.2. This section is divided up into different subsections considering, first, cases wherein the applicants’ responses transpire without issue and then, secondly, instances where interactional issues emerges in the interaction. In Section 8.3, the chapter is concluded with a discussion of the implications of the findings.

### 7.2.1 Asking Questions about Professional Aspirations

The purpose of the present section is to show and describe how interviewers design and linguistically format their questions concerning applicants’ professional aspirations. There is some variety in terms of how this is done, which in turn suggests that the academic recommendation (e.g. Beardwell, 2007b) to ask applicants the same questions, i.e. that the question posed to applicants ought to have the same linguistic design, is not realised in practice, even though the interviewers know the recommendation. This is a finding that has also been documented in recent reviews of
the job interview literature, in terms of interviewers not relying on structured interview guides (Macan, 2009, p. 207).

How, then, are questions concerning applicants’ professional aspirations subject to different linguistic designs? I have argued and aim to show that interviewers display an agenda in categorising applicants according to their professional aspirations. Where all of the questions that I will look at achieve this, some of them also do other things as well. What I will show is that other membership categories that are not related to professions can be oriented to in during the formulation of these kinds of questions. Before showing this, the questions in their simplest form will be considered.

7.2.1.1 Formulating the Question

In Excerpt (12), IN makes the issue of the applicant’s professional aspirations relevant by first producing the word “Offshore” (l. 1) as a single turn constructional unit. The unit carries a falling intonation and is followed by a slight pause. By producing “Offshore”, he topicalizes the act of going to work aboard an offshore drilling rig and thereby makes relevant a range of related professions, positions, roles, responsibilities, activities, and so on, that pertain to the work that goes on. As is evident from his successive question, “Ko:r kor ser du vejens liksom (. ) gå?”/“Where do you see the road sort of go?” orients towards the career trajectory that AP envisions for himself aboard a rig. So, in first having topicalized “Offshore”, IN uses the interrogative adverb “Where”, indicating an inquiry into a place, position, or direction, i.e. where AP sees the path going. IN shows a clear orientation towards, first, the roustabout position as a temporary position and, second, that employees seek other positions aboard the rig. It is also in this sense that his second question, “Har du s:att deg någe mål”/“Have you set yourself some goal?”, is framed. Linguistically, it is formatted as a Yes/No-question, but may function in this case as a Wh-question (Schegloff & Lerner, 2009). Given the context of the question’s production, “måll”/“goal” infers in the metaphorical sense to AP’s ultimate professional aspiration in terms of what position he would like to occupy in the future.

How categorising applicants according to their professional aspirations is handled practically is by asking the applicant in what division aboard the drilling rig s/he would want to pursue a career:
In Excerpt (12) IN makes the issue of the applicant’s professional aspirations relevant by first producing the word “Offshore” (l. 1) as a single turn constructional unit. The unit carries a falling intonation and is followed by a slight pause. By producing “Offshore” he topicalizes the act of going to work aboard an offshore drilling and thereby makes relevant a range of related professions, positions, roles, responsibilities, activities, and so on that pertain to the work that goes on. As is evident from his successive question, “Ko:r kor ser du veien liksom (. ) gå?”/“Where do you see the road sort of go?” orients towards the career trajectory that AP envisioned for himself aboard a rig. So in first having topicalized “Offshore” IN uses the interrogative adverb “Where” indicating an inquiry into a place, position, or direction, i.e. where AP sees the path going. IN shows a clear orientation towards, first, the roustabout position as a temporary position and, secondly, that employees seek other positions aboard the rig. It is also in this sense that his second question, “Har du s:att deg någe mål?”/“Have you set yourself some goal?”, which is linguistically formatted as a Yes/No-question but may function in this case as a Wh-question (Schegloff & Lerner, 2009). “mål”/“goal” given the context of the questions production, infers in the metaphorical sense AP’s ultimate professional aspiration in terms of what position he would like to occupy in the future.

The question in Excerpt (13) is similar apart from a few minor differences. Certain things about the way in which IN formats his question suggest that he
presupposes that the applicant knows which direction he wishes to head offshore. Note first of all the statement of the fact “>Nå kjenner jo du Mathias”/“So you obviously know Mathias”. This statement is made in reference to a current employee at NorCo and a common acquaintance of both the applicant and IN. As is inferable, Mathias works aboard a drilling rig in an unspecified position, arguably above that of roustabout and roughneck. This statement of fact is important for what IN states next, namely “så du har< gjenta tenkt deg ut en en ønh rettning videre”/“So you have thought out a direction onward”. So because A² knows Mathias, IN presupposes AP has some idea of what profession he wishes to pursue aboard the drilling rig if he starts offshore. Additional evidence for this analysis lies in IN’s use of the adverbial “gjerna”/“probably”, whereby he orients towards AP as likely to have thought out a career trajectory. Furthermore, the conjunction “so” ties back to the previous statement of fact concerning AP’s acquaintance with Mathias, thus making it a cause of AP knowing his professional aspirations aboard the drilling rig. That the question is made in reference to the act of going to work offshore is different in the present excerpt compared to the previous, where IN topicalized it immediately in an isolated turn constructional unit. Here, in l. 3, IN provides the topicalization in a conditional clause where he states “hvis du starter offshore”/“if you start offshore”. In this sense, the work division and the opportunities relevant to going offshore are topicalized at the end of IN’s utterance.

I am not claiming that either of these questions are the kinds of questions that should be asked in order to identify an applicant’s professional aspirations. What I am arguing, however, is that the previous questions are the most basic forms of these questions in my data, especially when comparing them to similar questions that are imbued with categories. The previous questions, thus, constitute the simplest linguistic format aimed at categorising applicants according to professional categories. It is worth noting that the categories themselves are not explicitly referred to in the questions. Rather, they are inferred from the question. As the next section will show, however, an interviewer inquiring into professional aspirations can display an orientation towards other membership categories that consequently come to affect how the question is posed.
7.2.1.2  Imbuing the Question with Other Categories

Having shown how questions concerning applicants’ aspirations can occur in their simplest forms, I now turn to instances where other complex social issues become observable in the interaction. To show this, I will rely on data from DrillCo showing two instances of questions asked regarding the applicants’ professional aspirations. The instances are from two interviews for the position as technical assistant. This is an entry-level position with mainly administrative responsibilities. A total of three applicants were interviewed for this position. However, I will restrict my focus to how the questions regarding professional aspirations are posed in two of these instances. In DrillCo, questions regarding professional aspirations are related to which general direction, i.e. ‘management’/‘operation’ or ‘engineering’/‘technical work’, the applicant is interested in pursuing. This fact will become clearer on the ensuing pages. However, there are some considerable differences in terms of how the interviewer formulates the question concerning the applicant’s professional aspirations that can be related to their respective social circumstances by the interviewer making membership categories such as ‘recent graduate’ and ‘jobless applicant’ relevant.

7.2.1.2.1  The Recent Graduate

Before reading the excerpt below, it is crucial to make a few notes on the applicants in order to fully understand what is going on. The applicant (A₁) being interviewed in Excerpt (14) is a European citizen who graduated only a few days prior to the interview from a UK based business school having completed a Master’s Degree.

Excerpt (14) – EU2:VID@20:44 – CEO is okay too

1   I¹:  So- (.) so what kind of
2       (1.1)
3       career do you
4       (1.0)
5       foresee in a company like this.=What is it that (0.2)
6       your ambitions are if i may ask.=I know you're (.)just
7       {starting your career now and basically the whole
8       }{(Frame #1)}
9       world is open, What is What are you hoping for (0.4)
10      eventually (0.2) will happen_
11      (1.1)
12     A¹:  CEO is okay too hopefully But there'll probably be
13     I¹:  [Yeah_  
14     }{(Frame #3)}

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It can be observed that I\textsuperscript{1} orientates towards A\textsuperscript{1}'s status as a recent management graduate. What is most evident in this sequence is that I\textsuperscript{1} is posing not just one but a total of three open-ended questions in various reformulations: the first in l. 1-5, the second in l. 5-6, and the third in l. 8-9. What is interesting in terms of categorisation in all of these questions is that I\textsuperscript{1} assumes that A\textsuperscript{1} is someone who aspires to have a career. In the first question, “So- (.) so what kind o:f (1.1) career do you (1.0) foresee in a company like thisis.=”, I\textsuperscript{1} makes an explicit reference to the concept of career and thereby orientates towards A\textsuperscript{1} being someone whose professional life involves progression. The crux of I\textsuperscript{1}'s question obviously is that A\textsuperscript{1} should indicate in what area they want to make a career. This is particularly evident from I\textsuperscript{1}'s use of the interrogative pronoun “what”, whereby he enquires into the specifics of the “kind o:f (1.1) career” A\textsuperscript{1} sees for himself. The other questions I\textsuperscript{1} poses also show an orientation towards A\textsuperscript{1} as someone who has professional aspirations for the future and is capable of progressing. The second question, “What is it that (0.2) your ambitions are if i may ask.”, likewise assumes that A\textsuperscript{1} has ambitions for his work life in terms of the area or type of work that he would like to perform in the future. Similarly, “What is What are you hoping for eventually (0.2) will happen_” also shows an orientation towards A\textsuperscript{1}'s future plans, here referred to using the gerund “hoping”.

In terms of membership categorisation relying on concepts such as “career” or “ambitions” and the activity of “hoping”, these are what the literature calls category-tied predicates and category-bound activities (Sacks, 1974; Stokoe, 2012). Both “career” and “ambitions” are predicates that I\textsuperscript{1} assumes are relevant to A\textsuperscript{1}. Being category-tied predicates means that ascribing them to a person makes him/her an incumbent of a particular category. The category itself is not explicitly referred to in Excerpt (14) by the interviewer. However, it is possible to make a deduction as to what kind of membership category a person pursuing a “career” and possessing “ambitions” might be an incumbent of. It is possible to argue that the membership category that I\textsuperscript{1} makes relevant is that of ‘recent graduate’.

While having a ‘career’ is not a characteristic exclusive to the category ‘recent graduate’, there are other characteristics of I\textsuperscript{1}'s talk that show how he orientates towards “career”. In this regard, the use of the verb “foresee” is particularly important as it indicates that AP is engaged in the process of planning out what his career should encompass. In this sense, the category-tied predicate, “career”, is contingent on the activity of foreseeing. Being engaged in the activity of planning out
a career is more relevant to someone in the early stages of his/her career. Additional evidence for this analysis can be found in the turn constructional unit, “I know you're (.) just starting your career now and basically the whole world is open,” (l. 6-8), where I\textsuperscript{1} claims epistemic access (Stivers et al., 2011) to knowledge about A\textsuperscript{1}’ recent graduation. In doing so, he makes reference to the activity of “starting” something. The category-bound activity of starting a career is only possible insofar as the person being categorized is at the beginning of his/her career. Note in this regard that I\textsuperscript{1} makes use of the temporal adverbials “just” and “now”, which characterise the temporal site of when A\textsuperscript{1} is “starting” his career. These again show that A\textsuperscript{1} is at the stage in his life where what one does is start a career. In this sense, the membership category of ‘recent graduate’ is made relevant and oriented to. His embodied behaviour also displays a similar orientation. Upon his production of “starting”, I\textsuperscript{1} extends his hand in an outwards motion from his chest to an apex in the air in front of him (see frame #1). Thereby he indicates movement, which can be interpreted as showing the commencement of something.

![Frame #1: I\textsuperscript{1} (seated left in image) extends his hand outwards from his body whilst looking at A\textsuperscript{1} (seated closest to the frame’s centre).](image)

Another category-bound activity that I\textsuperscript{1} orients towards A\textsuperscript{1} being engaged in is that of “hoping” (l. 8), that here refers to the professional outcome A\textsuperscript{1} hopes “eventually (0.2) will happen_”. Thus I\textsuperscript{1} orients towards A\textsuperscript{1} as someone being at the stage in his life where what one does is hope for the future, in terms of employment and the position that one eventually hopes to occupy. This would normally be the case for someone who is at the very beginning of his/her career. This fact is also evident

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from the ensuing joke (l. 11-12): “CEO is okay too hopefully_ But there’ll probably be few steps in between_”. The assessment of CEO as being “okay too” is a downgraded first assessment (Heritage & Raymond, 2005), given the fact that CEO is the highest ranking person in an organisation responsible for taking managerial action. The adverbial “hopefully” makes it evident that I\textsuperscript{1} attributes this assessment to A\textsuperscript{1} as something that he would find satisfactory. The humorous element here is obvious in that this position is one that many people would find attractive and aspirational, but very few would actually be able to attain. In this sense aspiring to be a CEO would be naïve, but is nevertheless the way in which I\textsuperscript{1} orients towards A\textsuperscript{1} as having a managerial interest. Note here that he also places emphasis on the fact that there will be steps to take beforehand (l. 11-13). This he also signals with his hand gestures (see Frame #3).

**Frame #3:** I\textsuperscript{1} extends his hand in a stepwise manner.

So what is observed here is a question concerning A\textsuperscript{1}’s professional aspirations, which is intended to aid I\textsuperscript{1} in categorising A\textsuperscript{1} as being either an incumbent of ‘management’/‘operation’ or ‘engineering’, is imbued with an orientation towards A\textsuperscript{1} membership as a ‘recent graduate’. While this may seem unproblematic at a first glance, the fact that this constitutes a case of biased language becomes evident by considering the corresponding question in the other interview for the same position.
7.2.1.2.2 The Jobless Applicant

Having showed how $I^1$ orientated towards $A^1$ as being a member of the category ‘recent graduate’ in asking for his professional aspirations in order to categorise him accordingly, the applicant ($A^2$) being interviewed in Excerpt (15) below is asked a considerably different question in terms of its linguistic formatting. Before proceeding, it is relevant to know that $A^2$ is a citizen of the Commonwealth of Nations, and currently resides in the United Kingdom on a work visa. He holds a Masters of Science in Engineering but has been unemployed for five months and is now fast approaching the visa’s expiration. $I^1$ formulates his questions regarding $A^2$’s professional aspirations in the following manner:

Excerpt (15) – EU3:AUD@07:31 – Looking for

1 $I^1$: So what is it that you are looking for (.). how jobwise, What (.) what interests you; What is it that you would like to: .hh deal with_

As is evident the way in which $I^1$ formulates his question in this excerpt compared to Excerpt (14), it is quite different. It can first of all be noted that there is no reference towards anything having to do with $A^2$’s career or ambitions. Instead, $I^1$ shows an orientation towards $A^2$ as being engaged in the activity of looking for a job. This orientation is arguably related to $A^2$’s position as being an incumbent of the category ‘jobless’. The first question in $I^1$’s turn at talk is “So what is it that you are looking for (.). how jobwise,” (l 1). Herein the gerund form of “looking for” refers to the activity of being actively engaged in searching for something, inferred by the interrogative pronoun “what”. In this regard, a morphological derivation (i.e. “–wise”) turns the noun “job” into “jobwise”, and creates an adverbial that modifies the verb phrase “looking for”. Thus, the searching behaviour is modified as going on in relation to employment. Where $A^1$ is oriented to as starting out his career, $A^2$ is quite simply just looking for work, which implies searching for something that one does not possess. In this sense “looking for” can be considered a category-bound activity (Stokoe, 2012) ascribable to an incumbent of the category ‘jobless’ in the sense that a person of this particular membership category does not possess employment and is thus presupposed to be engaged in the activity of looking for it.

The main focus of $I^1$’s line of questions in this excerpt obviously revolves around what specifically it is that $A^2$ wants to work with. As was shown in the
previous subsection, this means being a member of either the collective category of ‘management’ or ‘engineering’. Comparatively, these two Membership Categorization Devices (MCDs) are not as easily observable in I₁’s linguistic design. However, some characteristics of I₁’s talk provide evidence of his orientation. For example, his utterances “What interests you;” and “What is it that you would like to: deal with_” presupposes that A₂ possesses knowledge regarding what kind of job he ideally is looking for. The previous case showed how the desire for employment was more related to a goal much further into the future. This aspect is not present here in the same sense, because there is no orientation towards career. There are no adverbials that modify the temporal aspects of the applicant’s interests, thus indicating the professional goal to be reached in the future. The applicant’s vocational interests are a much more immediate matter in terms of what it is that he would like to work with.

So compared to the questions formulated in Excerpt (14), there are crucial differences in terms of how I₁ goes about developing the topic of the applicant’s professional aspirations. It has been shown how the applicants’ own social circumstances are made relevant in asking them their aspirations. In this last case, A₂ is made an incumbent of or oriented to as a member of the category ‘jobless’, i.e. someone who is without work and is actively engaged in looking for it.

7.2.2 Answering Questions about Professional Aspirations

In the previous section and its respective subsections, I have considered how interviewers pose questions about applicants’ professional aspirations. The purpose of the present section is to show how applicants respond to these kinds of questions with various degrees of interaction success from the interviewer’s perspective. Success, i.e. whether or not a response to a first pair part such as a question regarding professional aspirations gets a second pair part that accounts for these, is contingent on alignment and preference organisation (Levinson, 1983). Alignment refers to the structural relationship between a first pair part (a question) and its second pair part (the answer). In order to align with a question, an answer must be produced. Answers can be organized according to preference. A person can produce an answer that fits with the kind of answer that would be expected from asking the question, and this can appropriately be considered the preferred answer. The person answering a question
can also produce a dispreferred second pair part, e.g., an unexpected answer. These are what constitute more problematic cases. By talking of unexpected answers, I am not referring to situations where the interviewer is surprised by the answer or its contents. Rather, unexpectedness involves the answerer not accounting for the content that the questioner was trying to elicit. To misalign entirely, an interactionist would have to produce something other than an answer. For example, a person can refuse to answer a given question. I have no instances of applicants refusing to answer interviewer’s inquiries into their professional aspirations.

What then I aim to show in this section are instances where the applicants produce preferred second pair parts, i.e., cases where the applicant provides an expected answer, as opposed to instances where the applicant produces a dispreferred and thus unexpected one. Both instances are easily observable. However, the dispreferred answer is more evident due to the fact that the unexpectedness of the answer makes it an interactional problem.

7.2.2.1 Preferred Answers

The present section considers sequences where the relationship between the interviewer’s first pair part and the applicant’s second pair part is constituted by alignment and an adherence to the preference of the organisation of the first pair part. To illustrate this, I will rely on two excerpts: one from the NorCo roustabout interviews and one from the DrillCo technical assistant interviews.

7.2.2.1.1 The Driller

Excerpt (16) below is an example of how the question concerning the applicant’s professional aspirations transpires without incident. Here, the interviewer (IN) mobilises his inquiry in a first pair part (highlighted with an arrow) in response to which the applicant (AP) produces a second pair part (also highlighted with an arrow). Proof of AP’s answer aligning and adhering to the preference organisation of the question can be found by looking at IN’s verbal and embodied responses.

Excerpt (16) – SCA6:VID@05:07 – Driller

1  IN:  → .hhh Kor ø::h kor ser du veien {videre:: Where where see.PRS you road:DEF:SG forward Where do you see the road forward

{((Frame #1))}
fremover? (0.2) Altså ka
in_the_future So what
in_the_future? So what

AP: → .mt .hh ø:h Eg har jo: som sagt #ø:::# Ser
I have.PRS ADV as said Look.PRS
I have obviously as mentioned I look

jo veldig opp til han Arve
ADV immensely up to him NAME
immensely up to Arve obviously

IN: (0.4)
[.hja
Yes
Yes

AP: [*hos dokke° å: det han har gjort,
with you.2PL and what he have.PRS.AUX do.PST.PTCP
with you and what he has accomplished

Å::: det absolutt en vei som eg har
And it absolutely DET rød.INDF which I have.PRS
And it is absolutely a road that I want to follow

lyst til å gå (0.2) [sjølv,
desire to to go.INF self
myself

IN: [Ja_
Yes

AP: .hhhh (0.2) {Å:: ja komme seg opp på:h (på
And yes côme.INF self up on on
And yes get yourself up onto
{((Frame #2))
{((Frame #3))

borredek
å kanske en ø:h en dag øh
drilling_floor.INDF and maybe one one day
the drilling floor and maybe one day

(1.4)
sitte i stolen der å være heh heh [dr-
sit.INF in chair.DEF.SG there and be.INF
sit in the chair there and be

IN: [Ja_
Yes

AP: £driller£,
=driller.indf
driller

IN =Ja
Yes
Yes

AP: .hja
Yes

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As mentioned the sequential organisation (Schegloff, 2007b) of the above excerpts comprise IN’s question (l. 1-2) followed by AP’s second pair part (l. 3-16) and then IN’s embodied response (starting in overlap l. 11) as well as his verbal response (l. 19).

The characteristics of IN’s question are closely reminiscent of the questions of his described in Subsection 8.1.1. In all of his questions, IN assumes that the applicant aspires for a career aboard the drilling rig and this aspect is no different here. The crux of his question is to determine where and in what division aboard the drilling rig the applicant wants his/her career. Again, he uses the interrogative adverb “Kor”/“Where” to inquire into the place or position that the applicant sees “veien”/“the road” winding to in the future, in a metaphorical sense. In terms of his embodied behaviour, IN re-establishes his mutual gaze with AP upon producing “videre”/“onwards” (see frame #1).

Proof, in the conversation analytical sense (e.g. Sacks et al., 1974), that the purpose of IN’s question is to get AP (as well as other applicants) to state in which area aboard the drilling rig they desire to pursue a career can be observed in what happens in the
subsequent turn in terms of AP’s response. Here, he orientates towards the purpose of IN’s question as being an inquiry into what he would like to work with. In his first turn constructional unit AP states, “.mt .hh ø:h Eg har jo:: somsagt #ø:::h# Ser jo veldig opp til han Arve”/“I have obviously as mentioned I look immensely up to Arve obviously”. Here, AP makes a reference to Arve, his older brother who is working in NorCo as a driller aboard one of their rigs. That Arve is an employee at NorCo and thus someone that both IN and AP know was established fairly early in the interview. In making this reference to Arve, AP then makes relevant and displays an orientation to his career aboard the drilling rig, which has progressed into the drilling department. Apart from making a reference to Arve, AP also states “Ser jo veldig opp til han Arve/“I look immensely up to Arve obviously”. In looking up to his brother in this manner and in this job interview context, the admiration of Arve is in this regard professional and therefore revolves around what he has accomplished, which AP also makes reference to in l. 7 by adding “å: det han har gjort,”/“and what he has accomplished”. That AP wants to pursue a similar path is made explicit in his turn in l. 8-9 where he admits “Å:: det absolutt en vei som eg har lyst til å gå (0.2) sjølv,”/“And it is absolutely a road that I want to follow myself”

At this stage, it is only inferred in which division of the drilling rig that AP would like to pursue a career. His precise professional aspirations are observable in l. 11-16 where he says “Å:: ja kome seg opp på:b førredakk å kanske en ø:h en dag øh (1.4) sitte i stolen der å være heh heh dr - ØdrillerØ,”/“And yes get yourself up onto the drilling floor and maybe one day sit in the chair there and be driller”. In this turn constructional unit, AP makes use of the category-tied predicate (Stokoe, 2012) “førredakk”/“drilling floor”. I call this a category-tied predicate because it refers to a characteristic of someone working within the drilling division and the concrete location where work is conducted. Thus, being on the drilling floor corresponds with being a member of the drilling division. AP also makes reference to a distinct membership category pertaining to the drilling division, namely that of “ØdrillerØ”/“driller”. Thereby, he makes himself a potential future incumbent of that membership category.

Through his response, AP has then in a retrospective manner displayed an orientation towards IN’s question as inquiring into his professional aspirations and thus produced an aligning second pair part (Levinson, 1983; Steensig, 2012; Stivers et al., 2011). The question, then, is whether or not AP produces a preferred answer that
IN accepts as adequate. In order to determine this, IN’s behaviour during and after AP’s response needs to be considered in closer detail. Now, IN produces a few acknowledgement tokens throughout this sequence, whereby he displays recipiency and claims an understanding of AP’s talk (Jefferson, 1984; Schegloff, 1982). However, in order to consider whether or not the second pair part is the preferred one, other characteristics of IN’s behaviour need to be considered.

First of all, IN’s embodied behaviour displays an orientation towards AP’s second pair part as being acceptable and adequate. This is actually observable very early on during AP’s talk. Already in l. 11 and in overlap with AP’s talk, IN moves his writing hand down towards the interview guide in preparation of taking notes (see frame #2). The note-taking commences a few moments later, in overlap with the same turn constructional unit (see frame #3). IN continues taking notes up until his turn in l. 21, where he lifts his writing hand from the table and re-establishes eye contact with AP once more. IN’s note-taking behaviour is first of all evidence of that he orientates towards AP’s second pair part as being file-able, i.e., he is writing down his response. This then suggests that he is here documenting in which area of the organisation, of the drilling rig, that AP is likely to pursue a career.
Frame #2: While still looking at AP IN moves his writing hand down towards the table in preparation of note-taking. At this point AP gaze is focused somewhere upon the table.

Frame #3: IN starts taking notes

Frame #4: IN and AP re-establishes eye contact. IN lifts his writing hand from the table.
In terms of his verbal responses to AP’s answer, IN mainly resorts to acknowledgement tokens. However in l. 21, he produces a more substantive response to AP’s turn constructional unit ending in l. 16, wherein he states his hopes of one day becoming a driller. AP does this with some laughter as well as a smiling voice on the production of “£driller£/“driller”. While it is difficult to infer what exactly these characteristics of his speech indicate, it can be observed that IN’s response confirms that becoming driller is possible, as is evident how he designs his talk: “Det er absolutt ø:h ↑absolutt muligt_”/“It is absolutely absolutely possible”.

In doing so, then, IN confirms that AP’s professional aspirations are plausible. Furthermore, how IN responds both verbally and via his embodied behaviour indicate that AP’s second pair part is acceptable with regards to his initial question. There are no characteristics of IN’s talk or behaviour during and after AP’s second pair part that indicate that the second pair part is problematic or unexpected. In this sense, the second pair part adheres to the preference organisation of the question, in that it contains an account of the professional aspirations of the applicant.

7.2.2.1.2 The Head of Operations

In the second excerpt illustrating a preferred and, hence, aligning response to the interviewer’s inquiry into the applicant’s professional aspirations, I return to Excerpt (14) (reproduced below accompanied by what occurs successively in the interaction). Where this excerpt differs from the previous one (apart from in its length) is that A¹’s response is significantly more substantive, and that I¹ performs a couple of upshots at the end of A¹’s answer. (A raw transcript is available in Appendix E of this entire sequence.)

**Excerpt (17) – EU2:VID@20:44 – Head of Operations**

```
1  I¹:    So- (. ) so what kind of
2    (1.1)
3    career do you
4    (1.0)
5    foresee in a company like this. =What is it that (0.2)
6    your ambitions are if i may ask. =I know you’re (. ) just
7    (starting your career now and basically the whole
8    world is open, What is What are you hoping for (0.4)
9    eventually (0.2) will happen_ (1.1)
10   (1.1)
11   CEO is okay too hopefully. But there’ll probably be
12   A¹:    [Yeah_
13   [Yeah_   few [steps in between_
14   I¹:    [Huh Huh Huh [Huh Huh
15   A¹:    [The:u:h (. ) I would like to become
```
"(. ) yeah (. ) head of the (. ) operations in the future?"

".h[h [0.3] But first I would like to <start to get>"

"Yeah_"

"(0.2) familiarized I think with the operations (. ) on the rigs as well,"

((22 lines omitted during which the applicant formulates a question he would like to have answered later regarding the possibility for doing some work aboard oil rigs. He justifies by stating that it is necessary in order to learn the operational side of the business))

"So in the end (. ) yeah"

"(0.8)"

"I would like to get familiarized (0.2) u:h by myself"

"(0.3)"

"Mm_"

"(0.8)"

"#u:#h# (0.2) with the rigs (0.2) first [and then yeah"

"Yeah_"

"(Mm_"

"(0.5) start a:"

"(0.6)"

"a career path."

"→ So you’re fascinated by the operational side of it"

"and [not necessarily the pure technical side of it."

"Yeah_ [No the"

"(operation side I’m very fascinated by_"

"( )"

"Yeah_ So so how to manage[: drilling units in in this"

"Yeah_"

"(0.2) industry;"

"Yeah_"

In producing his second pair part and hence displaying an understanding towards the purpose of I¹ first pair part as being the elicitation of his professional aspirations, I¹ makes explicit a concrete membership category pertaining to the MCD (Stokoe, 2012) of ‘management’. In l. 15-16 A¹ makes himself a potential future incumbent of the membership category ‘head of operations’ in the following way: “I would like to become (. ) yeah (. ) head of the operations in the future?” As an obvious membership category that A¹ wishes to inhabit, the title “head of the operations”, which might also be referred to as Chief Operating Officer, is a senior management position responsible for the daily operation of a business (Investopedia, 2016). The emphasis on “like” designates it as something he wishes for, thus orienting towards the aspirational focus of I¹’s question. In predating himself as a desired incumbent of the membership category, “head of the operations”, he makes relevant the aforementioned MCD of “management”, which is constituted by people whose profession it is to manage people in organisations and businesses.

I¹ acknowledges this response as an adequate answer as during a place of transition relevance (Schegloff, 2002, p. 296), he produces a “Yeah”. This is
immediately after A\(^1\)'s production of his future aspirations (l. 18). In previous research, “Yeah” has been argued to function as a continuer and acknowledgement token displaying heightened recipiency and understanding (Lambertz, 2011). Arguably, it has a similar function in supporting and encouraging A\(^1\)'s continued speakership.

Aspiring to become the head of operations is a potentially naïve or overly ambitious aspiration to have at the start of a career. A\(^1\) orients towards the notion of career as a process that takes time to achieve. For example, after pausing in l. 17, he produces the disjunctive conjunction (Pomerantz, 1984a), “But”. Thereby, he indicates that he is veering topically from the issue of a temporally displaced aspiration of becoming head of operations to the steps that he would like to take in the more immediate future. In doing so he relies on the ordinal “first” to refer to the principal step in a sequence of actions aimed at getting “familiarized with operations” (l. 19-20). Accumulating knowledge is oriented to as a prerequisite for progressing into a career. I\(^1\) repeats this at the end of his answer in l. 42-52, where he concludes on how to progress in his career.

The question then is whether or not I\(^1\) accepts this answer as sufficient in relation to his initial inquiry into A\(^1\) professional aspirations. What is immediately evident from the way in which I\(^1\) reacts to A\(^1\)'s preceding answer is that it is done in an interpretative manner. Thus, he presents his understanding of what A\(^1\) has disclosed immediately preceding his turn at talk in order to have him confirm his interpretation thereof. Both his turns at talk (l. 52-53 and l. 57-59) are prefaced by “So”, which, according to Raymond (2004, p. 186), indicates an “upshot of prior talk to mark the completion of complex turns or activities and thereby pursue a limited range of actions from their recipients”. So in prefacing his turn at talk as an upshot of the previous talk, I\(^1\) seeks to have confirmed the gist of what A\(^1\) disclosed in his previous and rather lengthy answer. In other words, what I\(^1\) then is doing is concluding A\(^1\)'s talk with “So you: you’re fascinated by the operational side of it and not necessarily the pure technical side of it” in order to have him confirm this interpretation. In performing this upshot, I\(^1\) is again making an orientation towards operations and thus, management, as opposed to the technical side of offshore drilling. A\(^1\) confirms the upshot in l. 54-55, first, at the initial transition relevance place following after “operational side of it” and then in overlap with “of it” at the end of l. 53. The same is the case with the second upshot I\(^1\) performs in l. 57-59.
In both upshots, I₁ orients towards I₁ as a member of the membership categorisation device ‘management’. This membership categorisation device consists of people who are “fascinated by the operational side” (l. 52) and how to “manage: drilling units” (l. 57). Thus, the conclusion of this sequence is that A₁ is construed and oriented to as a prospective member of ‘management’ versus that of ‘engineering’. Thereby, A₁’s professional aspirations lie within management.

In the same sense as the previous excerpt showed, there is no orientation by I₁ towards there being a problem with A₁’s response. Furthermore, both instances have shown that the applicants orient towards the purpose of questions as an elicitation of their professional aspirations within a particular discipline. In terms of their behaviour, the interviewers in both excerpts exhibit an orientation towards professional categories. In the previous excerpt, filing the applicant’s response did this, whereas the category was confirmed in an upshot in the latter excerpt. Thereby, the interviewers also show an orientation towards the purpose of their mobilising an inquiry into the applicants’ professional aspirations as something that is done in order to categorise them professionally. This fact becomes more evident once I turn to instances where answers are produced that do not fit with the interviewer’s inquiry.

7.2.2.2 Dispreferred Answers

When considering dispreferred answers, the relation between a first pair part and a second pair part in terms of questions and answers, the latter is dispreferred if it is unexpected or considered a non-answer to the former (Levinson, 1983, p. 336). Question and answer sequences revolving around the topic of professional aspirations can exhibit the characteristics of dispreference.

In the present section, I will consider three instances where the applicant produces an answer that the interviewer orients to as being in adequate and thus dispreferred. What will become evident is that dispreference comes in various degrees. Thus, one can come across dispreferred answers that are corrected. However answers can also risk never being repaired, thus leading to a more serious case of dispreference. The subsection is therefore organized accordingly.

Preferred answers are interesting in their own right due to the fact that they exhibit a mutual understanding of what it is that is going on sequentially. But dispreferred answers are even more interesting, as the presuppositions and norms
regarding what the interaction is supposed to become entirely evident as interviewers and applicants’ background assumptions become observable.

7.2.2.2.1 The Ambitious Applicant

The first excerpt in consideration comprises a minor instance of dispreference but shows how the applicant is still required to produce his professional aspirations associated with the marine, drilling, and maintenance divisions aboard the drilling rig. Sequentially, the organisation of the sequence is as follows: first, the interviewer (IN) produces the question regarding the applicant’s (AP) aspirations. The applicant then produces an answer. The interviewer then repeats the question after which AP produces another answer.

Excerpt (18) – SCA(11):VID@05:15 – The Drilling Cage

1 IN: → Offshore. (.) Kor: r kor ser du veien liksom Offshore where where see you road:DEF.SG ADV Offshore Where do you see the road sort of go?

2 (.) gå? Ka: Har du s:att deg någe mål. go.INF What have you set you some goal What have you set yourself some goal?

3 (0.8)

4 AP: → Eg har jo de:it Eg ø::h Ja eg øh I have ADV it I Yes I I have that of course. I yes I

5 (0.8)

6 vil ikkje være på dekk hele livet? [Eg e:r Eg e:r Det want not be on deck all life.DEF I am I am It do not want to be on deck all my life. I am I am It

7 IN: [Nei__ No No

8 AP: ikkje et to fire (0.3) slaraffenliv eg ønsk[er, Eg is not a two four life of luxury I want I is not a two-four life of luxury I want. I

9 IN: [HhhHhh

9 AP: vil opp å fram_ want up and forward want to go up and forwards.

11 IN: Ja= Yes Yes

12 AP: =Absolut_ Absolutely Absolutely
The characteristics of IN’s question have already been dealt with in Subsection 8.1.1. Therefore, I will proceed immediately to AP’s answer, commencing at 1. 4. I intend to argue that AP’s initial response performs an altogether different kind of categorisation than the interviewer is looking for. In his initial answer, AP ascribes and detracts a number of category-tied predicates from himself. First he states, “Ja eg øh (0.8) vil ikkje være på dekk hele livet?”/“Yes I do not want to be on deck all my life”. The prepositional phrase “på dekk”/“on deck” refers to the location where people employed as roustabouts (and later roughnecks) usually conduct their work. The prepositional phrase here functions as predicate modifying the sentence subject “Eg”/“I” as an existential characteristic of someone who does not want to be a roustabout of roughneck “hele live”/“livet”. By negating the sentence he detracts from himself the category-tied predicate of someone who would be satisfied working on deck, and consequently infers that he is an ambitious applicant and future employee. A similar pattern can be observed in his ensuing turn constructional unit, where he says, “Det ikkje et to fire (0.3) slaraffenliv eg ønsker”/“It is not a two-four life of luxury I want”. Here the phrase, “et to fire (0.3) slaraffenliv”, refers to the relationship between time spent on job and recreation. Working aboard drilling rigs
usually involves two weeks of work aboard the rig and then four weeks off due to personnel rotation. As can be seen AP’s wording in terms of “slåfføl­viv”, roughly translating into “life of luxury”, the rotation system is seen as a considerable luxury that some people might be content with. That he is someone who would not be content with this kind of life is additionally observable in his successive turn constructional unit where he states, “Eg vil opp å fråm”/”I want to go up and forwards”. Related to the membership category ‘ambitious employee’, he ascribes himself the predicate of wanting to go “opp og-fråm”. Moving up and forwards in this context infers career progression and, in connection to the previous turn constructional unit, suggests dissatisfaction with staying in one place.

As can be observed, however, AP makes no explicit reference at this stage to either of the categories that IN is interested in, namely ‘drilling’, ‘marine’, or ‘maintenance’. In this regard, AP has failed to produce an expected answer. Evidence for this analysis can be found in IN’s second question, “Hvilken retning har du tenkt deg på det” (l. 13-14), which translates into “What direction have you planned for that”, and orients towards the preceding answer as being insufficient in relation to his first question. Note in the first question that IN relied upon “veien”/”the path” in a metaphorical sense to refer to the career trajectory. Career in this sense is understood as a trajectory an employee moves along in order to reach a particular employment goal. The noun “retning”/”direction” makes this metaphor relevant again, in that employment involves moving in the direction of a particular discipline, role, or position. Here, the directions that are inferred by the interviewer include the aforementioned divisions of ‘marine’, ‘drilling’, and ‘maintenance’, where the road eventually, in the metaphorical sense, ends. By performing a repeat then of his initial question, IN makes the division of labour aboard the drilling rig relevant once again.

In his second attempt at producing an acceptable response to IN’s inquiry, AP states that he imagines “driller buret å sånt”/”the driller cage and such” as the direction he is headed. By envisioning the driller cage, which is where a driller would be physically located during work, he has thus made himself an incumbent of the drilling category and thereby someone who is interested in moving in that direction. That this is the response IN has been looking for is observable from what happens during his ensuing turns at talk (l.15-16 and l.18). In l. 17 IN produces the acknowledgement token (Jefferson, 1984), “Ja_”/”Yes”. At the onset of his production of this token, he diverts his mutually held gaze with AP to his interview
guide placed immediately in front of him on the table (see frame #1). At the same time, he starts moving his right writing hand down towards the paper. This motion continues during AP’s subsequent turn (l. 18) until IN’s hand is finally touching the paper (see frame #2) during his production of “Mm_”. Here, he also starts taking notes. At this stage then, IN treats AP’s response as being file-able. In other words, the response has been produced in a manner by which it fits the professional and occupational categories one finds aboard a drilling rig, and which IN was interested in determining AP’s predilections in relation to.

**Frame #1:** IN breaks his mutual gaze with AP and shifts his focus to his interview guide. Simultaneously he also starts moving his writing hand towards it.

**Frame #2:** IN starts taking notes.

The present case has shown how, in order to be file-able, applicants’ answers need to contain a membership categorisation aligned with one of the three aforementioned categories. In the present case, the applicant’s initial response is imprecise according
to the categories into which the interviewer needs to categorise the applicant. Therefore, he reformulates his question and makes it possible for the applicant to produce a file-able answer. The applicant thus produces an answer that makes him a potential future incumbent of the membership category “driller”.

7.2.2.2.2 The Unknowing Applicant

Where the previous applicant did not manage to produce an acceptable in the first try, resulting in IN repeating and reformulating his question, the applicant (AP) in the present case admits openly that he is unaware of what the opportunities are aboard the drilling rig. This results in IN starting to explain what the opportunities are by accounting for the various divisions:

Excerpt (19) – SCA16:VID#08:51 – The Opportunities

1  IN:  >N- Nå kjenner jo du Mathias så du har<
        Now know ADV you NAME so you have:PRS:AUX
        So you obviously know Mathias, so you have

2  gjerna tenkt deg ut en en ø:h .hh
    ADV think.PST.PTCP you out DET DET
    probably thought out a

3  rettning videre hvis du starter offshore?
    direction.INDF forward if you start.PRS offshore
    direction onwards if you start offshore?

4  
5  (0.9)

6  AP:  → Ja: kanske.
        Yes maybe
        Yes maybe.

7  Men æ:h det det jeg er litt usikker på.
    But that that I am a bit unsure on
    But that is what I am a bit unsure about.

8  IN:  Ja,
    Yes

9  AP:  .mt Er litt usikker;=Jeg må si me:d
        Am a bit unsure I must say with
        I am a bit unsure. I must say with

10  
11  (0.2)

12  #ø:h# si de:t >sånn som det er at de:t<
    say it ADV as it is that it
    say it like it is that it

13  (0.7)
I know not quite like

precisely what

what I want to do.

You can say so from deck then there is

Of course I obviously know what opportunities there are.

There are so to speak really two directions. It is

either up on the drilling floor and then in

either hvert rettning drilledstolen?
after a while direction driller_chair.DEF.SG
after a while direction the drilling chair.

33  (0.4)
34  AP:  Mm_
35  IN:  Eller eventuelt ø::h .hh å gå fra: fra dekk til
Or perhaps to go from from deck to
Or after a while to go from deck to
36  assisterende kranfører å opparbeide deg ge fem
assistant crane_operator and achieve you G five
assistant crane operator and achieve yourself a G5
37  ((G5)) sertifikat å så enne opp #i: kranen_
  certificate and then end up in crane
  certificate and then end up in the crane.

It is clear here that AP’s answer falls short of the preferred second pair part of IN’s initial question. In terms of the preference organisation of social actions (see Levinson, 1983), the linguistic format of a question such as that of IN (l. 1-3) constrains the kind of answer that the second speaker (i.e. AP) can produce. Certain things about the way in which IN formats his question suggests that he presupposes AP knows which direction he wishes to head offshore. Note first of all the statement of the fact “>Nå kjener jo du Mathias”/“So you obviously know Mathias”. This statement is made in reference to a current employee at NorCo and a common acquaintance of both A^2 and IN. As is inferable, Mathias works aboard a drilling rig in an unspecified position arguably above that of roustabout and roughneck. This statement of fact is important for what IN states next, namely “så du har< gjerna tenkt
deg ut en en ø::h .hh rettning videre”/“so you’ve probably thought yourself a direction onwards”. So because A^2 knows Mathias, IN presupposes AP has some idea of what profession he wishes to pursue aboard the drilling rig if he starts offshore. Additional evidence for this analysis lies in IN’s use of the adverbial “gjerna”/“probably”, whereby he orients towards AP as likely to have thought out a career trajectory. Furthermore, the conjunction “so” ties back to the previous statement of fact concerning AP’s acquaintance with Mathias, thus making it a cause of AP knowing his professional aspirations aboard the drilling rig.

In order for AP to align with this question, he must answer it in a way that matches the formal design preference (Steensig, 2012; Stivers et al., 2011). This means that the first pair part projects the second pair part that ideally should be produced. For the present case, this would mean that AP produces as his second pair
part the answer which IN expects of him (Levinson, 1983). To do so would mean accounting for his professional aspirations, as has previously been shown. However, as can be observed, this does not occur in the present interview. What occurs immediately after IN has completed his question is a 0.9-second pause. The pause, which is a rather lengthy one, thus indicates an incipient problem that occurs moments later. AP first produces a long in-breath followed by what is initially a slight confirmation to IN’s questions: “Ja: kanskje”/“Yes maybe” in l. 6. Following this, he then produces the conjunction “Men”/“But” in l. 7 whereby he indicates a disjuncture in the conversation (Pomerantz, 1984a). This disjunction is primary evidence that the answer AP has started producing is not what IN anticipated with his production of the initial question. AP then says, “det det jeg er litt usikker på”/“that is what I am a bit unsure about” referring anaphorically back to IN’s question. The trouble that has been incipient is here entirely evident in AP’s uncertainty.

The topic of AP not knowing what it is that he wants to aspire to aboard the drilling rig continues across the ensuing turn constructional units. What is noteworthy here is that he, in several ways, orients towards his response as being problematic. For example, his talk is filled with hesitations not only in the form of pauses (e.g. l. 4, 10, 13, and 15) but also prolonged fillers such as “æ:h” (l. 7) and “ø:h” (l. 12 and l. 14) that are commonly associated with problems in the interaction (Schegloff, 2002). He also produces a couple of self-initiated repairs such as between l. 9 and l. 12 and l. 12 and l. 14. Furthermore, his choice of lexical vocabulary also shows an orientation towards his answer as somehow problematic. His talk in l. 9-12 where he states “Jeg må si med (0.2) .hhh si det >sann som det er at det<”/“I must say with say it like it is that it” has an almost confessional character to it. This is mostly evident from his use of the modal verb “må”/“must”, whereby he indicates an obligation to say something like it is.

Not being able to answer an interviewer’s question can be detrimental to an applicant’s chances. In terms of membership categorisation in the job interview, AP has just characterised himself as an applicant who does not know what he wants to aspire to. For example, he characterised himself using the predicate “usikker på”/“unsure about” (l. 7) with reference to IN’s question and “litt usikker”/“a bit unsure” (l. 9) more generally. He therefore risks, in his inability to answer IN’s question, making himself a potential incumbent of the categories “unknowing
applicant”, “unambitious applicant” or “unmotivated applicant”. These potential membership categorisations are important for what follows.

Presenting a lack of knowledge in terms of being unable to answer a question arguably invites further explication of the question. This is what happens in the interaction between the interviewer and applicant in said case. This is arguably due to the fact that the issue of what knowledge the applicant possesses turns into an issue, as IN starts explaining which opportunities there are aboard the drilling rig and in doing so, presupposes that AP does not possess knowledge about the division of labour on a drilling rig. In this regard, AP’s “↑Ja_”/“Yes” is a second pair part to IN’s upshot in l. 22 in Excerpt (19). In producing a confirming response, AP has just agreed that he does not know what the opportunities are. In l. 23, IN commences by accounting for the opportunities aboard the rig starting “fra degk”/“from deck”, with reference to the roustabout and roughneck positions.

With the gap provided by IN’s hesitations in terms of the filler produced in l. 25 and the slight pause in l. 26, AP takes the conversational floor in l. 27 and says “Ja da jeg vet jo ka muligheter der er”/“Of course I know what opportunities there are”. So where he has previously stated he is uncertain about what he wants to do, he states here that he does know what the opportunities are. The question of why he takes the floor and states that he does know what the opportunities are can be addressed with reference to what he has said earlier. In l. 14-16 for example, he states that he does not know quite what it is that he wants. Whether or not it is because of a misunderstanding, IN seems to orient towards AP’s answer as indicating uncertainty about what the opportunities are aboard a drilling rig. Given the fact that AP’s turn at talk in l. 27 states that he knows the opportunities, his lack of knowledge is with regards to his own personal aspirations. In other words, he knows what the opportunities are but not his aspirations. When IN thus starts to account for the opportunities, it becomes apparent that he understands AP as being unaware of these. This would in turn suggest that AP does not know much about the drilling business, and this is what AP’s turn at talk in l. 27 addresses, given the fact that he risks the prior negative categorisations.

In any case, it can be observed that IN still orientates towards AP as being unknowledgeable about where he can aspire to work and pursue a career. He continues to explain the most common career trajectories in l. 29 onwards, explaining how he can pursue a career in either the drilling division by referring to
“drillerstolen”/“the driller chair” (l. 32) or the marine division by making relevant the membership category “assisterende kranfører”/“assistant crane operator” (l. 37). By accounting for these possibilities IN then treats AP as still lacking knowledge of his opportunities, despite AP’s claim of epistemic access.

7.2.2.2.3 The Flexible Applicant

In the present part of the chapter, I will return to the DrillCo interviews for the technical assistant position in relation to which one interview has already been considered. The present case is with the unemployed applicant A², who was posed a significantly different question compared to that of A¹. However, this is not the only issue related to this piece of interaction. As I aim to show, the I¹ is having significant difficulties in obtaining a preferred answer from the A² to the point where he has to reformulate his question multiple times. A full raw transcript is also available in the appendix for the present case (see Appendix F: Raw Transcription of L1_3).

Excerpt (20) contains I¹’s initial question formulation followed by A²’s question and then I¹’s reformulation:

Excerpt (20) - EU3:AUD@07:31 – Looking for

1  I¹:  ➔ So what is it that you are looking for? (.)  The jobwise, What interests you; What is it that you would like to deal with?
2  A²:  ➔ (0.4) I would like to: (.) #i i: # i would like to deal with #e: # more challenging jobs. I’m sure when working with DrillCo >you would let me have a< (0.2) challenged job. hh than in (. .) Fobos because more
3      Fobos (. .) was (. .) wasn’t that challenging at that time because we don’t have that much project (. .) on that time so (. .) E:m I know ( ) DrillCO have a lot of (. .) a lot of market demand at the moment?. hh And i’m quite sure about i can be able to: (0.4)>contribute really well to the compa[ny'_
4  I¹:  ➔ (I’m sure you can; .hh But what is it that interests you;=It is it the <drilling; engi]neering side of it; Is it> (. .) how we design wells and drill wells_ >So is it< more the managerial (0.2) .h <side of what we do;>

A² allocates his interest to the very first turn constructional unit in his answer, where he proffers “challenging jobs” as his desired type of work in l. 6-7. He thereby orients towards the quality of specific job tasks rather than the membership categorisation devices of ‘management’ or ‘engineering’ that I¹ is interested in. In other words, he is here producing a dispreferred answer to I¹’s question, and is thus
failing to align with the preference organisation of the question (Steensig, 2012; Stivers et al., 2011). Evidence for this analysis can be found in the apparent lack of an acknowledgement token (Jefferson, 1984). In Excerpt (17), I\textsubscript{1} produced a number of “Yeahs” to encourage continuation. However, no such minimal responses are produced here or indeed at any other point during the answer. This fact may be indicative of incipient interactional problems. That A\textsubscript{2}’s answer is dispreferred finally becomes fully apparent in l. 16, where I\textsubscript{1} anticipates A\textsubscript{2}’s imminent turn-completion and thus assumes speakership in overlap, repeating the candidate’s preceding assertion (l. 14-15). This turn at talk is the best evidence that I\textsubscript{1} does not find A\textsubscript{2}’s response adequate due to the fact that he here reformulates his question (l. 17). Contrary to the questions in his initial First Pair Part (l. 1-3), I\textsubscript{1} here provides candidate answers (Pomerantz, 1988) in order to elicit a sufficient response from A\textsubscript{2}. He covers the technical aspect in l. 17-19 referring to it as “the drilling engineering side” and how they “design wells and drill wells”, whereby he makes relevant the MCD of engineering. In a similar manner, the MCD of ‘management’ is made relevant by “the managerial side of what we do”. Thereby the initial analysis is that this sequence, in a similar sense compared to the previous case, revolves around the task of ascribing the applicants to different MCDs and thus being able to characterize them as belonging to management or engineering. It is evident from A\textsubscript{2}’s talk that he does not attend to these two MCDs of drilling. What he does instead is construct his response around a specific aspect of a given job.

The second answer that A\textsubscript{2} produces to I\textsubscript{1}’s second question is also oriented to by I\textsubscript{1} as being insufficient and not what he was inquiring into. Skipping ahead from A\textsubscript{2}’s second answer and proceeding directly to I\textsubscript{1}’s third question and second reformulation of his initial question, and then what happens next, it can be observed that I\textsubscript{1}’s effort to assign A\textsubscript{2} to any of the aforementioned categories is met by A\textsubscript{2} with reluctance. In other words, he presents himself as someone who both knows ‘the management side’ and ‘the technical side’ of drilling and again produces an answer that can appropriately be considered dispreferred to the question:

**Excerpt (21) – EU3:AUD@08:41 – Looking for**

38 I\textsubscript{1}: #But i don't think# you answered my question_=What is-
39 What interests you; >And i’m sure you can do it all,<
40 (.). But what is it that you really like to do,
41 (0.6)
42 A\textsubscript{2}: E:m:
I\textsuperscript{1} is in l. 38 sanctioning A\textsuperscript{2} and holding him accountable for not having produced the preferred next action (Levinson, 1983). Again I\textsuperscript{1} reformulates his question this time stressing the professional aspirations of A\textsuperscript{2} by asking “But what is it that you really like to do”. With the very first turn constructional unit of A\textsuperscript{1}’s answer, “It’s up to the job”, he contextualizes his predilections in terms of the job he is assigned and refrains from communicating any preference with regards to professional aspirations in either ‘management’ or ‘engineering’. Rather, he performs what is required of the job. However in answering in this manner, he misses what I\textsuperscript{1} is trying to get at. I\textsuperscript{1} presumes that applicants should readily account for which category they consider themselves incumbents of. However, in Excerpt (21), the case is different. A\textsuperscript{2} seems to be reluctant in ascribing himself to either of the two categories. For example, he states that he is “flexible in either way;” (l. 45). He thereby indicates that he considers himself to be an incumbent of either of the categories, someone who can work both types of jobs. Rather, he focuses on communicating his flexibility in either category, perhaps in order to avoid limiting his opportunities. In any case, he misses the purpose of the question as I\textsuperscript{1} intended it.

It is also evident from l. 55-61 that I\textsuperscript{1}’s agenda has been to ascribe A\textsuperscript{2} to the aforementioned categories. Note here the upshot “<So you don't have a preference for technical .hh (. ) work (0.3) where you calculate and you design: and you (0.4) implement_” (l. 55-56). Being that A\textsuperscript{2} holds an MSc in engineering, one would necessarily assume that he would prefer work pertaining to the MCD of ‘engineering’ as opposed to ‘management’. It is in this sense that I\textsuperscript{1}’s negating upshot is intended to
have A² confirm the conclusion that he indeed does not “have a preference for technical (.) work” (l. 55-56) but that he is contrarily “more to the (0.9) to >the managerial side< of administrating a crew or team or project” (l. 57-61). Here, I¹ thus seeks to confirm whether or not is in fact an incumbent of the ‘management’ category. Being that A² is either reluctant to place himself within either category or at the very least does not understand that this is what I¹ wants him to do, the matter of the degree to which A² would ascribe himself to either of the categories is oriented to by I¹. This can be observed in l. 57 wherein I¹ relies on the comparative adverbial “more” to designate that A² is inclined towards ‘the managerial side’ rather than ‘technical work’.

7.2.3 Summing Up

The present chapter has investigated professional categorisations in job interviews and specifically sought to answer the following research question: “How are professional categories used and oriented to by interviewers and applicants?” The central finding of this section’s analyses is that interviewers inquire into the professional aspirations of applicants for the purpose of categorising them according to existing professional categories, either in the drilling industry at large, in the case of DrillCo, or aboard the organisation of individual drilling rigs, in the case of NorCo. Furthermore, it was shown that in the majority of cases applicants were readily able to provide answers that can be characterised according to a specific category. However in some instances there were issues concerning applicant’s answers. In a couple of instances, the applicant provided an unacceptable answer, which meant that the interviewer had to reproduce and reformulate his initial question for the purpose of obtaining an acceptable answer. In another instance, an applicant oriented towards his own lack of knowledge concerning opportunities aboard the drilling rig. This made it relevant for the interviewer to provide additional explanations into these opportunities. Thereby, these findings also show how the job interview is dependent on the co-operation of the interviewer and the applicant.

These findings indicate that membership competence plays an important role in the sense that applicants display different degrees of competence concerning their ability to provide a sufficient answer. This issue relates their degree of knowledge. For example, certain applicants are knowledgeable about professional categories aboard
the drilling rigs, whereas others are not. In other words, their degree of knowledge affects them being able to competently engage with the interviewer.

7.3 Self-Reporting and Trait Questions

One of the most common kinds of question one can come across in the job interview is known as ‘the trait question’ in HR literature:

“Trait questions include a broad array of interviewer inquiries into applicant self-descriptions (e.g., What is your greatest strength or weakness?) and opinions (e.g., How do you feel about team meetings?). Often these questions are intended to tap any or all of the four constructs of applicant reliability, KSAs, values, and motivation.” (Eder & Harris, 1999, p. 4).

As Eder and Harris argue, these kinds of questions are designed to elicit the applicant’s values, knowledge, skills, abilities, etc. in order to predict the applicant’s performance. This is generally also how this kind of question is used and taught by consultants (see for example Skilling, 2012, 2013). Additionally, these kinds of questions can be used in order to obtain descriptions of personality characteristics (Salgado & Moscoso, 2002, p. 304). Traits are often elicited in order to assess the applicant’s fit regarding job, group, organisation, and vocation (Kristof-Brown, 2000; Kristof-Brown, Zimmerman, & Johnson, 2005; Kristof, 1996; Morley, 2007; C. K. Parsons, Cable, & Liden, 1999). This means evaluating whether or not the applicant fits with the organisation at large, the job s/he is supposed to carry out and the people s/he has to work with. Thus, when determining person-organisation fit, HR representatives can look for applicants who have a supplementary fit with the organisation, which is “when a person and an organisation possess similar or matching characteristics” (Cable & Edwards, 2004, p. 822). This means assessing the applicant according to their personality, values, goals, and attitudes, and then determining whether or not s/he matches the organisation’s characteristics, including its culture, values, goals, and norms (Kristof, 1996, p. 4). In relation to person-job fit,
what is being assessed are the applicant’s KSAs (knowledge, skills, and abilities) and whether or not they match the requirements of the job (Edwards, 1991, p. 285).

However, trait questions contain some uncertainty. Eder and Harris (1999) conclude upon previous research by summarizing that uncertainty pervades the ability of trait questions to predict an applicant’s future performance. In other words, there is no demonstrated link between self-descriptions elicited from trait questions and how an applicant will eventually perform in a work situation. That these answers are an imprecise measure for predicting future performance is particularly interesting from an interactional point of view. What is it about applicants’ responses to trait questions that renders them unsuitable for assessing how that person will eventually end up performing? Why do such questions suffer uncertainty regarding their work performance predictability? Are there clues in the interaction as to why these kinds of questions show some unreliability towards predicting future performance?

In order to address this issue, I have collected cases of so-called “trait questions” such as:

Excerpt (22) – SCA15:VID@11:19 – Strong Personal Qualities

IN: K- Ka vil du si er de sterke personlige
    What will you say are your strong personal
    What would you say are your strong personal
    egen↑skapene dine.
    competence.DEF.PL yours
    competencies?

In interactional terms, it is imprecise to say that a question such as this is not a question asking for a description of traits. Rather, these are first pair parts (Schegloff, 2007b) designed to elicit information from the applicant in order to document his or her strong personal competencies. By asking what the applicant would consider “de sterke personlige egen↑skapene dine”/“your strong personal competencies”, the interviewer makes relevant what I call a self-report of whatever competence, skill, ability, etc. that the applicant would consider relevant for the assessment segment (C. Goodwin & Goodwin, 1992), his or her “strong personal competencies”. My focus here is on ‘other-initiated self-reports’ and therefore I do not consider those evaluations that are self-initiated by the applicants themselves, such as the one below:
So by referring to other-initiated self-reports, I mean that it is the interviewer who makes it relevant for the applicant to report his or her own traits, hence self-report. As mentioned, the problem that I wish to address concerns why it is that these other-initiated self-reports might be hard-pressed to predict the future performance of applicants. In order to do so, I attend to the responses applicants’ produce in two ways. First, I will analyse how other-initiated self-reports are sequentially mobilised. Secondly, I draw on the concept of ‘epistemics’ in order to consider how applicants orient towards the certainty of their evaluations.

The etymological origins of the term ‘epistemics’ originate from the Aristotelian philosophical concept of ‘episteme’, which refers to human knowledge (Moses & Knutsen, 2012, p. 217). Within studies of social interaction and in particular those of CA, the study of how knowledge is managed in conversation is the study of epistemics. It encompasses the study of the interactional negotiation of who has the rights to what knowledge (Glenn & LeBaron, 2011; Heritage & Raymond, 2005; Raymond & Heritage, 2006), or the degree to which someone has access to the knowledge (Pomerantz, 1984a), as a practical problem during social interactions. In this sense, the practical problem of knowledge in conversation has three distinct dimensions (see Stivers et al., 2011, p. 9): 1) epistemic access, 2) epistemic primacy, and 3) epistemic responsibility. Epistemic access involves issues such as knowing and not knowing, the person’s degree of certainty, what the source of the knowledge is, and the quality of the knowledge. Epistemic primacy concerns the authority of knowledge, including who has the rights to claim knowledge. Lastly, epistemic responsibility involves, for example, what a person can be expected to know.

The kind of epistemics I am interested in regarding other-initiated self-reports concerns access and thus concerns issues such as how certain an applicant is in what s/he is evaluating. What I aim to show is that producing other-initiated self-reports is epistemically not a straightforward issue for applicants, and that some assessable qualities are easier to evaluate than others. This practical issue is important if once again the evaluative purpose of the job interview in general is considered, and
the reliability of the information that the interviewer obtains. In order to investigate the aforementioned issues, I will answer the following research question: “How are other-initiated self-reports made relevant by interviewers and provided by applicants?”

In addressing this question, I rely on a collection of 21 instances of other-initiated self-reports. All of these can be found in “Appendix E: Collection of Other-Initiated Self-reports”. The instances can be subdivided into additional categories depending on what it is that the interviewer wants to have evaluated. I rely on Goodwin and Goodwin’s (1986; 1992) term ‘assessables’ to refer to what the interviewer seeks to have evaluated and have thus identified sequences in the data wherein the assessment of something is sought. Consequently, I have 16 instances of the interviewer enquiring into the applicants’ competencies, eight instances of inquiries into language proficiency, five instances with the interviewer inquiring into managerial abilities, and, lastly, four times where the interviewer asks how the applicant handles giving and receiving feedback.

The section is structured as follows: Section 7.3.1 considers the sequentiality of self-reports and how they are mobilised during the job interview’s talk in interaction. It is shown how interviewers focus on the elicitation of the competencies, strengths, and weakness. Similarly, applicants produce multiple self-reports in their second pair parts, often occurring in list format. However, on some occasions, other actions are observable. Thus, accounts of where the knowledge for doing the self-report is from and justifications as to why the self-report is true can be observed in the interactions. Following this, in Section 7.3.2, the epistemics of the self-reports is addressed. Here, it is show how there are three degrees of epistemic access at work in job interviews regarding the certainty of applicants’ self-reports. In Section 7.3.3, this section of the empirical investigations is concluded and the implications discussed.

### 7.3.1 The Sequentiality of Self-Reports

The present section analyses the sequentiality of the production of self-reports in job interviews. In doing so I draw upon a number of observations. The first observation is a fairly simple one: interviewers ask for and applicants produce more than one self-report. In other words, the applicant is not asked to produce a “strength” or “competence”. The second observation I wish to report is that self-reports occur in
what resemble list formats. Jefferson (1990) was one of the first to describe lists in everyday interactions and she observed that lists often, though not always, occur in three-part units. Jefferson primarily considers lists within the same turn-constructional unit. However, in job interviews, lists occur across greater chunks of conversation and in multiple turn-constructional units. Consider the following example:

Excerpt (24) – (1)SCA17:VID@04:44

1  IN:  |  Ka ka er de sterke egenskapene dine? .h
What What are DET strong competency.DEF.PL your
What are your strong competencies

2  AP:  |  Eg lærer fort,
I learn.PRS fast
And I learn fast

3  |  {((0.2)
{{{(IN orients

4  IN:  |  Ja_
Yes
Yes
{{{(IN starts

5  AP:  |  Å: eg er glad i arbeid,
And I am happy in work
And I am fond of work

6  |  (0.3)

7  |  Å så er jeg ganske nøye,
And then am I pretty meticulous
And then I am pretty meticulous

Here the applicant produces three evaluations (l. 2, l. 6 and l. 8). Each of the two latter are connected to the prior one via the applicant’s use of the conjunction “Å”/“And”. This means that each new self-report is added to the previous one, thus construing a list of self-reports, i.e., what the applicant considers to be his strong competencies. There are no issues with listing self-reports like this. Indeed, the interviewer begins filing the applicant’s evaluations. The third observation is that often, but not always, the applicant will justify the self-report or account for the knowledge used in order to make it.

The significance of these observations for Eder and Harris (1999), regarding the low reliability of these “trait questions” in predicting actual work
performance, is that work performance is not the issue. Rather, the issue is the competencies, strengths, and weaknesses themselves. The orientation generally seems to be towards the issue of what the competencies are in an existential manner, i.e. what are the abilities, characteristics, and so on that the applicant actually possesses, and thus not on how they are actually used in performing work.

7.3.1.1 *Multiplicity in Self-reports*

In this subsection, I will show how interviewers generally pursue more than one self-report, that the applicants generally tend to produce more than one, and thus that self-reports generally tend to occur in list constructions that span multiple turn-constructional units.

Having closed the previous topic, the interviewer (IN) in Excerpt (25) below initiates a self-report sequence (see l. 10-11). After the question, the applicant (AP) produces an insert expansion wherein he asks for clarification in terms of what the self-reports should be related to. He then produces two times three self-reports. The first one commences in l. 21 and the second one in l. 39.

**Excerpt (25)** - (1)SCA8:VID@07:35 – *Not an annoying person*

1   AP:   Så det vel litt å lære å kjenne #de:#
So it little to learn.to know those
2   (0.3)
3   IN:   Ja_=
Yes
4   AP:   =#du  jobbe med #
you workPRS with
you work with
5   (0.3)
6   IN:   .h Hvis >hvis du ska for¶søke å så<
If you.2SG should try.INF and then
7   (0.5)
8   IN:   beskrive::: deg sjøl;
describe.INF you self
describe yourself
9   (0.5)
10  Ka:  ka vil du si er de viktigste:
What what will you say.inf are det important.SUPL
What would you say are your most important
egenskapene dine? competency.pl.def your competencies

(0.5)

AP: → Sånn jobb #ø:::h# eller Like work or like work or

IN: [Ja:h_ Yes

Yes

AP: .hh[hh

IN: → [Både personlig]; [å: jobbrelatert_] _ Both personally and job related Both personally and job related

AP: [Eg ø:::hh I

I

(0.7)

.hhh

(0.8)

→ Eg ø:h gjør mitt beste; Prøver {å::: I do.PRS my best Try.PRS to I do my best. Try to {

({(IN orients towards interview guide on the table in front of him and starts taking notes))

(1.0)

få til det eg vil å det eg tror er:rg get.INF to what I want and what I believe.PRS is achieve what I want and what I think is

right, right

(0.3)

.hhh ø::hm

(2.0)

Eg >Men eg er ø:g< ydmyk, Å s- altså ø:g ø:h Eg hører I But I am also humble And well I I listen But I am also humble. And well I listen

jo på folkh

adv to people to people of course

(0.6)
som ø:h
who
who
(0.7)
som (kan ting å::: sø: uhm #ja: mer erfaring
who can thing.PL and yes more experience
who can do things and yes more experience
nnn
{{(IN nods and
continues taking
notes))

#Å:# >Altså eg hø- eg hører jo på uansett ka
and Well I I listen.PRS ADV to regardless what
and Well I listen regardless to what

alle folk sier;
all people say.PRS
what all people say of course

.h[hh ø:::h Men eg ø:h
But I
But I

IN:
{(Ja_
Yes
Yes
{(IN nods and
continues taking
notes))

(1.0)
AP: →Jahh ↑eg er .hhhh
Yes I am
Yes I am

{{(0.5)
{{(IN stops taking
notes and looks at
AP))

egentlig snille; ≥eg tror ikkje eg er nåге sånn:<
actually kind I think.PRS not I am some like
actually kind I do not think I am some like

masete: irriterendes person tror eg; Har eg
någing annoyance person thînk I Have.PRS I
a nagging annoying person I think Have I

>inntrykk av i hvert fall< [føsjølf ø:h
impression of in every case self
the impression of myself in any case

IN:
[Neih Hnh Hnh .hh hh
No
No

AP: .hh Å eg tror ikkje eg er så vanskelig å
And I think not I am so difficult to
And I do not think I am so difficult to

bli kjent med {egentlig;
become.INF familiar with actually
become familiar with actually
IN’s initiation of the self-report in l. 7-11 is again done after the previous sequence has been closed (see l. 1-6) and there is no explicit constriction as to what aspect the self-report is supposed to be done with regards to. Here, it can be noted that he uses the definite plural form of “egenskapene”. Thereby, he shows an orientation towards AP having multiple competencies. The generic nature of the first pair part actually leads the applicant to conduct an insert expansion (Peräkylä, 2004; Schegloff, 2007b) with which he asks for clarification by saying “Sånn jobb #ø:::h# eller”/“Like work or”. In commencing an insert expansion, AP indicates an inability to produce an answer to IN’s first pair part before obtaining additional information. In other words, he is unable to immediately infer in what regard he ought to produce his self-report. In his clarification, IN maintains the general aspect of his initiation by responding “Både personligt å: jobbrelatert_”/“Both personally and work related”. So, the self-report that the applicant is supposed to perform is not restricted to either of these two topical domains, but should encompass them both.

As mentioned, AP produces a number of self-reports after the insert expansion: his first group of self-reports are “Eg ø:h ↑gjør mitt beste;”/“I do my best” (l. 21), which is immediately followed by “Prøver å::: (1.0) fø til det eg vil å det eg tror e:r riktig,”/“Try to achieve what I want and what I think is right” (l. 21-24). He then concludes by saying “Men eg er o:g< ydmyk,”/“But I am also humble” (l. 28). Hereafter, he explains why he is humble, e.g. he listens to people (see l. 28-34). These three self-reports are arguably related to work. Thus, doing one’s best is something one does in relation to performing a particular task. Similarly, trying to achieve what one considers to be the right thing as well as being humble are also work-related self-reports. Additional evidence for this can be found in the AP’s ensuing turn-constructional units (l. 33) wherein he mentions that he listens to people who “kan ting”/“can do things” and have “mer erfaring”/“more experience”. The purpose of adding this comment obviously is to avoid insinuating that he is someone who does
what he wants, disregarding others’ opinions. This would then suggest that the aforementioned self-reports are relatable to a working context.

In terms of constructing a list across multiple turn-constructional units, these evaluations are connected via their adjacency, use of conjunctions, and specific adverbials. The first two evaluations are immediately adjacent to one another, albeit constituting distinct turn-constructional units. The third one is related to the previous ones via the contrastive conjunction “Men”/“But” (Glenn & LeBaron, 2011, p. 15), which indicates a contrast to the previous evaluations, that have mainly focused on him acting on his own accord. Being humble thus contrasts with doing what you yourself think is right. Additionally, he makes use of the adverbial “o:g”/“also”, which indicates that this evaluation is made in addition to the previous two.

AP also produces a number of other self-reports including “↑Eg er .hhhh (0.5) egentlig snjille;”/“I am actually kind” (l. 39), “>Eg tror ikkke eg er nåге sаnn:< mæsete: irri↑tørendes person tror eg;”/“I do not think that I am some like nagging annoying person” (l. 41-42), and “.hh Å eg tror ikkke eg er så vanskelig å bli kjent med egentlig;”/“And I do not think I am so difficult to get to know really” (l. 45-46). The self-report in l. 39 is a straightforward self-report in which he attributes the predicate adjective “snjille”/“kind” to himself, i.e. “Eg”/“I” in the subject position, via the copular “er”/“am”. The evaluation of him not being “nåге sаnn:< mæsete: irri↑tørendes person”/“some like nagging annoying person” and ”sа vanskelig å bli kjent med egentlig”/“so difficult to get to know” follows the same pattern. The aforementioned quotes are both part of subordinate clauses, which are negated in the main clause using “ikkje”/“not”. Thereby he insinuates the contrary, namely that he is not annoying and easy to get to know. Both of these self-reports cannot squarely be considered work-related but are more in terms of how AP is towards other people. Thus, these kinds of self-report seem more oriented towards AP’s perception of his own personality as opposed to a competence mobilised in order to perform some task.

Again, the list aspect can be found in the relation between each of these evaluations, their adjacency, and the use of a conjunction. They are topically related in that being easy to get to know and not being annoying can readily be related to being kind. Similarly, these self-reports are proximate to one another and the last evaluation is prefaced by the conjunction “Å”/“And” thereby indicating that it is produced in addition to the previous one.
None of the aforementioned self-reports are considered problematic by IN. He engages in note-taking immediately after the initial work-related self-report is produced (l. 21), and continues throughout the applicant’s response until l. 40 where he re-establishes eye contact with AP. He resumes taking notes in l. 46 after AP produces his last self-report. Thereby, he is treating AP’s answers as being file-able. Furthermore, at various points during the interaction, IN nods, thereby displaying recipiency and understanding (Bavelas & Gerwing, 2011).

7.3.1.2 Self-reports and Other Actions

Doing self-reports can make other actions relevant including justifications of why the evaluations are made and accounts for the knowledge used in making it. Consequently, an applicant can produce a self-report and then proceed in justifying it. Similarly, the applicant can account for where the knowledge that informs the self-reports comes from. Sequentially, this means that self-reports can occur alongside other kinds of actions.

In the excerpt below, which is from the DrillCo interviews for a technical assistant position, I² (interviewer two) initiates a self-report sequence by asking the applicant (AP) to provide his strengths and weaknesses. The applicant (AP) then goes on to produce two evaluations. In extension of the second one, he proceeds to perform a justification.

**Excerpt (26) — L1_2:VID@22:26 — The Team Player**

1  IN³:         #Absolutely_#
2          (0.3)
3  IN²:        Yeah_
4          (0.6)
5  #Okay_#
6  → .hh (0.2) Can you maybe {summarize and give me: a
7  }{(I² and AP establish
8  mutual gaze)}
9  couple of your key strengths and a couple of your key
10  limitations {in terms of your working style;
11  }{(AP nods)}
12  {((1.0)
13  }{(I² nods and
14  AP looks down))}
15  AP:  → I'm a good team player?
16  (0.3)
As mentioned, l. 1-4 encompasses the conclusion of the previous topic, which has been on the issue of safety in the drilling industry. Both I\(^2\) (l. 1) and I\(^2\) (l. 3) agree with AP’s assertion produced immediately prior. Then in l. 5 after a 0.6-second pause, I\(^2\) produces an “#Okay_#”. This functions as a second-closing third marking acceptance of the applicant’s response and implicates closure of the previous sequence (Schegloff, 2007b, p. 121). Subsequently, she then progresses into a new topic by producing a new first pair part (l. 6-8). In terms of its linguistic composition, the question (l. 6-8) can be considered a Yes/No interrogative (Raymond, 2003) that makes relevant a confirming/non-confirming response. This is observable from the fact that the modal verb “Can” is moved to the front the sentence subject “you” thereby denoting an ability to do something. The question does in fact receive a confirming response in the form of a nod in overlap with l. 4. However, simply confirming the ability to provide a description of strengths and weaknesses would likely be an insufficient answer. In order to produce a preferred second pair part to the question, AP must evaluate what he would consider to be his strengths and weaknesses.
The two evaluations that AP produces are “I’m a good team player?” (l. 10) and “And #u::h# A good motivator as well”. These are two distinct turn-constructional units. The first one is both grammatically, syntactically, and prosodically complete and also treated as such by I谁 produces an acknowledgement token (Jefferson, 1984) “Mhm,” (l. 12) and also starts taking notes. The second self-report is a distinct turn-constructional unit despite it not containing a verb. It is actually retrospectively added to the previous turn-constructional unit via the conjunction “And” and the phrase “as well”. They are self-reports in the sense that in both instances AP attributes these two characteristics of being a team player and a motivator to himself by relying the contracted copular “‘m”. Thereby he links the predicates, i.e. “good team player?” and “a good motivator”, to the sentence subject “I”, which he uses reflexively to refer to himself. What is also interesting in this sequence is what occurs after AP self-reports. In l. 10, he starts accounting for his time as a manager in a student society. By doing this account, he provides support for his self-report. Evidence that his immediate second pair part is sufficient is observable in I谁’s verbal and embodied behaviour. In l. 12 after AP has produced his first self-report, she produces the acknowledgement token (Gardner, 1997) “Mhm,” at the same time as she disengages from looking at AP in order to focus on the piece of paper she is holding in her hand. She then commences in note-taking, which continues until l. 17. This suggests that the second pair part is preferred, in that she is treating his self-report as file-able.

What is characteristic of this particular sequence as opposed to the previous ones that I have been looking at is that AP here starts justifying for why he is a good motivator (l. 14-21). He tells the story of how he took a year off to work in a management committee and during that year had to manage 40 unpaid students working in their student society. Following his production of “forty people” (l. 20), I谁 lifts her eyebrows, thereby visibly indicating the difficulty of this feat of motivating this amount of people. AP also adds that these were unpaid students (l. 20-21). Thereby he insinuates that managing forty people who were unpaid constitutes a motivational challenge for him. This, then, makes up the argumentative basis for him being able to evaluate himself as being “a good motivator”.

Adding other actions related to self-reports can allocate other self-reports to later turn-constructional units. In Excerpt (27) below the applicant (AP) produces
both an account (l. 15-17) and a justification (l. 24-26) in between his self-reports (l. 9-10 and 20-21):

Excerpt (27) — (1)SCA7:VID@15:55 — A Person Who People Have Trust In

1 IN: Hvis du ska: seie någe om: om øh
If you should say something about
If you should say something about

2 \{personlege egenskaper,
personal competency.PL
personal competencies
{((IN looks at AP))

3 Ka er de sterke egenskapene dine.
What are your strong competency.DEF.PL your
What are your strong competencies

4 (0.4)
5 AP: hmpf
6 (1.1)
7 {Khn Khn
{((IN looks down
and prepares to take notes))

8 (0.7)
9 Ø: h Eg e r (0.2) veldig motivert ((0.3) kan
I am very motivated can
I am very motivated
{((IN starts taking notes))

10 jeg begynne med å si for det her,
I begin.INF with to say.INF for this here
I can start by saying for this

11 (1.5)
12 IN: {Mhm
{((IN looks up
at AP))

13 AP: Ø:::hm
14 (0.6)

15 Øt Så er eg >Jeg har fått< tidligere på: Vi
Then am I have received previously on We
Then I am I have previously received at We

16 har jo mye sånn tilbakemelding:e:r {å sånn
have.PRS DET many like feedback_message.PL and such
have a lot of like feedback and such
{((IN nods))

17 der på:# befalskolen å forsvaret å sånt,
there at officer_school.DEF and army.DEF and such
things at the officer school and the army and such

18 .h Ø:hm#
19 (0.8)
20 → Eg trur å har hørt før oss at jeg er
I believe and have heard before also that I am
I believe and have also previously heard that I am

21 en person som folk får tillit til;
a person whom people get trust to
a person whom people have trust in

22 {0.5}
{{(IN orients towards
interview guide and
starts taking notes)}

23 IN: Mhm

24 AP: Ø:h Fordi:: eg anser meg sjøl som øh ganske
Because I consider my self as quite
Because I consider myself quite

25 ydmyk? Å har ø:h mye respekt for andre
humble And have much respect for other
humble And have a lot of respect for other

26 mennesker,
péople
People

27 (1.5)

28 IN: Ja_ [Khn
Yes
Yes

29 [Ø:hm
(0.8)

30 → Å dermed ogso en ærlig person da_
And thus also an honest person ADV
And thus also an honest person

31 (0.5)

32 Som (0.4) tydeligvis #ø:hm# (vekker folks at
Who clearly evoke people.poss that
Who cleare evoke people’s that
{{(IN stops taking notes
and looks up at AP)}

33 folk får tillit til meg då,
people get to trust to me then
people have trust in me then

34 (0.5)

35 IN: ↑Mhm;

36 IE: .hhh Ø:::hm

37 (0.7)

38 Så (0.3) er eg veldig seriøs {i arbeidet mitt.
Then am I very serious in work my
Then I am very serious in my work
{{(IN starts taking notes)}

In this excerpt, AP produces multiple self-reports in response to IN’s first pair part in l. 1-3. The first competence he produces as a response is “Ø:h Eg e:r (0.2) veldig
motivert (0.3) kan jeg begynne med å si for det her, ”/”I am very motivated I can start by saying for this” (l. 9-10). After the production of the evaluation, IN starts taking notes. This self-report is not justified. After a lengthy pause in l. 11, during which IN has finished taking notes, he lifts his head and producing a “Mhm…” (l. 12), which here acts as a continuer (C. Goodwin, 1986) whereby he shows an orientation towards AP’s turn at talk as still ongoing. What AP then does is produce the beginning of a self-report, “.mt Så er eg”/”Then I am” (l. 15). Here, he halts the production of the assessable (C. Goodwin & Goodwin, 1992) in order to begin the production of a new turn-constructional unit “>Jeg har fått< tidligere på:/”/”I have previously received at”. The production of this turn-constructional unit is also halted. He then proceeds to account for an army and officer school practice, namely “Vi har jo mye sånn tilbakemelding#ere å sånn der på:# førsvaret å sånt”/”We have a lot of like feedback and such things at the officer school and the army and such” (l. 15-17). This turn-constructional unit is unrelated to the previous self-report but rather projects into the ensuing one. Note that IN is disengaged from note taking and looks at AP throughout the production of this account.

What it projects is the source of the knowledge that informs the self-report that AP is about to produce. Thus, evaluating himself as “en person som folk får tillit til”/”a person whom people have trust in” is thus informed in part by the feedback that he has received. Additional evidence for this analysis can be found in the main clause of the turn-constructional unit. Here he states, “Eg trur å har hørt for oss”/”I believe and have also previously heard”. Not only is this a conviction but something that he has heard from others. Thus he refers back to the conducted evaluations. The issue of knowledge in self-reports will be addressed in depth in the ensuing section.

What can then be observed here is that this particular assessment (l. 20-21) is preceded by an account for where his knowledge comes in order to produce the self-report. Similar to Excerpt (26), Excerpt (27) above also shows how the self-report is succeeded by two justifications: 1) “Fordi:: eg anser meg sjøl som øh ganske ydmik”/”Because I consider myself quite humble” and “Å har ø:h mye respekt for andre mennesker,”/”And have a lot of respect for other people” (l. 24-25). What gives these two turn-constructional units away as justifications for the previous self-report are the conjunctions. The conjunction “Fordi::”/”Because” connects the previous self-report as occurring on account of what follows in the turn-constructional, i.e., that he considers himself humble. Similarly, the conjunction “Å”/”and” ties the second turn-
constructional unit to the preceding one, and is thus oriented to as an addition to the first, and is therefore also consequential in obtaining people’s trust. The basis of his argument is that being humble and having respect for other people fosters trust.

7.3.1.3 Preliminary Conclusion

The present section has addressed the issue of how self-reports are handled interactionally. It has been shown that interviewers, in their first pair parts, request information on the applicants’ competencies, strengths, and weaknesses. Applicants are always assumed to have more than one of the aforementioned features. Similarly, applicants always respond with more than one. In many cases this means that the production of self-reports come to resemble lists, as they occur in clusters. However, doing self-reports also makes other actions relevant. Thus, an applicant can argue why he is a good motivator or people trust him by justifying his evaluations. Similarly, an applicant can account for where the knowledge informing his evaluation comes from. The topic of knowledge in self-reports is an important and interesting one that is the focus of the ensuing section.

Another thing to consider mainly with regards to NorCo’s interviews and the interview guide that the interviewer uses, is that the question regarding the applicant actually using his/her competencies in practice is not asked. This means that the performative aspect of competencies is disregarded or at least not considered. An interview guide is not use in the DrillCo interview making it impossible to determine whether or not there is an interest in terms of the performative aspects of strengths. Nevertheless, the preceding analysis has shown that the primary concern of interviewers’ first pair part initiations and applicants’ second pair part evaluations mainly involves the activity of producing and documenting strengths, weaknesses and competencies.

7.3.2 The Epistemics of Self-Reports

Having considered how other-initiated self-reports occur sequentially in the interaction, the present section considers the issue of the knowledge-basis that the self-reports are based upon. There are a number of observations again that are relevant going into this analysis.
First of all, ‘competencies’, ‘strengths’, and ‘weaknesses’ are a territory of knowledge (Heritage, 2012a; Heritage & Raymond, 2005) where the interviewer and applicant have different epistemic statuses. The interviewer is less knowledgeable (or K–) meaning that s/he does not have access to information on the applicant’s skills or characteristics. This is evident from the fact that interviewers request information from the applicants. The applicants on the other hand have knowledge, or are assumed to be knowledgeable (or K+), with regards to his/her strengths.

A second observation concerns the directness of the knowledge. In conversation it is found that conversationalists have different degrees of access to their knowledge, such as ‘direct’ or ‘indirect’ (Stivers et al., 2011, p. 13). Pomerantz (1984a) showed how first and second assessments are contingent on the speaker’s access to what is being assessed. The directness of access to the knowledge is a complex issue concerning self-reports. Arguably, the applicant has direct access to knowledge about him or herself through introspection. However, an applicant can also have access through colleagues’ evaluations.

The third observation is that applicants claim varying levels of certainty in making their claims. Thus, applicants can objectively claim, 1) “I am a team player”, 2) “I do not think I am so difficult to become familiar with actually”, or 3) “I am an honest person who clearly evokes people’s trust in me”. Utterances number 2) and 3) contain upgrades and downgrades such as “I do not think” and “clearly”. ‘I think’ has previously been shown to function as a marker of tentativeness (or uncertainty) (Kärkkäinen, 2003) or belief (Precht, 2003). Similarly, a marker such as “clearly” indicates a higher degree of evidentiality (Biber & Finegan, 1989). A self-report such as the number 1) has no linguistic markers indicating the level of certainty of the utterer. As a result, it is proffered neutrally.

7.3.2.1 Neutral Epistemic Access

In this section I will be considering those other-initiated self-report second pair parts exhibiting what I have decided to call ‘neutral’ evaluations. This particular type of evaluation is one of the most frequent. Generally speaking, it has the following linguistic format.

1SG/3SG + VB + EVALUATION SEGMENT
Self-reports are prefaced with a first personal pronoun (either “jeg”/“eg” in Norwegian or “I” in English). Occasionally the third person pronoun “det”/“that”/“it” can occur in the subject position. Then follows a verb which can be a copular (e.g. “er” in Norwegian or “am” in English) or in some cases regular verb such as “lære”/“learn”. An evaluation segment then follows, which can either be an adjective, an adverbial, or a noun, or a configuration thereof.

The following excerpts show how this format is used in producing actual self-reports during the job interview:

**Excerpt (28) — (1)SCA17:VID04:44**

1   IN:  
   Ka ka er de sterke egenskapene dine? .h
   What are your strong competencies

2   AP:  
   Eg lærer fort,
   I learn fast

3   {((0.2)
   {((IN orients
   towards paper
   on table))

4   IN:  
   Ja_
   Yes

5   {((IN starts
   taking notes))

6   AP:  
   Å: eg er glad i arbeid,
   And I am happy in work

7   {((7.3)
   Og så er jeg ganske nøye,
   And then am I pretty meticulous

8   IE:  
   {Kanskje for nøye av og til_
   Maybe too meticulous of and to
   {((IN nods and
   carries on
   taking notes))

9   IN:  
   Ok
   Okay

10  IE:   
   {Når e:gt holder på tømringa_<
   When I keep busy with the carpentry

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Excerpt (29) – L1_2:VID@22:26 – The Team Player

6 .hh (0.2) Can you maybe summarize and give me: a
(((I² and AP establish mutual gaze))

7 couple of your key strengths and a couple of your key
8 limitations {in terms of your working style;
9 {((AP nods))

10 AP: → I'm a good team player?
11 (0.3)
12 I²:
13 {[(Mhm,
14 {(((I² looks at paper in her hand and then takes notes))

15 → [And #uu::h# a good motivator as well,

Excerpt (30) – (1)SCA3:AUD@07:59 – Work Effort

1 IN: .h Hvis du skal si litt om: om
If you.2sg shoud say.INF little about about
If you should say a little bit about

2 deg sjø:l? (0.3) Ka::: vil du si er de
you self What will you.2sg say.INF are DET
yourself What would you say are
sterke: sidene dine,
strong side.PL.DEF your
your strong sides

3 AP: → Nei det e::r arbeidsinnsats
No that is work_effort
No that is work effort

Each of these excerpts exhibit turn-constructional units that are neutrally formatted. The first example in Excerpt (28) is “Eg lærer fort,” “I learn fast” where the applicant proffers his ability to learn fast as a competence. The adverbial “fort” modifies the verb “lærer”, signifying the quickness at which it takes place. In other words, the applicant’s ability to learn fast is evaluated to constitute one of his strengths. An example where a copular verb is used can be found in the same excerpt at l. 7, “Å: eg er glad i arbeid” “And I am fond of work”. Here the sentence subject “eg” “I”, reflexively referring to the applicant himself, is attributed the adjective “glad” “fond” via the copular “er” “am”. The adjective comes with the prepositional phrase “i
“in work” denoting the object of the applicant’s liking. Note that in the last self-report, in the original transcription (l. 89), the sentence’s verb and subject have swapped places. This is due to the conjunction “så”/“then”. Excerpt (29) shows the same pattern in English. Here, however, the evaluation segment (l. 10) is a noun phrase with the head noun “team player” being modified by the adjective “good”.

Again, the sentence is linguistically formatted around the copular “am” through which the predicate “a good team player” is reflexively attributed by the applicant to himself. In the last example, excerpt (30), the pronoun “det”/“that” (l. 4) occupies the subject position in the sentence. The fact that this particular pronoun is used is because its predicate complement, “arbeidsinnsats”/“work effort” is not reflexively attributable, i.e. it would be ungrammatical to say, “I am work effort”. A work effort is arguably something that one possesses. In this sense, the pronoun “det”/“that” is pointing out a competence that the applicant considers himself in possession of. In all of these cases, the self-report is produced without any linguistic markers denoting the epistemic status or aspect that the applicant has in making his evaluation. The next two sections consider how applicants linguistically display uncertainty or certainty in their self-reports.

7.3.2.2 Low Epistemic Access

The present section considers those cases where the applicant linguistically displays less certainty in their claims. Lower epistemic access is indicated by orienting towards the self-report as an opinion, using a cognitive verb such as “think” (Kärkkäinen, 2003; Precht, 2003):

**Excerpt (31) — (1)SCA8 — Not an annoying person**

7 IN: →  .h Hvis >hvis du  ska  for↑søke å  så<  
   If if you.2SG should try.INF and then  
   If you should try and then

8 beskrive::: deg sjøl;
describe.INF you self
describe yourself

9 (0.5)

10 Ka: ka vil du  si  er de viktigste:
What what will you.2SG say.inf are det important.SUPL
What would you say are your most important
In the previous subsection, it was shown how self-reports can follow a simple format. In the last excerpt, however, the self-reports are generally longer. One example is “>Eg tror ikkje eg er någe sånn:< måsete: irriterendes person tror eg; Har eg nagging annoying person think I Have nagging annoying person I think Have I>

>impression of in every case self the impression of myself in any case”

Focusing on “>Eg tror ikkje eg er någe sånn:< måsete: irriterendes person tror eg; Har eg nagging annoying person think I Have nagging annoying person I think Have I>impression of in every case self the impression of myself in any case.”
ikkje eg er någe sånn< mæsete: irri†tørendes person” the same linguistic format can be found. However in the present case, it is moved to a subordinate clause of the main clause “Eg tror ikkje”. Thus, the following rough structure can be observed:

[MAIN CLAUSE: 1SG + VB] + [SUB. CLAUSE: 1SG + VB + EVALUATION SEGMENT]

In these turn constructional units, then, the self-report itself is moved to the subordinate clause. This is because it is the syntactical object of the, in this case, transitive verb “tror”/“think”. In both l. 41 and l. 45, this verb is negated, meaning that the object of the main clause is linguistically constructed as something that AP does not believe. In English conversation, “think” has previously been linked to hedged opinions (Kärkäinen, 2003; e.g. Precht, 2003). AP could have designed his turn-constructional unit otherwise. He could have stated, “I am not a nagging or annoying person”. This linguistic construction would correspond to those investigated in the previous section. Then he would have oriented towards it as an epistemically neutral fact. By hedging the opinion that he is not a nagging or annoying kind of person, he avoids insinuating that he knows the impression he gives other people. Thereby, he escapes being accountable for knowledge he does not have direct access to. Additional evidence can be found for this analysis. For example he adds “tror eg,”/“I think” to his preceding evaluation in l. 41-42. He adds stress on “tror” and thus indicates that this is his belief and opinion. Furthermore, he adds, “Har eg >înntrykk av i hvert fall< £sjølf£/“Have I the impression of myself in any case.” Here, he construes the previous evaluation as being an impression he has of himself. Thereby, he orients towards it as being a sensory experience that he has obtained from his interactions with others. In other words, he is not claiming direct access to the trait. The same pattern can be observed in a subsequent self-report: “.hh Å eg tror ikkje eg er så vanskelig å bli kjent med egentlig;”/“And I do not think I am so difficult to become familiar with actually” (l. 40-41). The same conjugated mental verb, “tror”/“think”, is used and negated again to indicate that this is an opinion as opposed to a fact, given that he does not have access to knowledge about how other people experience becoming familiar with him.

Excerpt (32) below does not make use of a cognitive verb. Here, the applicant (AP) instead uses a configuration of a modal verb plus a main verb. The
particular construction displays an orientation towards the self-report as being AP’s own opinion:

**Excerpt (32) — (1)SCA9@09:46 — Push On**

1 **IN:** Hvis du ska for søke å sá si någe  
   If you should and then say something

2 om deg <sjøl som person> ka er de [sterke about your self as person] What are DET strong
   yourself as a person What are your strong

3 egenskapene dine competency.PL.DEF
   competencies

4 AP: .hhh #Nei# det vanskelig å snakke om seg  
   No it difficult to talk about you
   No it’s difficult to talk about

5 [sjøl men eg kan jo prøva?  
   self but I can ADV try.INF
   yourself but I can try of course

6 [Hhh Huh Huh

7 (0.3)

8 **IN:** [↑Ja_  
   Yes
   Yes

9 [Det:  
   It
   It

10 AP: .hhh Eg vil nå sá  
   I will ADV sáy.INF
   I would say

11 (0.8)

12 på jobb så eg nå den sá: liker å:h  
   at work then I ADV the_one who like.PRS and
   at work then I am the one who likes to

13 (0.9)

14 pusha litt på: få ting: gjort,=  
   push.PRS little on get thing.PL done
   push a little bit to get things done

In terms of syntactic structure, AP’s self-report in l. 11-15 has a similar structure compared to the previous one. However in the subordinate clause “så eg nå den så: liker å:h pusha litt på: få ting: gjort,”“then I’m the one who likes to push a little bit to get things done”, the copular verb “am” is dropped in the original utterance. Nevertheless his self-report applies to the same structure. In the main clause, the main
difference is observable. Here he relies on the modal verb “vil”/“would” and the main verb “så”/“say”. In conjunction they are used to indicate that the content of the subordinate clause is an opinion or conviction. The adverbial “nå”, which is difficult to translate into English in this particular context, here and alongside the two verbs constructs the meaning that the propositional content of the subordinate clause is something that AP considers to be the case.

The present case has considered how cognitive verbs and modal verbs in conjunction with other verbs can be used in order to indicate less certainty. This means that self-reports are constructed as opinions rather than neutral facts, as shown in the preceding subsection.

7.3.2.3 High Epistemic Access

I have only been able to identify one instance where the applicant claims a high degree of epistemic access. In order to show this I wish to return to Excerpt (26), which is partly reproduced below. The evaluation I wish to focus on occurs in l. 30-32, but I will touch upon a few additional aspects that affect how the applicant (AP) communicates a high degree of certainty in making his evaluation:

Excerpt (33) – (1)SCA7:VID@15:55 – A Person Who People Have Trust In

1 IN: Hvis du ska: seie någe om: om øh If you.2SG should say.INF something about something.2SG about

2 {personlege egenskaper, personal competency.PL personal competencies

3 (IN looks at AP)

Ka er de sterke egenskapene dine. What are your strong competency.DEF.PL your strong competency.PL

(((11 lines omitted))

15 .mt SÅ er eg >Jeg har fått< tidligere på: Vi Then am I have received previously on We
Then I am I have previously received at We

16 har jo mye sånn tilbemelding#:er: å sånn have.PRS DET many like feedback_message.PL and such have a lot of like feedback and such

(((IN nods))

17 der på:# befalskolen å forsvaret å sånt, there at officer_school.DEF and army.DEF and such things at the officer school and the army and such
I believe and have also previously heard that I am a person whom people get trust to

Because I consider myself quite humble And have a lot of respect for other people

And thus also an honest person

Then I am very serious in my work
Early on in his response to IN’s question, AP explains how receiving feedback is a normal practice at the officer school and in the army. This is consequential for how his self-reports are constructed. Here I will focus on the following one: “Å-dermed ogso en ærlig person da_ (0.5) Som (0.4) tydeligvis #ø:hm” vækker folks at folk får tìllit til meg då”/“And thus also an honest person who clearly evoke people’s that people trust in me” (l. 31-33). The gist of his self-report here is that he is a person that people come to trust. He relies upon the adverbial “tydeligvis”/“clearly”, which increases his certainty regarding the knowledge basis of his self-report. To claim being someone that “clearly” inspires people’s trust is a claim that arguably requires support. It is in this sense that the earlier account for officer school and army feedback practices serves a function. This means that through the feedback that AP has received, he has obtained direct access to that particular domain of knowledge wherein people’s views of him are provided. This means that the feedback he has received is his “knowledge source” (Stivers et al., 2011, p. 9). He thus uses the adverbial “tydeligvis” to upgrade his degree of certainty in this knowledge source.

7.3.2.4 Preliminary Conclusion

What this section has showed is that self-reports come with different degrees of epistemic access, alongside orientations towards the certainty of the knowledge and its source in making the evaluations. In part this shows that self-reports are ‘evaluative stances’ (Du Bois, 2007; Kärkkäinen, 2003, 2006) at the base of which lies relative knowledge that applicants have and claim different degrees of access to. With regards to strengths, weaknesses, and competencies as ‘territories of knowledge’ (Heritage, 2012a, 2012b), this means that applicants have relative positions with regards to their own access to these territories and also they show this through their linguistic design, either voluntarily or involuntarily. Obviously, I am not saying that neutral epistemic access also means that the applicant is a quick learner objectively. Rather I mean that the applicant is orienting towards the self-report as an objective fact. Again, these are claims of access to the knowledge base supporting the self-report.
7.3.3 Summing Up

Section 7.3 has presented analyses that attended to an interest in so-called trait questions within HRM literature. At the outset I was interested in attending the issue of why these kinds of questions do not deliver in terms of predicting applicants’ future performance if hired, from a social perspective, based on analyses of the interaction.

In doing so, I argued that these kinds of questions should rather be understood from a social and interactional point of view, i.e. on the basis of the function that they observably have in actual job interview interactions. What I therefore argued was that these questions are better understood as other-initiated self-reports because the interviewer initiates self-reports on the part of the applicant and makes them relevant as to the skills and traits. In doing so, I asked the following research question: “How are other-initiated self-reports made relevant by interviewers and answered by applicants?” Other-initiated self-reports often mark a new topic in an interview concerning the applicants’ strengths, weaknesses, and competencies. Interviewers mobilise these through first pair parts. In their questions, interviewers always assume that applicants have more than one competence or strength. Questions are formulated in an existential way, inquiring, for example, into the “what” of what the applicants’ competencies are. Likewise, applicants tend to produce more than one competence in their second pair parts. This gives a list effect, wherein applicants produce multiple and consecutive self-reports. Doing an evaluation can also make other actions relevant. Thus, an applicant can justify why a particular self-report is relevant as well as account for it. Similarly, an applicant can account for the source of knowledge informing the self-report. In this sense, applicants orient towards claiming a certain trait as an accountable action requiring justification.

Knowledge, or epistemics, also plays a considerable role in the production of other-initiated self-assessments. The interviewer obviously has no access to the territory of knowledge that is the applicant’s competencies, strengths, or weaknesses, as opposed to the applicant. However, it has been shown that applicants also display different degrees of access and, thus, certainty of the knowledge at the basis of their self-reports. Thus, applicants can claim neutral, low, and high degrees of epistemic access in supporting their self-reports. Neutral access is indicated by an apparent lack
of linguistic markers indicating access, whereas low epistemic access is indicated with the use of cognitive and modal verbs. In the one case where an applicant claimed high access, he relied on an adverbial to indicate it. His doing so was facilitated by his previous statement, introducing an account of the source of his knowledge.

There is an interesting and key implication of these findings, namely the orientation of the interviewer towards his questions as well as the applicant. First of all, it is arguable that the interviewer orients towards his questions as being capable of eliciting the applicants’ characteristics. Second, it shows an orientation towards the applicants as being able to account for their own skills. These orientations are in a way a practical solution to a practical problem that concerns the issue of how the interviewer obtains knowledge about the applicants’ competencies. By inquiring into the competencies, the interviewer is presupposing that the question can elicit them. This is observable from the fact that the NorCo interviewer in particular engages in taking notes following the applicants’ responses. Furthermore, by asking the applicant about his/her competencies, the interviewer presupposes that s/he is not only aware of them but is also readily capable of accounting for them. This is evident from the fact that 1) the interviewer asks the applicants to account for competencies and 2) then proceeds to document the responses. Thus, these orientations allows for reasoning about applicants with regards to their competencies at the micro-level of talk in interaction.

7.3.3.1 Implications: Why “Trait Questions” do not Predict Work Performance

As the introduction to this section is testament to, a primary concern has been the issue of the lack of performance predictability of “trait questions”, as indicated by Eder and Harris (1999). I suggested in the introduction that seeing how these kinds of questions are handled in the interaction in the job interview might provide clues as to why these kinds of questions are unable to predict an applicant’s ultimate performance in a job situation, obviously on the basis of the response that the applicant provides to being asked these kinds of question.

Firstly, the term ‘trait question’ is inaccurate in referring to what is actually going on in the interaction. It would be problematic to assume that questions such as “What are your strongest competencies?” elicit objective traits. Rather, the second pair parts that these questions make relevant are self-reports. The linguistic form of
the questions themselves contain the evaluation itself, i.e., the interviewer is interested in “what” the applicant considers to be his/her “strong competencies”, “strengths”, or “weaknesses”. This means that the interviewer provides the applicant with the evaluation segment, in response to which the applicant must provide the evaluation item or what in terms of assessments are called assessables (C. Goodwin & Goodwin, 1987, 1992). In practice, this means that an applicant proffers his or her evaluation item, including being “a team player”, “kind”, “precise”, or “humble”, as a “strong competence” or “strength”. As the interviewer offers the evaluation and the applicant the evaluation item, the applicants’ second pair parts can be termed “other-initiated self-assessments”. The greatest evidence for these kinds of responses being evaluations and not objective accounts for traits is found in Section 9.2 on epistemics. Here, it was shown how applicants orient towards different degrees of certainty about their evaluations, and also oriented towards them as being beliefs and opinions.

Secondly, another reason why other-initiated self-reports are arguably incapable of predicting future work performance can be found in the sequential structure of the interaction itself. In none of the excerpts does the interviewer or applicant orient towards how a competence or strength is used in actual work. This is paradoxical, especially in the NorCo interviews where a point in the interview guide explicitly highlights the performative aspect of competencies. In the actual interactions, both in the NorCo and DrillCo interviews, the interviewer orients towards the practical task of obtaining the self-reports, whereas the applicant orients towards providing them. Thus, the interviewer engages in note-taking while the applicant produces multiple evaluations in list format over multiple turn constructional units. It is in this sense that I argue that in actual interview practice, the performative aspect of what Eder and Harris (1999) call “trait questions” is simply not there – or, at the very least, not made explicit. Instead, the practical task of the interviewer is concerned with documenting “strengths” and “competencies”, while the applicant is engaged in providing them, justifying them, and accounting for the knowledge behind them. In other words, there is no explicit orientation towards any kind of performative aspect in terms of either strengths or competencies in any of the questions in the excerpts used for this particular investigation.

Thirdly, it may not necessarily be the case that the performative aspect of strengths and competencies is not the interest of the interviewer. The case may be that the other-initiated self-reports are still used in attempt to predict performance despite
performance not being an explicit issue in the interaction. The NorCo interview guide is good evidence for this. However, serious precautions should be taken if the questions are used in this regard. As argued, these kinds of sequences do not function in the way “trait questions” are thought to function. Indeed, the section on epistemics showed that in many cases applicants oriented towards different degrees of certainty, which showed that their evaluations are beliefs and opinions as opposed to objective facts. In some instances, the applicants did of course orient towards greater certainty, and in some cases displayed neutrality in doing their self-reports. However, treating them as objective accounts of traits would be problematic since they are self-reports.

7.4 Empirical Findings

In this final section of Chapter 7, I will summarise by answering the research questions of each of the preceding empirical investigations and in doing so account for the various findings of the analyses. This section is structured accordingly: Subsection 7.4.1 answers the research question and related findings associated with the investigation reported in Section 7.1, whereas Subsection 7.4.2 concerns the analysis in Section 7.2. Section 7.3’s investigation is considered in Subsection 7.4.3. Finally, I will discuss the findings on a more general level in Section 7.4.4 in preparation for the subsequent discussion in Chapter 8.

7.4.1 Presupposed Norms and the Morality of Employment

What emerged from the analyses of Section 7.1 is that 1) interviewers rely on norms to moralise and practically reason about applicants’ employment related behaviours and circumstances, 2) interviewers and applicants intersubjectively negotiate and reason about employment behaviours and circumstances, 3) interviewers and applicants do not rely on or possess the same norms of employment, and 4) interviewers occasionally orient towards their moralisations as being problematic. I will consider each of these findings in turn after I have addressed the empirical research question.

In the introduction to Section 7.1, I asked, “How are presupposed norms about employment oriented to and used by interviewers and applicants?” The analyses showed that interviewers moralise applicants’ employment behaviours and
circumstances. To do so, they rely on presupposed norms regarding what they consider to be normal/abnormal, loyal/disloyal, right/wrong and ideal/non-ideal. The norms may not always be overtly relevant but emerge when applicants’ behaviours and circumstances are such that they conflict with the presupposed norms. When this happens, as I have observed in a number of instances, the interviewer moralises the specific issue or calls it into question in order to either explain or justify the specific issue. Likewise, applicants presuppose norms in accounting for or explaining their employment-related behaviour or circumstances. So in this sense, both the interviewer and the applicant rely on subjectively presupposed norms about the circumstances or behaviour. But these presupposed norms also play a role in the intersubjective reasoning about these circumstances since, for one of the parties, the job interviewer, an issue of confusion needs to be resolved and understood in order to evaluate the applicant according to the job interview’s professional agenda.

Having considered how presupposed norms are used, I will now go into further detail on the findings related to subjectivity and intersubjectivity. What I have shown, as mentioned above, is that both interviewers and applicants rely on norms in order to intersubjectively reason about employment-related matters. However, the norms that interviewers and applicants presuppose in reasoning are not necessarily the same. So, when an interviewer might presuppose that a particular employment change between two firms is incoherent and does not make sense, by orientating towards career, the applicant might suppose their coherence based on an altogether different norm, regarding the need for a steady income.

Both the interviewer and applicant bring their own subjective understandings to the interview table, meaning that the way in which they reason about the issue is not done on the same basis. Obviously, and as mentioned above, the interviewer moralises to resolve and to obtain further information about the issue. So in this sense, both parties come to engage in intersubjective reasoning about the behaviours and circumstances. However the norm that the interviewer relies upon in order moralise the applicants circumstances is not the same as the norm the applicant presupposes in responding to the interviewer and accounting or justifying for their story. This, in some cases, leads to a misunderstanding where the divergence between presupposed norms becomes most apparent. Recall here the case of the applicant who changed from a pulp and paper company to a job in the medicinal industry.
The final finding worth considering is that interviewers occasionally orient towards their moralisations as being problematic. Thus, interviewers hesitate, pause and repair their own speech during the moralisations, which shows an awareness of the potential sensitivity of moralising the applicant. So moralising is not an unproblematic matter. This problem may be because moralising, at least in the cases that I have investigated, calls into question, for example, the applicant’s loyalty, ability to stay in a job, and career motivation. These are potentially negative circumstances to imply but may be explanatory concerning why it can be observed that interviewers display this orientation.

7.4.2 Professional Membership Categorisation

The analyses of Section 7.2 investigated how interviewers enabled the characterisation of applicants according to existing professional membership categories in the drilling industry at large or in the organisation aboard a drilling rig more specifically. The main findings here are that 1) interviewers inquire into applicants according to pre-existing professional membership categories and 2) in some cases applicants display different degrees of membership competence regarding answering the interviewers questions.

Again, I will address these findings in turn by first answering the research question. In the introduction to Section 7.2 I asked, “How are professional categories used and oriented to by interviewers and applicants?” Interviewers imply professional categories via their questions with which they inquire into applicants’ aspirations. Likewise the interviewer orients towards them in their upshots of applicants’ answers. In most cases applicants are able to provide the interviewer with an answer that makes it possible for the interviewer to infer and document the relevant category.

However, certain instances were documented wherein the applicant seemed to have trouble with producing a response. In these cases, interviewers oriented towards the applicant’s response as being insufficient. When this was the case, the interviewer took additional interactional measures to pursue an appropriate and acceptable response from the applicant. In one case, supplying additional information so as to make the applicant able to answer was one way of solving this issue. In another case, the applicant seemed reluctant to supply an answer. This meant that the
interviewer sanctioned the applicant for not answering, which led the interviewer to repeat his question multiple times. The significance here with regards to cases wherein the interaction failed is that interviewers, applicants, and applicants in between have different degrees of membership competence with regards to the career opportunities in the industry as well as aboard drilling rigs. Membership competence is a precondition for being considered a member of a specific collectivity. In order to be a member, one must be competently capable of acting in a manner appropriate to that collectivity. Knowledge relevant to the collectivity is key in this regard. Being aware of the organisation of a drilling rig is a piece of knowledge that a member of, for example NorCo or the drilling industry at large, is to be aware of if s/he is to be considered a competent member. In this sense, interviewers are part of the collectivity that is the organisation that they represent as well as the industry in which it operates.

7.4.3 Other-Initiated Self-Reports

Section 7.3 investigated what in the HR literature are conceived as trait questions. In the investigation itself I made the following findings: 1) From an interactional point of view, what goes on regarding trait questions is better captured by the term other-initiated self-reports, 2) applicants’ self-reports of traits resemble lists and only seldom contain exemplification of the traits, 3) interviewers orient towards their questions as being able to elicit traits and applicants as able to account for own traits, and 4) applicants orient towards different degrees of certainty regarding their knowledge about their own traits.

Before going into detail, I will answer the research question, which concerns the first and primary finding. The question is “How are other-initiated self-reports made relevant by interviewers and provided by applicants?” The answer to this, in interactional terms, is that interviewers are the ones who initiate interactional sequences containing other-initiated self-reports in their first pair parts and thus make them relevant for uptake by the applicant in their adjacent second pair parts. Interviewers formulate their questions focusing on “what” applicants would assess as their “strong competencies” or “strengths”. This means that interviewers supply the applicants with the evaluation itself, thus making it relevant for the applicants themselves to supply the items that they would evaluate accordingly. Applicants tend to organize their responses around what resemble lists, meaning that more than one
“strength” or “competence” is produced. However other actions are also made relevant by the self-reports. Thus, applicants justify why a given evaluation holds to be true. Another aspect of self-reports concerns epistemics. As shown in the chapter, applicants indicate different degrees of epistemic access to their own self-reports. Thus, they indicate a greater sense of certainty concerning particular evaluations as opposed to others. In their second pair parts, applicants report their traits often in list form and seldom with exemplification, which is also summarised in the second finding above. Applicants usually produce one trait and then proceed to provide the next one.

Related to the third finding, it is observed that interviewers orient towards their question as being able to elicit the applicants’ traits, and the applicant as being able to account for his or her own traits. So by asking the applicant to account for his or her traits, the interviewer inadvertently presupposes that s/he is able to do so. This is a practical solution to the practical problem of how the interviewer obtains knowledge about the applicants’ knowledge, skills, and abilities. In other words, the interviewer supposes that by simply asking the applicant, s/he is able to obtain the applicant’s traits. Related somewhat to this issue is the final finding, which is that applicants orient towards different degrees of certainty regarding their knowledge of own traits. Thus, they display different degrees epistemic stances as well as orienting towards the existence of their traits as being an opinion of theirs rather than a fact.

### 7.4.4 General Concerns for Discussion

In this part of the summary section of this chapter, I wish draw out some of the points that are relevant for theoretical discussion in the next chapter.

An aspect worthy of consideration, which arguably is more relevant to HR literature, is the relationship between the professional agenda on the one hand and the reality of the social context of talk in interaction on which it is contingent. Most job interviews consist of at least two social actors that I have shown may possess different norms and understandings as well as different degrees of membership competences. This means that pursuing the professional agenda of applicant evaluation in the job interview is far from unproblematic. Furthermore, it shows that applicant evaluation is not a simple matter in terms of obtaining it, but is actually contingent on social processes in the talk in interaction between interviewer and applicant. This concerns
issues such as subjectivity, intersubjectivity, and membership competence. Yet another aspect concerns the interaction surrounding trait questions.

With regards to the concern with strategy and the S-as-P agenda, what is salient about the micro-strategies that I have covered is that they are recurrent and not singular instances. To paraphrase, there are multiple instances of the interviewer using norms to moralise the applicants’ behaviours and circumstances. There are multiple instances of professional categorisation of applicants. Finally, there are multiple cases wherein the interviewer shows an orientation towards his/her question and the applicant as able to explicate traits. As I argue these are recurrent and hence micro-strategies that the interviewers rely upon to engage in practical reasoning to evaluate the applicant. Another aspect is that the interviewer draws on and makes relevant recruitment concerns and organisational knowledge. The interviewer in NorCo, for example, makes relevant professional membership categories that comprise and draws upon the organisation aboard a drilling rig. Likewise the DrillCo interviewer drew upon very general professional categories relevant to the entire industry within which they operate. However, concerns for the organisation do not necessarily have to be made relevant by the interviewer drawing upon existing knowledge. They can emerge in the here-and-now of the concrete enactment of a job interview. As I showed in Section 7.1 interviewers moralise applicants norms. Although this is a recurrent practice, each moralisation is a response to individual applicants’ particular behaviours and circumstances conflicting with presupposed norms. In other words the moralisations are recurrent but emerge in individual instances when circumstances are conflicting.
Based on the findings of the empirical investigations reported in Chapter 7, the present chapter draws on these analyses to discuss the implications for theory, methodology, and practice. With regards to theory, the purpose is to nuance the understanding of the job interview concerning parts of the HR literature’s functional understanding of it as a selection practice. Implications are also discussed with relevance for the S-as-P agenda and the relationship between strategy and the job interview. The methodological implications encompass the argument that a turn towards interaction is needed in S-as-P as well as job interview research. Finally, the implications are discussed for interviewing practitioners relevant to both sides of the table.

8.1 Nuancing the Understanding of the Job Interview

In this section of the discussion, I will focus on two main arguments that I intend to use in order to nuance our understanding of the job interview. Parts of the HR literature specifically focusing on selection and recruitment conceive of the job interview as a selection technique (Macan, 2009, p. 203), a selection tool (Beardwell, 2007b, p. 207), selection method (Brecher et al., 2006, p. 156) or a controlled
conversation with a purpose (Torrington et al., 2002, p. 242). This kind of functionalist understanding is still relevant because it to a large extent captures the purpose of the job interview, namely the evaluation of the applicant for potential employment. However, the phenomena the functionalist understanding does not capture are contingent on the social context within which the job interview is performed. Hence, I will be arguing in the section below that the job interview should be conceptualised both as a selection method and a social practice.

8.1.1 The Social Aspect of the Job Interview

The argument I will make in this subsection is based on findings concerning the role of subjectivity and intersubjectivity, social sensitivity, and membership competence, which all play a role during the practical accomplishment of the job interview. Hence, I will argue the job interview is both a selection technique, as some HR researchers argue (e.g. Beardwell, 2007b), but also a social practice.

8.1.1.1 Subjectivity and Intersubjectivity

The first empirical investigation, reported in Section 7.1, concerned norms and moralisation. I found that both interviewers and applicants presuppose norms either in moralising employment circumstances or explaining/justifying them. The purpose of moralisations is to enable reasoning about circumstances or behaviour that conflict with what is otherwise presupposed to be the norm. This means that the interviewer imposes his or her own subjective understanding on the applicant’s employment behaviour or circumstances, e.g. they do not make sense, they are disloyal, or abnormal. The task of the applicant is absolving the apparent conflict. Thus I showed applicants themselves orient towards norms of their own that they used to justify and explain the circumstances that are conflictive with the interviewer’s norms. These norms are in the cases that I have investigated not the same the same and thus I showed how both parties rely own their own subjective understandings in order to engage in reasoning about these issues.

Since the behaviour or circumstances related to the applicant’s behaviour involve a conflict with what the interviewer’s presupposed norms, they constitute a practical problem of understanding. This issue relates back to Schutz’s (1932, 1953) understanding of intersubjectivity as a practical problem, which I have covered
earlier. Intersubjectivity covers the problem of how social actors come to obtain the same understanding about events and issues. Moralisations and applicants’ subsequent responses can be viewed in this manner as an intersubjective negotiation and reasoning about the applicants’ employment circumstances. This is based on the fact that the interviewer’s moralisation implies a conflict that needs to be resolved by further explication on part of the applicant. The point here is that the meaning of applicants’ employment circumstances and behaviours is established intersubjectively between the interviewer, who moralises, and the applicant, who explains or justifies in an attempt to absolve the conflict with the interviewer’s norms. So in this regard, the job interview is not a simple transfer of information from one party to the other (Eder & Harris, 1999) nor is it simply a technique for evaluating applicants (Beardwell, 2007b), where they are required to answer questions. Rather, the job interview is contingent on social processes revolving around intersubjective reasoning and meaning making. Thereby, the construction of meaning is a co-concerted effort by the interacting parties.

However, it is important to emphasise that this intersubjective negotiation is also affected by the professional agenda of the job interview, wherein the social relationship of interviewer and applicant are of importance. It is not necessarily the case that the interviewer is convinced by the explanation the applicant provides, meaning no intersubjective understanding is achieved. In this case, the subjective understanding the interviewer imposed in producing the moralisation might remain the same. Furthermore, and as Schutz (1932) asserts, it is not possible for two social actors to obtain the exact same understanding of events. Where the applicant has direct experiential access, the interviewer only has access to it through the communication of the applicant. The two social actors’ understandings will therefore never be exactly the same. One problem here, of course, is that this particular aspect has not been investigated. So one suggestion for future research might be to investigate the interviewer’s subsequent understanding in a follow-up interview with the research. By doing so, it may be possible to explicate if and how the interviewers understanding of the applicant’s employment behaviour or circumstances has changed.
8.1.1.2  *Social Sensitivity*

The second aspect regarding the argument that the job interview is not only a selection tool but also a social practice concerns the fact that interviewers orient towards certain topics as being sensitive. Because norms are involved, this is not an innocent thing, as the interviewer passes moral judgment on the applicant concerning an insinuation that, for example, the number of employers is abnormal, the applicant’s behaviour is potentially disloyal, or the link between employments is incoherent. I showed in Section 7.1 how interviewers hesitate, pause, and reformulate their questions to avoid stigmatising the applicant, behaviour, or circumstances. So while the interviewer is required to evaluate the applicant in terms all relevant matters, this entails asking some potential socially problematic questions of a person. This shows that the interviewer not only pursues the professional agenda but also manages the social relationship with the applicant.

Interviewers have to evaluate applicants for employment purposes, and this means that they occasionally have to pose questions into potentially sensitive matters. In Chapter 7, Section 7.1, I showed how interviewers moralised applicants’ work-related behaviours and circumstances. A potential by-product of moralization is that the interviewer risks insinuating that the applicant is potentially disloyal towards her employer, the applicant is incapable of holding a job, or the applicant is not career motivated. Obviously this is a potential stigmatisation of the applicant and thus not an innocent thing to do. To accommodate this, interviewers do a number of things; for example, in Subsection 7.1.1, it was shown how the interviewer changed his wording from a more prejudicially-laden formulation where he was apparently puzzling over some circumstances to a formulation that was less judgmental, i.e., he wanted to hear more. Similarly, Subsection 7.1.2 showed how the interviewer repaired his question from one that suggested that something was ‘going on’ in the applicant’s employment records. His reformulated question instead focused on the applicant’s reasons for moving between jobs. So by doing these repairs and changing the wording, the interviewer cooperates with the applicant to maintain his or her positive face. This, of course, suggests that although the interviewer might have to evaluate the applicant using the job interview in the functionalist sense, the interaction is also embedded in the social context where other needs become relevant.
There may be various reasons why these orientations towards the sensitivity of the morality factor were attached to certain issues: for instance, it may be that the interviewer wishes to avoid awkwardness and potential conflict between himself/herself and the applicant. In this sense, the repair and hedging is a practical solution to maintaining a respectful relationship with the applicant. Furthermore, being polite also supports the activity itself in the sense that it does not escalate into conflict. There’s another aspect, of course: that the interviewers generally, I suppose, want applicants to leave the interview and the site of the company with a good feeling. Being accused of disloyalty and incoherence in employment decisions are potentially detrimental accusations, and with the repairs, their negative impact is therefore lessened.

8.1.1.3 Membership Competence

The third and final aspect regarding the relationship between the job interview’s professional agenda and the social context within which it is embedded concerns the ethnomethodological concept of ‘membership competence’ (Garfinkel, 1967). In the investigation reported in Section 7.2 I showed how applicants display different degrees of membership competence when answering questions about their professional aspirations. Membership competence is the ability of a member to act appropriately and in accordance with the collectivity he or she is a member of. For example, members of NorCo or DrillCo or even the drilling industry at large will possess shared knowledge that they use in order to act competently. Job interviewers are a prime example of members who are able to act competently both in their organisation and the job interview by drawing on relevant knowledge.

The problem that can develop in the job interviews creating a potential problem is that this knowledge varies from applicant to applicant meaning they have different degrees of membership competence. Some applicants may be more knowledgeable because they have already worked for some years in the industry or have obtained the knowledge from elsewhere, which make them aware of the various opportunities there are aboard a drilling rig. Other applicants are less proficient perhaps because they come from another industry or background. In Chapter 7, Section 7.2 I showed how some applicants were readily capable of providing answers that would make them incumbents of membership categories in the organisation.
However, there were also instances where applicants exhibited a lack of competence for providing an acceptable answer. The cases considered in Section 7.2.2 were of applicants who were either unable to provide a reply due to lack of knowledge or due to a lack of knowledge that only a single membership category should be provided. So in other words applicants’ different backgrounds affect their level of competence concerning interacting with an interviewer in a given context. The implication of this is that practitioners should be made aware of this potential source of problems where interactional difficulties may develop. This is especially the case if the job interview is to provide equal opportunities and if recruitment is desired from other industries.

8.2 Strategy and Job Interviews

The present section explores the links between strategy and the job interview and develops an empirically-based version of Tsoukas’s (2010, 2015) framework by drawing on findings from the previous investigations. What I will argue in Subsection 8.2.1 is that the job interview has a number of strategic affordances that enables the interviewer to draw on an already pre-existing pattern of actions as well as for strategy to emerge from the actions of the interviewer. Thus concerning the interviews I have observed as an emergent pattern of actions as described by the Process Perspective (Mintzberg, 1973; Mintzberg & Waters, 1985). I am making this argument, first of all, on the basis that there is no explicit strategy document towards which interviewers orient and, secondly, that some of the observed interviewer practices are recurrent across cases. With regards to Tsoukas’ (2010, 2015), my contribution here is to supplement a theoretically based framework with insights explicated on the basis of empirical analysis of the activities in which social actors purportedly cope with.

8.2.1 Strategy in Job Interviews?

The short answer to the question in the title of the subsection is a resounding no – at least, if we understand strategy in the mainstream traditional sense. As mentioned a number of times at this point, I have not been able to document the existence of a strategy relevant to the job interview itself. While an HR strategy in NorCo exists, this explicates the amount of people needed and thus does not attend to the job
Since the general purpose of this investigation has been to explore the links between strategy and job interviews, this finding made that task rather difficult. There may be good reasons why a strategy might not be oriented to during the enactment of the job interview: for example, it may be entirely irrelevant in job interviews and at the very least in the cases I have investigated. This is because the primary concern is the applicant at hand for the job in question. So what interests the interviewer in this situation, and the concern s/he attends to, is whether the individual applicant is worth hiring.

However, this does not mean that the job interview is not strategic. One of the things learnt from Mintzberg’s Process Perspective (Mintzberg, 1994a; Mintzberg & Waters, 1985) is that strategies can emerge over time in patterns of actions. Likewise, Gylfe et al. (2016, p. 134) argue that “strategy is realised through a pattern of reoccurring embodied configurations consisting of specific postures, gestures, gazes, and so on”. One might speculate that, although interviewers do not orient towards corporate, business, or function strategy, there may be patterns of action and reoccurring practices that are achieved through so-called embodied cognition. In this dissertation, I have not used the term ‘embodied cognition’. Rather, I have used the term micro-strategies to refer to how I see practitioners engaging in practical reasoning in the ethnomethodological sense. Here, I will be arguing that interviewers rely on micro-strategies in realising strategy as a pattern of actions.

One of the things the job interview allows for as a recruitment and selection tool is different kinds of actions. By this, I mean that from multiple interviews, decisions are made with regards to which applicant is to receive a letter containing a job offer and which applicants the interviewer rejects. Here, potential patterns of action might emerge because of how the interviewer reaches this decision, that is, how it is achieved by practical reasoning about each applicant during and after the job interview. During my investigations, I have focused on the kind of practical reasoning in the forms of micro-strategies related to 1) the moralization of applicants’ employment behaviour and circumstances, 2) their professional membership category and 3) their traits. These are domains in which potential patterns can emerge, leading to specific outcomes that may then come to constitute, for example, an HR strategy. It may be the case that applicants who are more prone to or congruent with the norms the interviewer relies on in reasoning are hired. Professional categories may be yet another area where patterns emerge, given that the applicants’ aspirations are used to
reason about their professional identity, thus making it possible to document where in the organisation applicants aspire to be. Thus, this kind of reasoning allows for the identification of applicants according to existing professional categories. Finally, trait questions are interesting because they are designed to elicit applicants’ knowledge, skills, and abilities. Whether they do so is another matter. However, the traits that the applicants report may lead to patterns with regards to the kind of traits claimed and which applicants are commonly hired, or not, based on these responses.

How I have portrayed strategy above is informed to a large extent by the outcome following the interview. Unfortunately, I have not integrated this aspect explicitly in my research. In this sense, the present investigation provides some initial insight into the different areas that might lead to emerging patterns of actions which future research could pursue. However, what I have shown is that micro-strategies recur across interviews. In Chapter 7, Section 7.1, I explained multiple instances of moralizations of applicants’ employment behaviour and circumstances by interviewers. Chapter 7, Section 7.2, showed how interviewers commonly inquired into applicants’ professional aspirations and oriented to relevant professional membership categories. Finally, Chapter 7, Section 7.3, explicated the interviewer’s interest in applicants’ traits. The fact that these micro-strategies are recur indicates that concerns with morality, professional membership and traits are not isolated concerns in single interviews. Rather, the concerns transcend each interview.

Such concerns are located at the organisational level, regarding what kind of people are preferred, their norms and morality, and their professional identities. The interviewer thus acts upon and draws on these aspects regardless of whether it is a formulated strategy or an emergent pattern of action in the concrete and single enactment of the individual job interview. This kind of understanding has also been supported by Gylfe et al. (2016), who argue that managers create bridges between macro-level strategy and employees at the micro-level. Interviewers’ moralizations can in this respect be seen as a concrete expression of a pattern of action related to, for example, a concern with the loyalty of their employees, or their orientation towards career. Thus, the interviewer makes these kinds of concerns relevant in the individual interview by drawing on these micro-strategies, micro-strategies that arguably could constitute larger patterns of action as Mintzberg (1994a) suggests makes up one form of strategy. In this regard, the interviewer is the one who makes these organisational concerns relevant during the micro-level enactment of a job
interview when circumstances, for example, are such that they conflict with what he or she presupposes to be normal with regards to the morality of employment.

8.2.2 Framework for Understanding Inconspicuous Strategy Activities

In accounting for the S-as-P agenda in Chapter 5, I also presented Tsoukas’s (2010, 2015) framework for understanding different kinds of strategy making. I argued then that this framework was of relevance to the present investigation. In this subsection, I will discuss in what ways this is the case. As I have mentioned, the framework Tsoukas has created draws on Heideggerian social theory. As a consequence, the framework is primarily theoretical in terms of it explicating the various ways in which strategy making could occur in practice. The contribution I make is empirically based, and draws on the findings of the previous investigations. In this sense, I aim to move the framework from a theoretical foundation to an empirical one, based on the preceding analysis.

| Table 11.2.2 – Empirical Framework for Understanding Inconspicuous Strategy Activities |
|---------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Type of action                  | Practical coping                 |
| Type of intentionality         | Micro-strategy                   |
|                                 | - Norms                          |
|                                 | - Professional membership        |
|                                 |   categorisation                 |
|                                 | - Orientations                   |
| Type of language use           | Practical reasoning              |
|                                 | - Subjectivity                   |
|                                 | - Intersubjectivity              |
| Type of strategy making        | Emergent pattern of actions      |

As can be observed, this framework largely corresponds with Tsoukas’s (2010, 2015) original framework on its left side of the table with regards to ‘action’,
‘intentionality’, and ‘language use’. I have also decided to keep ‘strategy making’ in the framework, which I do have some reservations about using. I will return to these later. The big differences between the two frameworks are found on its right side of the table. Here I have swapped Tsoukas’s concept, ‘tacit understanding’, with ‘micro-strategy’. These encompass the precise resources social actors use in order to accomplish their activity as opposed to the generic idea of tacit knowledge. Language use, in the original frameworks, is described as being a ‘situational coping skills’. The language use that I have investigated is geared towards ‘practical reasoning’ in the ethnomethodological sense. Having explained the broad thoughts behind the framework and its main differences with the original one. I will now go into detail with it from cell to cell and top to bottom.

8.2.2.1 Action

At the top of the table, concerning ‘type of action’, the framework is identical to that of Tsoukas. From an empirical point of view, I do not contend with Tsoukas’s term ‘practical coping’ as it concerns the description of what goes on in the job interview, in the sense that it is carried out towards a particular end. This end is, of course, the evaluation of the applicant for employment purposes. The concept of practical coping encompasses a social actor’s ability to deal with a situation and achieve its desired outcome. This arguably reflects what is observable in the empirical investigations where the efforts of both interviewer and applicant go toward achieving the desired outcome, i.e. the evaluation of the applicant for employment purposes from the point of view of the interviewer, or getting a job from the point of view of the applicant.

In the instances of interaction that I have observed, the social actions an interviewer mobilises, such as questions, are used in order to first of all, obtain an answer from the applicant; secondly, to document his/her answer; and, finally, to be able to evaluate the applicant for employment purposes. In this sense, the way in which I use the framework with regards to how practical coping is understood is more or less aligned, because it sees coping as a kind of action aimed at a particular outcome. The implications of this are that the interviewer asks questions and takes notes for the purpose of evaluating the applicant. Likewise, the applicant answers questions to the best of his/her ability for the purpose of getting a job.
This is not a form of detached coping taking place outside daily activities like a strategy meeting. As explained, the job interview is common activity and part of the recruitment and selection process. Nor can we speak of deliberate coping with a breakdown. The job interview is not a breakdown in everyday events. Again, it is very much integrated into many organisations’ recruitment and selection practices.

8.2.2.2 Intentionality

Where the two frameworks differ first is with regards to the concept of ‘intentionality’. As I explained in Chapter 5, intentionality encompasses mental states and the cognition of social actors that they use to realise practical coping and complete their activities. What Tsoukas (2015) and also Chia and MacKay (2007) argue is that social actors share tacit understandings to accomplish the activity at hand. Arguably, it is problematic to make claims about what goes on or is present inside the minds of people, as it is impossible to empirically observe it. What I argue instead is that the kinds of resources social actors use should be explicated from an interactional point of view, as this would make them directly observable in the empirical material. In this sense, I use the concept of ‘intentionality’ to denote the quality of how interviewers and applicants reason in job interviews, and the resources they draw upon and mobilise in order to reason and accomplish the activity by interaction. By resources, I mean the use of recurrent practices. These resources are captured by the concept of ‘micro-strategy’ and are dividable into ‘norms’, ‘professional membership categorisations’, and ‘orientations’.

In order to support the argument that interviewers and applicants rely on micro-strategies, I will now draw on empirical findings from the investigations of Chapter 7. Section 7.1 showed how interviewers moralised applicants’ employment behaviour and circumstances by drawing on certain norms. The norms interviewers used to moralise and problematize the applicants were not shared by the applicants. So, where an interviewer might orient towards a certain behaviour as being disloyal, the applicant might not do the same and rather sees it as a matter of professional aspiration. Similarly, I documented a normative orientation by the interviewer towards employment changes as ideally being motivated by career considerations. However, in the concrete cases, the way in which the applicants made sense of the situation conflicted with that of the interviewer. This means that the ways
interviewers and applicants attempt to make sense is not done necessarily on the basis of shared norms or understandings. This is why I propose the concept of micro-strategy to designate the kind of practical coping I mean, in terms of how social actors reason about certain circumstances. As I have argued, here the first kind of micro-strategy is the use of norms for making sense of behaviour and other circumstances related to employment.

What I have shown in Chapter 7, Section 7.2, is that interviewers rely on the practice of asking applicants their professional aspirations to characterise them according to existing professional categories either in the industry or in the organisation itself. I refer to ‘professional membership categorisation’ as a micro-strategy not only because it is a recurrent practice, but because the interviewer relies on these categories to reason about the applicant in terms of their professional identity. The interviewer and applicant may share these concepts, as a number of the cases I have analysed shows. Here, the applicant is readily capable of providing an acceptable response relatable to the existing professional categories. However, in certain cases, the applicant does not know the categories and thus provides an insufficient response, which shows that these professional membership categories are not necessarily shared between the interviewer and the applicant either.

Finally, I have indicated that ‘orientation’ is the last kind of micro-strategy that interviewers rely upon in reasoning in the job interview. The concern here is with what was discussed in Chapter 7, Section 7.3 regarding trait questions, or what I called other-initiations of self-reports. What I mean by this is that orientation as micro-strategy concerns the way in which the interviewer orients towards the applicant as competently being capable to provide information on his/her own traits. This analysis was primarily focused on interviewers, so whether or not these orientations are shared remains to be studied in the future.

In other words then, where scholars like Tsoukas (2010, 2015) and Chia and MacKay (2007) argue that social actors rely on tacit understandings to achieve their activities, I argue on the basis of the findings of Chapter 7 that practitioners rely on empirically observable micro-strategies. These are recurrent practices that they use to reason about various recruitment concerns and resolve practical problematics such as obtaining applicants’ traits. Another argument I wish to make with regards micro-strategy has to do with another latent issue with tacit understandings. What researchers such Chia and MacKay (2007) argue is that practical coping is mindless.
The alternative understanding that I am offering with micro-strategies is that they are skilful solutions to practical problems. So the orientation towards applicants as able to communicate their traits is a practical solution to the practical problem of how the interviewer can obtain knowledge about applicants. Likewise, the use of professional categories is a solution to the practical problem of determining the professional identity of the applicant, as well as what area of the organisation s/he fits into. Similarly, norms are practical resources for reasoning about applicants. This is not mindlessly done, but rather carefully achieved through the mobilisation of the micro-strategies. For example, norms are not relevant across all interviews, but only in cases were the employment behaviour or circumstances are such that they conflict with what is presupposed to be the norms. Once this happens, these norms are made relevant in the interview and explicitly oriented to. Across all micro-strategies, it is not so much the fact that these are underlying tacit understandings held by the interviewers and applicants. Rather, they are actively mobilised and made relevant through the interaction. Thus, the interviewer’s questions make professional categories relevant, or display a particular orientation towards the applicant.

8.2.2.3 Language Use

The way in which language is used constitutes another aspect of the framework where differences with the original can be found. Tsoukas (2010, 2015) argues that in practical coping, language is used to get on with the activity at hand. While this is not necessarily wrong, it can be nuanced by considering ‘practical reasoning’.

In the analyses of Chapter 7, I showed how interviewers rely on language in order to make sense of and reason about various issues. So in this sense, language is not simply used to get on with the activity. Rather, interviewers use language as a tool for reasoning to then accomplish the activity. Consider, for example, the case of moralizations as covered in Chapter 7, Section 7.1. The moralization itself comprises the interviewer’s own subjective understanding on the basis of which the applicant’s circumstances constitute a conflict. Language is, in this case, used to mobilise subjective understanding and make it relevant for the applicant to explain and justify the conflictive circumstances. In this sense, the interviewer’s moralisations can be seen as an effort to engage in intersubjective reasoning about the applicant’s
employment behaviour and circumstances. This negotiation is entirely based on language use or, to be more precise, the talk in interaction between the two social actors. Similarly, interviewers question applicants about their professional aspirations in order to document the professional membership categories which are most relevant and, in this sense, to engage in practical reasoning about the applicant. So language, i.e. questions and answers, is not exclusively used to get on with the activity. Rather, language is used in order to reason practically about the various aspects and issues of the applicant, in order to accomplish the activity.

8.2.2.4 *Strategy Making*

For lack of a better substitute at this point, I have decided to keep Tsoukas’ (2010, 2015) category ‘type of strategy making’ category and the associated concept of ‘emergent patterns of action’. It may be imprecise to have this category here primarily because the job interview is not associated with strategy making and certainly not on the corporate or business levels despite potential contributions to HR strategy. Again, this is not the explicit goal but a by-product. In the previous subsection I argued that interviewers draw upon existing patterns of actions by drawing on micro-strategies. Thus, the interviewer makes relevant concerns including the professional membership category of the applicant as well as his/her morality concerning employment related behaviours and circumstances. One could perhaps talk about ‘strategic affordances’ instead. In this sense one would capture the fact that strategy is a possibility that can arise from the job interview rather than an end-goal in and of itself. I argued for this in part in the previous section. Thus, interviewers may draw on pre-existing patterns and patterns may emerge with regards to traits the applicants should possess, the professional categories they should fit into with regards to different positions, and finally the morality and norms that they rely upon in order to reason about their work. This does not need to be explicated in a plan but can emerge from the action that interviewers take on the basis of the interviews having been conducted. As I mentioned in the previous section more research and data collected over time is needed in order to fully develop this particular aspect of the framework.
8.3 Methodological Implications: Towards an Interaction Turn

Although the Practice Turn within the Social Sciences (Reckwitz, 2002; Schatzki, 2001a) has instigated a lot of research in terms of investigating strategy as a social practice, there are several good reasons why S-as-P researchers should pay social interaction the attention it deserves. Therefore, I align with researchers such as Cooren (2007a, 2007b) who argue that an Interaction Turn is needed within the social sciences. In the present section, I will therefore discuss the methodological implications of an Interaction Turn for S-as-P based upon the findings of my own research project.

First of all, a focus on interaction explicates the details of organisational life with regards to how social actors achieve their activities regardless of whether they are job interviews, as I have investigated, or strategy meetings (Samra-Fredericks, 2003). So by paying the micro-level of interaction appropriate attention, one can explicate the micro-strategies that organisational actors rely upon, because these are mobilised via turns at talk in order to accomplish their activities. In Chapter 7, Section 7.1, for example, I showed how interviewers rely on norms to moralize applicants through their questions. Likewise Chapter 7, Section 7.2, showed how interviewers infer certain professional membership categories when asking applicants about their professional aspirations. Chapter 7, Section 7.3, documented the interviewer’s orientations towards applicants and also towards their own questions as being capable of addressing applicants’ traits. The point here is that these micro-strategies are only observable and documentable by engaging with social interaction at the micro-level. This is because this is the level where the strategies are relevant for accomplishing the activity at hand. In the ethnomethodological sense, they are the practical methods used by the interviewer to practically accomplish the job interview as an organisational activity.

Secondly, by attending social interaction at the outset of the inquiry, social processes that take place between the actors can be documented. For example, Chapter 7, Section 7.1, documented the intersubjective negotiation of the meaning that takes place between the interviewer and the applicant of the applicant’s employment behaviour and circumstances. Relatedly, Chapter 7, Section 7.2, showed how competence is an issue when answering questions about professional aspirations.
Occasionally, applicants answered in an unacceptable manner, requiring the interviewer to take additional interactional measures in order to establish common ground and thus obtain an acceptable answer. Likewise, how applicants orient towards the certainty of their knowledge also takes place at the micro-level of social interaction as they indicate this via their lexical choices.

These micro-strategies and the various social processes taking place in organisational activities at the micro-level of interaction can only be explicated methodologically by using recording technology and appropriate data treatment. To explicate these using observation as I, for example, discussed in Chapter 5, would be beyond the cognitive capability of the individual researcher to capture. By simply observing and taking notes, you risk losing elements including: the detailed nature of what the organisational actors are doing, what they are saying and how they are saying it; the various material artefacts in their use; and the micro-strategies, or methods in the ethnomethodological sense, that they use in order to achieve the activity. By instead relying on recording technology such as audio and preferably video recording devices, the researcher’s cognitive limitations are less of an issue in terms of capturing the exact detail of what is going on in the activity of interest. Furthermore, the audio and video recordings allow the researcher to return to the activity numerous times in order to scrutinize its events. So where the observer is only able to observe the activity once and otherwise has to confer with his/her fieldnotes, a researcher relying on video and audio recordings can rewind the tape, so to speak, again and again.

However, recording also has some obvious downfalls: Recording technology only captures what it is pointed at, and only records for the duration of it being switched on. So what takes places before or after an activity or outside the range of the microphone is lost. It is likely that events unfolding here can have some significance for the activity of interest. With regards to my own research, some of what I have not been able to capture includes the interviewer greeting and guiding applicants to the interviewing room, as well as seeing them off once the interview is completed. Furthermore, I have not been able to document the reasoning that takes place after the interviews, except for in a few cases. In cases where multiple interviewers are involved, it is likely their subsequent interactions include talk about the applicants that would allow further insights into the recruitment practice itself. It is also arguable that recordings of the activities themselves should not constitute the
only source of data. In order to obtain greater insights into the organisation, it may be beneficial to collect additional documents. I have done so in order to both understand the organisation as well as the positions being hired for. Furthermore, I have had informal talks with practitioners in order to gain a greater understanding of their practice.

Another issue worth paying consideration to is video versus audio recordings, and the question of which is more appropriate to use. Ideally, micro-ethnographers strive to use video, because it provides the most detailed amount of information with regards to social actors’ embodied conduct (LeBaron, 2008a; Streeck & Mehus, 2005). The same cannot be said for audio data, which only captures sound waves in the vicinity of the recording device. As is evident at this stage, I have relied on a number of audio recordings. My justification for this is primarily practical. The amount of effort in gaining access to these recordings makes them too valuable not to use. Furthermore, I am convinced that audio recordings still hold analytical value as long as they are used in a manner recognising their shortcomings.

Another aspect of collecting interactional data is how it is treated for analysis in order to make it analysable. From a conversation analytical perspective (see Hepburn & Bolden, 2013a; Jefferson, 2004), this means doing detailed transcriptions that capture the details of interaction. The data need to be described in order to analyse the turn taking that takes place, as well as other kinds of conduct including embodied and paralinguistic behaviour. The issue that can arise here has to do with the level of detail in the transcription as it is possible to capture virtually all aspects of what transpires including gaze, gesture, posture, intonation, and articulation. This means that transcriptions can end up with an incredibly high level of detail that may be appropriate for doing analysis, but problematic for disseminating the results to a wider audience. It is therefore important to recognise that some details are of more relevance than others. Thus, academics researching the phonetics of talk-in-interaction are interested in the details of speaker’s articulations, whereas as a management scholar interested in organisational activities likely has little use for this kind of information in the transcriptions. So, in other words, what it really comes down to is to transcribe what is needed for the purpose at hand.

A final consideration is whether or not the Microethnography as a methodology has been appropriate for the present investigation. With regards to the explication of micro-strategies in the ethnomethodological sense, Microethnography’s
focus on interaction for the purpose of analysing how practitioners accomplish their activities allows for the explications of their various orientations, tacit understandings, presuppositions, norms, and membership categories that are mobilised through their talk in interaction. To this end, the methodology is arguably suitable.

Its focus on interaction is by and large a micro-level endeavour. Although it may not be ill suited, it does face challenges when researchers attempt to link observations in the data with macro-level concepts and concerns that are of theoretical relevance to the interviewer. This is also referred to as bridging the micro- and macro-levels (Seidl & Whittington, 2014). One solution to this problem Lynch (2001, p. 40) provides is to focus on what he calls macro-talk. He acknowledges that a lot of so-called macro-concepts like ‘society’ and ‘organisation’ are everyday concepts that researchers have adopted. Therefore we should study the vernacular use of macro-talk by social actors.

This is also entirely possible to do using a microethnographic methodology. In Section 7.2 I investigated the interviewers use of professional membership categories. These are broad, perhaps meso-level, categories within the organisation according to which its employees are categorised. So, it may not be easy to connect the micro-level with macro-level concepts. I for example had issues connecting interaction in job interviews with strategy. To get around this I took the members’ perspective and investigated their use of macro-level concepts instead. The issue may also have been caused by the fact that certain macro-level concepts are assumed to be present, which means that one risks imposing them on data analyses because they are of interest to the researcher. The only way in which this can be avoided is to take the members’ perspective and investigate the macro-level talk that they use or orient to.

8.4 Practical Implications

In the present section I will discuss some of the practical implications that the present research has for job interview practitioners. The first implication is primarily dedicated to job interviewers and focuses on their moralizations of applicants’ employment behaviour and circumstances. What was shown in the analyses was that interviewers oriented towards these moralizations as potentially socially sensitive due to the fact that they risked insinuating the applicant was potentially amoral or
abnormal in terms of employment. The second implication is relevant to both the interviewer as well as applicant, and encompasses the self-reporting of applicant traits. I argue that self-reporting generally yields little useful knowledge. In order to accommodate this, interviewers and applicants should aspire towards substantiating traits by further questioning and exemplification. Finally, I will argue that interviewers should stop interviewing and start interacting.  

8.4.1 Focus on the Applicant’s Perspective

While the issue of norms is not easily addressable in terms of practical implications due to their presupposed nature, there is a particular issue worth consideration where changes can be made in interviewing practices. This has to do with the way in which interviewers linguistically format their moralization. A by-product of moralization is that interviewers challenge the morality of the applicants. This leads them to produce their questions with a clear orientation to the social sensitivity of the matter. This I also considered in the HR section of this chapter. As shown in Chapter 7, Section 7.1, interviewers hesitate, pause, hedge and repair their questions when they make relevant what they think are potential issues. However there is not necessarily any reason why this should be the case, and this can be avoided by acknowledging the applicant’s perspective.

One of the reasons why moralization is a problem is due to social sensitivity. As mentioned, the ways in which interviewers go about formulating their moralizations of applicants can be described as an orientation towards the social sensitivity of the matter. Insinuating that an applicant is disloyal towards her employer or that the applicant’s occupational decisions are incongruous is a sensitive issue. This is why moralizations are often formulated with care. However, the inevitable consequence is that the interviewer passes judgment in asking the question, and thus orients towards the applicant’s circumstances as problematic. This can arguably be avoided. The applicant’s reasoning about the same behaviour or circumstances does not rely on the same norms. Hence, while the interviewer may orient towards the behaviour or circumstances as potentially morally problematic, the

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4 I recognise that the CARM (Conversation Analytical Role-play Method) enterprise (e.g. Stokoe, 2014) constitutes a viable training method for practitioners. Arguably, some of the training points discussed here could easily be transferred.
applicants do not rely on the same norms to reason about their decision to apply for a job whilst, for example, receiving educational support from the employer. As such, this might not be a socially sensitive issue for them.

In order to remedy the interviewer’s orientation towards their moralizations as potentially face threatening, it is possible instead to be aware of and acknowledge the applicant’s perspective from the outset and rather inquire into this particular viewpoint. Thus, rather than taking as an outset what the interviewer himself or herself considers to be the moral problem, one could instead start by inquiring into the applicant’s perspective at the outset. In the case investigated in Subsection 7.1.1, the interviewer asked a rather long and indirect question whereby he presupposed the applicant acted disloyally. In doing so, the interviewer specifically asked for what her employers thought about her applying. This is a detour that can be avoided by simply asking: “Why are you leaving your current employer while they are paying for you education?” This diminishes the moral aspect to a certain degree and instead highlights the applicant’s perspective and reasoning about the behaviour. It should ideally be possible for the most part to formulate questions in advance when the applicant’s files are read, instead of having to come up with them during the flux of the conversation. Thus, where concerns arise that from a recruitment and selection perspective are documentable, planning questions that inquire into the applicant’s reasoning is possible.

This implication can be used for training purposes by showing interviewers concrete instances of their own conduct where they clearly orient towards the issue treated as being a sensitive matter. On this basis, it is possible to make suggestions with regards to alternative linguistics formulations that could be used in order to highlight the applicant’s perspective rather than relying on their interviewer’s.

8.4.2 Substantiation of Self-Reporting

In Chapter 7, Section 7.3, I investigated so-called trait questions and the responses that they received. What was crucial about the sequences that followed from the interviewer’s questions is that applicants engage in what I have called self-reporting, whereby they provide lists of their own traits for the interviewer to document. While self-reporting is not necessarily a problematic practice, it arguably constitutes a problem if traits are not further substantiated. In the majority of the cases that I
investigated, the interviewer would pose the question “What are your strengths and weaknesses?” The typical applicant answer would typically comprise a number of what the applicant considers his or her main traits and weaknesses. Following this, the interviewer would acknowledge the applicant’s response and often engage in some sort of note-taking in order to document the traits or weaknesses. In a few cases, the applicant would substantiate the traits by providing examples of when the trait was used in practice. However, in the majority of cases there is no explicit follow up by the interviewer in order to substantiate the answer, nor do the majority of applicants provide examples. The problem here is that, from a recruitment perspective, the amount of information self-reporting affords in terms of insights into an applicant’s traits is sparse, since the ways in which the traits are relevant in a working situation are never addressed. This kind of knowledge is more telling in recruitment situations, where the issue is the applicant’s work competencies. Simply obtaining a list of traits is likely only to scrape the surface of the applicant.

What interviewers can do practically is pursue substantiation of the traits in terms of asking follow up questions and thereby gaining further responses. So once the applicant, for example, asserts that one of his competencies is that he is precise, as was considered in one of the excerpts in Subsection 9.2.1, or that the applicant is someone who is good at earning the trust of colleagues, as was the case in one of the excerpts in Subsection 9.1.2, the interviewer should ideally follow up and require further explications of the work relevance of these traits. So, for example, it is relevant to ask in what context or in what respect earning the trust of co-workers is important and it would be relevant to ask how he goes about obtaining trust. Likewise, for the applicant who claims to be precise, it may be relevant to ask how he goes about being precise. The interviewer could ask for examples of when precision was important in order for the applicant to complete a task. In other words, there are numerous follow up questions that could be asked in order to gain further insights and substantiate the claimed traits. Likewise, applicants themselves do not necessarily need to wait for the interviewer to ask them to exemplify their traits. They can provide and incorporate examples in order to further substantiate their claims.

Another thing to consider for the interviewer in order to gain qualified responses is to think of relevance. While it may be right for the applicant to claim that he is a nice guy and that he likes to work, there are numerous other applicants and indeed people around the world who would aspire towards the same traits. The issue
here is how relevant these answers are in terms of the assessment of the applicant for employment purposes. Part of the reason why these kinds of answers might be delivered is, in part, due to the question that the interviewer asks. In many cases, it is left to the applicant to determine in what regard the traits should be provided. This could, for example, be in terms of their personal traits or work-related traits. When it is left to the applicant, there is very little control over the response and thus one might obtain answers that are basic. The interviewer can qualify the inquiry into traits by specifying that he is interested in traits with regards to work. This, of course, does not discount the opportunity to also ask for personal traits. Rather, it restricts the applicant in terms of the answer s/he is to provide and thus the applicant does not have to decide on his or her own accord in what respect answers should be provided. This should also allow for a more substantial follow-up in order to qualify the traits, as it would make further questions about the traits in a professional context, as described above, relevant.

Again, this particular aspect and practical implication is trainable. It is fairly easy to show interviewers and applicants their own behaviour via, for example, video recordings in order to make them aware of the opportunities for further substantiation in order to obtain better insights into the applicant’s traits, and thus enhance the quality of the interview. Additionally, concrete suggestions can be developed as to how interviewers might pursue this substantiation, as well as how applicants themselves can provide them from the outset when they are engaged in self-reporting. Some applicants already substantiate their traits. However, these are in the minority. So in this sense there are a number of training opportunities not just for interviewers, but also for applicants.

### 8.4.3 Stop Interviewing and Start Interacting

The final implication and argument that I wish to consider is that interviewers should discard their interview guides and stop interviewing the applicants. I argue this because locking the job interview down in a grid of questions and answers in order to be able to document, i.e. file, the applicants’ answers shackles the dialogue and, hence, greater understanding. The problem is especially prevalent regarding moralizations and trait questions. Concerning moralizations, interviewers often pose their questions and then the applicant provides an answer, after which the interviewer
documents the answer. The same is the case regarding trait questions with interviewers asking the question, getting an answer, and finally writing the answer down. It is in this sense that I argue that job interviews to a certain extent are shackled by a single-minded focus on asking the right questions in order to obtain answers that somehow reveal the applicant’s characteristics.

Taking an interactional or perhaps, rather, a dialogical approach to the interview might yield deeper insights. One way of doing this could be that the interviewer engages in a dialogue with the applicant with regards to how or why is morally problematic according to certain norms. Thus, instead of encouraging answers, the interviewer should encourage a discussion about the norms of employment-related behaviour and circumstances. What the result of this might hypothetically be is deeper insights into the moral code of the applicant. This would also give the applicant a view of the value system of the interviewer and the organisation, if of course they are representative thereof. A dialogical approach would, of course, only work if the interviewer vocalises his and the organisation’s concerns in terms of the applicant’s employment behaviours and circumstances.

A dialogical approach to the issue of trait questions was hinted at in the previous section on substantiation. Interviewers, and arguably also applicants, should to a greater degree give voice to the traits that are needed not only to be successful in the job, but in the organisation at large. This means discussing the relevance of the traits in relation to the job as well as the organisation. Ideally, this would be beneficial to the interviewer and organisation as well as the applicant. The applicant would gain a greater insight into the traits the organisation desires and thereby be able to better judge whether his/her traits match, and vice versa for the organisation and the job interviewer.

It may be idealistic to present the argument that interviewers should abandon the otherwise popular job interview format in place of simply just chatting with the applicant about certain topics such as morality and traits. However, the more discussion that is encouraged, the more understanding should ideally be created between the interviewer and applicant. This means that both parties would be better able to make a more informed decision on whether or not to hire the applicant, or whether to accept or reject a potential job offer. It may, of course, also be naïve to suggest that the interviewer should altogether abandon his/her interview guide. It is warranted to have questions that are recurrent. This, however, does not mean that the
interviewer’s interactional responsibility should end after s/he has obtained an answer. Each answer is an opportunity, if it makes sense, to make further inquiries, discuss the answer, and present the interviewer’s own/the organisation’s views.

8.5 Summary

In the present chapter, I have discussed the various theoretical implications of my findings both for HR theory and the S-as-P agenda. With regards to HR theory, I argued that in order to fully capture what goes on in the job interview and grasp its complexity in practice, we need to conceptualise it both in functionalist terms as well as something which is a social activity. Thus, it becomes possible to observe various social processes taking place in practice that are relevant to the enactment of the interview. With regards to S-as-P, one of my contributions was to argue that the link between the job interview and strategy is through emergent patterns of actions that are oriented to and made relevant in the singular instances of the job interview. The interviewer thus acts and reasons on behalf of the organisation about concerns such as the morality of applicants and their professional membership categories, as well as their knowledge, skills and abilities. Furthermore, I have contributed with a framework for understanding inconspicuous strategy activities. In the section of methodological implications, I argued alongside other researchers that a turn towards interaction is needed if we are to grasp at the lived complexity of organisational life.

The study’s methodological implications revolve around a proposed turn towards interaction in order to explicate the details of organisational life and how organisational actors accomplish their activities. By looking at turn-taking and using video recordings to document conduct, as the present investigation has, the various methods or micro-strategies that interviewers and applicants rely upon can be explicated.

Finally, the practical implications are twofold: first, I argued that interviewers should take the applicant’s perspective into account when inquiring into matters that they conceive of as being potentially socially sensitive. What I have showed in the analyses was that interviewers seemingly oriented towards certain matters as being problematic from a social perspective. By taking the applicant’s orientation as the outset for formulating questions, the kinds of orientations towards
social sensitivity that are observable in some types of moralizing questions can be avoided. Apart from this, I discussed trait questions and self-reporting. The main argument in that regard was that these should be further substantiated as relying on self-reports as the only kind of information on traits may be flawed or yield very little knowledge. To accommodate for this, interviewers and applicants should seek to substantiate the reported traits by further inquiry into their usage, for example. Some applicants do so. However, I have not been able to document instances where interviewers do so, which seems to be a wasted opportunity to obtain further validation.
CHAPTER 9

CONCLUSION AND FUTURE RESEARCH

My motivations for pursuing this dissertation’s research agenda have been to explicate the argued role of strategy in job interviews. Taking on this challenge, I asked the following overall research question:

“How do practitioners practically accomplish the job interview as a form of strategy work?”

I investigated this question in three separate empirical investigations reported in Chapter 7. Here I documented different micro-strategies that interviewers and applicants rely upon. Micro-strategies are important for the practical accomplishment of the job interview because they provide interviewers and applicants with practical resources for reasoning, which they use for accomplishing the job interview.

So the short answer to the main research question is that interviewers and applicants rely on micro-strategies in order to accomplish the job interview. This is because micro-strategies comprise resources for practical reasoning about issues, circumstances, and topics of relevance to the interview’s selection purposes. I explicated a micro-strategy involving the norms that interviewers rely on to moralise applicants’ employment circumstances and behaviour. This was in order to practically reason about applicant related specifics that seemingly conflicted with what was
otherwise presupposed to be normal, loyal, or ideal by the interviewer. Likewise applicants relied on their own norms in justifying and explaining. Characterising applicants according to existing professional membership categories is another practice interviewers rely upon to reason about the applicant’s professional identity. Finally in order to solve the practical issue of obtaining applicants’ traits, interviewers orient towards their questions as being able to elicit these from applicants. All in all, these strategies are resources that both interviewers and applicants rely on in reasoning to practically accomplish the interview.

A significant aspect of the above research question has been strategy and how it is relevant in job interviews. There are two ways to consider strategy and job interviews and both are related to understanding of strategy as an emerging pattern of actions. The first is in terms of the decision following each job interview as to what applicants are hired and what applicants are rejected. Patterns may emerge on the basis of the interviewer’s reasoning and use of micro-strategies. The link between the interview and the outcome of the recruitment process has not been a focus of this research but would be an area in which future research may wish to go. Another way in which strategy may be relevant is via the interviewer directly in the interview. In this line of thinking the interviewer makes relevant organisational concerns and existing patterns during his/her enactment of the interview.

There are additional possibilities for future research: As mentioned, one possibility is to investigate micro-strategies further to explicate more of the resources that interviewers and applicants draw upon in accomplishing the job interview. This endeavour could also be expanded to other kinds of activities that are strategic in both the conspicuous and inconspicuous senses. One could focus on strategy meetings and explicate the micro-strategies that practitioners use there. Researchers could also engage with other activities such as team meetings and investigate the micro-strategies there. There are of course also opportunities to expand upon the present research agenda. If one wanted to pursue how patterns emerge, a longitudinal study could be conducted comprising recordings of job interviews over a number of years to track supposedly emerging patterns. It would also be interesting to pursue an empirical investigation to the activities surrounding the activities. In those cases where multiple interviewers partook in a job interview, I obtained a couple of recordings of their post-interview interactions about the applicant. Obtaining additional of these and correlating them with their interviews could be used to
explicate additional micro-strategies because it identifies what it is that interviewer takes note of during the enactment of the interview and recall after it has been accomplished.
APPENDIX

On the following pages, you will find enclosed overviews ranging from audio and video data to collected documents, and from observations to transcription conventions, grammatical abbreviations and data collections, as well as transcriptions. All of the data reproduced here in the form of transcriptions is raw, meaning that it is processed to various degrees. Some of the transcriptions are detailed, containing transcriptions of stress, intonation contour, overlap and embodied behaviour, whereas others contain nothing more than a rough orthographic reproduction of what was said in the interview. Please note that in many of the original and raw transcriptions, the applicant is often referred to as AP or APL (applicant), IE (interviewee), or CA (candidate). Interviewers are either referred to as IN (interviewer) or IN¹ (interviewer number 1, 2, 3 and so on) in cases where there was more than one interviewer present.
## Appendix A: Audio and Video Data

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Data Location **</th>
<th>Length in min.</th>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Position interviewed for</th>
<th>Applicant Gender</th>
<th>Num††</th>
<th>Lg.‡‡</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(1)SCA1</td>
<td>61,3</td>
<td>Aud.</td>
<td>HR Recruiter</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>NO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(1)SCA2</td>
<td>34,55</td>
<td>Aud.</td>
<td>HR Recruiter</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>NO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(1)SCA3</td>
<td>19,39</td>
<td>Aud.</td>
<td>Roustabout</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>NO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(1)SCA4</td>
<td>48,42</td>
<td>Aud.</td>
<td>Roustabout</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>NO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(1)SCA5</td>
<td>27,3</td>
<td>Aud./Vid.</td>
<td>Roustabout</td>
<td>Male</td>
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<td>NO</td>
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<tr>
<td>(1)SCA6</td>
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<tr>
<td>(1)SCA7</td>
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<tr>
<td>(1)SCA8</td>
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<tr>
<td>(1)SCA9</td>
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<tr>
<td>(1)SCA10</td>
<td>31,2</td>
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<tr>
<td>(1)SCA11</td>
<td>12,44</td>
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<tr>
<td>(1)SCA12</td>
<td>41,11</td>
<td>Vid.</td>
<td>Roustabout</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>2</td>
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</table>

** Refers to the location of the audio/video file in the data corpus.
†† Signifies the number of people present in the interview including the applicant.
‡‡ Indicates the language spoken in the data.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Class</th>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Hours</th>
<th>Message</th>
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<td>(1)SCA13</td>
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<tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>(1)SCA19</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>(1)SCA20</td>
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<td>Roustabout</td>
<td>Male</td>
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<td>NO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(2)SCA1 to (2)SCA5</td>
<td>282,81</td>
<td>Vid.</td>
<td>Social worker</td>
<td>Female</td>
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<td>NO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L1_1</td>
<td>62,28</td>
<td>Vid.</td>
<td>Rig manager,</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>EN</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Operations director</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L1_2</td>
<td>50,54</td>
<td>Vid.</td>
<td>Technical Assistant</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>EN</td>
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<tr>
<td>L1_3</td>
<td>30,06</td>
<td>Aud.</td>
<td>Technical Assistant</td>
<td>Male</td>
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<td>EN</td>
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<tr>
<td>L1_4</td>
<td>46,48</td>
<td>Aud.</td>
<td>Technical Assistant</td>
<td>Female</td>
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<td>EN</td>
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<tr>
<td>L1_5</td>
<td>50,01</td>
<td>Aud.</td>
<td>Technical Inspector</td>
<td>Male</td>
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<td>EN</td>
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<td>L2_1</td>
<td>23,29</td>
<td>Aud.</td>
<td>SSCE Equipment Engineer</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>EN</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Code</td>
<td>Grade</td>
<td>Type</td>
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<td>------</td>
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<td>--------</td>
<td>-----</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>L2_2</td>
<td>75,35</td>
<td>Vid.</td>
<td>Drilling and Pipe Handling Equipment Manager</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>EN</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L2_3</td>
<td>34,36</td>
<td>Aud.</td>
<td>SSCE Equipment Engineer</td>
<td>Male</td>
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<td>EN</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L2_4</td>
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<td>Aud.</td>
<td>SSCE Equipment Engineer</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>EN</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L2_5</td>
<td>26,19</td>
<td>Vid.</td>
<td>Subsea Superintendent</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>EN</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L2_6</td>
<td>60,03</td>
<td>Vid.</td>
<td>Roving Subsea Superintendent</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>EN</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L2_7</td>
<td>61,32</td>
<td>Vid.</td>
<td>Roving Subsea Superintendent</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>EN</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L2_8</td>
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<td>EN</td>
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<tr>
<td>L2_9</td>
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<td>Vid.</td>
<td>Rolling Subsea Superintendent</td>
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<tr>
<td>L2_10</td>
<td>32,4</td>
<td>Vid.</td>
<td>Riser analyst</td>
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<td>4</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>L2_11</td>
<td>33,29</td>
<td>Vid.</td>
<td>Riser analyst</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>EN</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L2_12</td>
<td>16,52</td>
<td>Vid.</td>
<td>Riser analyst</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>EN</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
## Appendix B: Documents Overview

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DOCUMENT</th>
<th>PP.</th>
<th>DESCRIPTION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>NorCo Rig Organigram</em></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>This document describes the organisation aboard a drilling rig and the different positions in the various departments such as ‘marine’, ‘drilling’, ‘maintenance’, and ‘administration.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>NorCo Generic Interview Guide</em></td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Interview guide explicating the topics the interviewer is to touch upon as well as the characteristics of the applicant s/he is supposed to assess.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>NorCo Strategy</em></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Website address explicating NorCo’s strategy and business objectives.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>NorCo Roustabout Job Ad</em></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Job ad explicating the responsibilities of a roustabout and the requirements the applicants need to meet in order to qualify. The document also explains about NorCo.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>News Article about NorCo</em></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>News article explaining NorCo’s recent investments and their consequences for labour demands.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>NorCo News Article</em></td>
<td>5</td>
<td>News article featured on NorCo’s parent company’s webpage about the new hires in NorCo.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>NorCo HR Presentation</em></td>
<td>9</td>
<td>PowerPoint presentation of NorCo’s recruitment strategy.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Document</td>
<td>Count</td>
<td>Description</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------------------</td>
<td>-------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>NorCo – About Us</strong></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Webpage showcasing the leadership in NorCo.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>DrillCo – Vision/Value Statement</strong></td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Page featured on DrillCo’s website containing their vision statement as well as various values.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Vacancy Details - Equipment Engineer</strong></td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Document detailing the position where a new employee is required.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>L1_1 CV</strong></td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Applicant CV.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>L1_1 Personality Test</strong></td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Applicant’s personality test.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>L1_1 Interview Guide</strong></td>
<td>9</td>
<td>Interview guide based on applicant’s competencies. Not used in interview.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>L1_1 Ability Report</strong></td>
<td>8</td>
<td>Report of applicant’s abilities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>L1_3 CV</strong></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Applicant CV.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>L1_3 Personality Test</strong></td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Applicant’s personality test.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>L1_3 Ability Report</strong></td>
<td>8</td>
<td>Report of applicant’s abilities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>L1_4 CV</strong></td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Applicant CV.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>L1_4 Personality Test</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>L1_4 Ability Report</strong></td>
<td>8</td>
<td>Report of applicant’s abilities.</td>
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<tr>
<td>L2_1 Applicant CV</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Applicant CV.</td>
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<tr>
<td>-------------------</td>
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<td>L2_3 Personality Test</td>
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<td>L2_4 Applicant CV</td>
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<td>Applicant CV.</td>
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## Appendix C: Transcription Conventions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SYMBOL</th>
<th>DESCRIPTION</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>[</td>
<td>Indicates embodied and verbal overlap.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>=</td>
<td>Indicates latching, which means that there is no hearable (or measurable) gap between two turns or within a turn of talk.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(0.5)/()</td>
<td>Indicates a pause. A period within parenthesis indicates a micro-pause of less than two-tenths of a second.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>· , ; ? _</td>
<td>Indicates intonation contour. A period marks a falling, a comma slight rising, a semicolon a slight fall, a question mark a high rise and an underscore a flat intonation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Stress</strong></td>
<td>Underlined word syllables, e.g. “repeat”, indicates stress or emphasis.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>°Quiet°</td>
<td>Degree signs indicate that the talk produced within their boundaries is noticeably quieter than the surrounding talk.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&gt;Fast talk&lt;</td>
<td>This particular combination of greater-than and less-than symbols indicates that the talk produced within it is produced fast.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&lt;Slow talk&gt;</td>
<td>This particular combination of greater-than and less-than symbols indicates that the talk produced within it is produced slowly.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Symbol</td>
<td>Description</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------</td>
<td>-------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-</td>
<td>A hyphen indicates a cut-off.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#Creaky voice#</td>
<td>Indicates glotalization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>£Smiling voice£</td>
<td>Indicates that the talk produced within the symbols is produced with a smiling voice.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(     )</td>
<td>Empty parentheses indicate that the transcriber could not discern what was being said.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(YEAR)</td>
<td>Uppercase words in parentheses indicate that something has been edited for anonymity’s sake.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>((Nodding))</td>
<td>Double parentheses greyed out in the transcripts contain description of multimodal behaviour or references to screen dumps from the videos.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>.hhh</td>
<td>Indicates an auditory in-breath.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>hhh</td>
<td>Indicates an auditory out-breath.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# Appendix D: List of Standard Grammatical Abbreviations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>First person</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Second person</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Third Person</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ADV</td>
<td>Adverbial</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AUX</td>
<td>Auxiliary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DEF</td>
<td>Definite</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DET</td>
<td>Determiner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FUT</td>
<td>Future</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IMP</td>
<td>Imperative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INDF</td>
<td>Indefinite</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INF</td>
<td>Infinitive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PL</td>
<td>Plural</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PRS</td>
<td>Present</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PTCP</td>
<td>Participle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PST</td>
<td>Past</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SG</td>
<td>Singular</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SUPL</td>
<td>Superlative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VB</td>
<td>Verb</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix E: Raw Transcription of L1_2

L1_2820:44
1  *IN1: So so what kind of career do you foresee in a company like this
2  *IN1: What is it that your ambitions are if I may ask
3  *IN1: I know you're just starting your career now and basically the whole world is open
4  *APL: Yeah
5  *IN1: What is What are you hoping for eventually will happen
6  *IN1: CEO is okay too hopefully
7  *APL: Yeah
8  *IN1: There'll probably be few steps in between
9  *APL: ( ) I would like to become yeah head of the operations in the future
10 *IN1: Yeah
11 *APL: First I would like to start to get familiarized I think with the operations on the rigs as well
12 *APL: And maybe a question to you as well is there any chance that you could start on the rig or during your career to see what's really going on
13 *IN1: Mm
14 *APL: I think that will be necessary to see yeah how the drill rigs or semi subs or ( ) how the operations are working
15 *IN3: Mm
16 *APL: And yeah to work with people offshore as well
17 *APL: And if you can bring
18 *APL: what you learn at that moment you can bring an operation during your onshore operations
19 *APL: So in the end yeah I would like to get familiarized by myself
20 *IN2: Mm
21 *APL: with the rigs first and then yeah start a a career path
22 *IN1: Mm
23 *IN1: So you're fascinated by the operational side of and not necessarily the pure technical side of it
24 *APL: Yeah
25 *APL: No the operations I'm very fascinated by
26 *IN1: ( )
27 *IN1: Yeah
28 *IN1: So how to manage drilling units in in this industry
29 *APL: ( )
30 *APL: Yeah
31 *APL: Yeah
32 *APL: Oh yeah
33 *IN1: Yeah
34 *APL: Delivering good product to your client
35 *IN1: Mm
36 *IN1: Yeah
37 *APL: of the highest yeah
38 *APL: operation standards and offshore incidents as well be cause you know safety is one the most important things in this business
39 *IN1: Yeah
40 *IN2: Yeah
41 *IN1: Yeah
42

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55  *IN3:  Absolutely
56  *IN2:  Yeah
56  *IN2:  Okay
**Appendix F: Raw Transcription of L1_3**

L1_3@07:31

1. *I1: So what is it that you are looking for (.). I job wise,
2. What- what interests you; What is it that you would like to: I deal with__
3. *AP: [I'm=
4. (0.4)
5. I would like to deal with more challenging jobs__
6. I'm: (.). I'm quite sure when working with
7. (EMPLOYING COMPANY) you would let me have a< (0.2)
8. more challenged job .hh than in (.). (PRIOR COMPANY)
9. because (PRIOR EMPLOYER) (.)
10. was (.). was 't that challenging at that time because
11. we don't have that much project (.). going on that time
12. so. hh I know ( ) (EMPLOYING COMPANY) have a long:
13. (.). a lot of market demand at the moment? .hh And I'm
14. quite sure about i can be able to: (0.4) >contribute
15. really well to the company __<
16. *I1: [I'm sure you can; .hh But
17. what is it that interests you; Is it the <drilling:
18. engineering side of it; Is it> (.). how we design
19. wells and drill wells_ >So is it< more the managerial
20. (0.2). <side of what we do;>
21. *I3: [.hh
22. *CA: =I am Actually i do have experience in the drilling
23. operation [side.
24. *I1: [Mm:.
25. *CA: I was basically involved in (.). e:m >lot of< (0.2)
26. giving assistance to the (.). hh operations (.). and em
27. different departments of the company: .hh And also i
28. was involved in a lot of (.). u:m (.). e:m (0.2)
29. activities like (.). logistics r- (.). em applications
30. .h h and i was involved
31. in u:m
32. (0.6)
33. e:m checking the (0.3) tool selectivements standards
34. and certi[fications etcetera
35. *I1: [#Mm_#
36. *CA: so. ·hh I think it's fairly a- a good experience_ I
37. got a basic experience in the drilling operation i
38. think .hh that's the reason why i applied for
39. th[is #so: _#
40. *I1: [#Mm_
41. (0.6)
42. #But i don't think# you answered my question=What is-
43. What interests you; >And i'm sure you can do it all,<
44. (.).But what is it that you really like to do,
45. (0.6)
46. *CA: E:m:
47. (0.4)
48. Uh >It's up to the job;< Or it's up to #the: e:m# the
49. requirement of the job; >I'm flexible in either way;<
50. [U:h I have a (.) fairly good idea about the drilling
51. *I1: [#Mm#
52. *CA: side?
53. *I1: M[m;
And drilling calculations? hh I also have a good idea about the operation side as well.

<So you don't have a preference for technical work (.) where you calculate and you design: and you implement (.) You are more to the managerial side of administrating a crew or team or project,

if you could decide what would you prefer to do:

e: m basically operation (.) s i am: i like to be in the operations actually. I don't know.

Maybe in the future hh e: m i think the technical assistant position is a good start_

Yes? [ ]

[ ]Yeah i'm sure.

hh I'm sure it is.

This year you had with ((candidate's prior employer)) here you were offshore all the time or were you also onshore (xexexexe).

No it's a basically an onshore position But I've been in offshore five or six time
Appendix E: Collection of Other-Initiated Self-reports

1. (1)SCA3@07:59

1  IN:  Hvis du skal si litt om deg sjøl Ka vil du si er de
2  sterkedivine dine
3  IE:  Nei det er arbeidsinnan
4  IN:  Mm
5  IE:  Å det å kanskje stå på jeg er ikkje sånn som på en måte
6  gir op da det jo liksom det var det om på en måte kanskje
7  gjorde på en måte dat av ltt på den styrmannsbiten det var
8  det at jeg ikkje på en måte klarte å sätte meg helt inn i
9  det å på en måte forstå alt for det er mykje regning det
10  mykje sånt men ellers så fullførte jeg året liksom på en
11  måte jeg har jo fikk jo vitnemål då jeg ikkje sto
12  på eksamen da men jeg har ikkje tatt eksamen enda
13  IN:  Nei
14  IE:  ( ) Det er bare at jeg har sagt at jeg vil fullføre året
15  for at jeg vil ha den mulighet om det ska være interessant
16  igjen da
17  IN:  Mm
18  IE:  Så det var det liksom det den delen så det positivt da og
19  jeg ( ) flink til å komme i kontakt med folk å jobbe i
20  ikkje eg kan jo selvfølgelig jobbe alene men også jobbe i
21  team og samarbeid
22  IN:  Mm
23  IN:  Bra

2. (1)SCA4@09:33

1  IE:  Sterke egenskaper
2  IE:  I jobbsituasjon så
3  IE:  Det eg er engasjert
4  IN:  Mm
5  IE:  Å eg er en av dem som ikke bare møter opp på jobb for å
6  haav lønn men eg går heim fra jobb å tenker på ka eg har
7  gjort i dag å hvorledes var produktet
8  IN:  Ja
9  IN:  Ja
10  IE:  Å jeg jo en person tror jeg sjøl å har jeg fått fortalt
11  som former andre i en sånn tankegang
12  IN:  Mm
13  IE:  At ( ) positivt å det folk blir inspirert har jeg fått
14  fortalt
15  IN:  Ja
16  IE:  Å det føler jeg sjøl å fordi jeg liker å holde på med folk

3. (1)SCA7@15:54

1  IN:  Hvis du ska: si någe om: om øh personlige egenskaper, Ka
2  er de sterke egenskapene dine.
3  IE:  Eg er veldig motivert kan jeg begynne med å si for det her
4  IN:  Mm
5  IE:  Så eg har fått tidligere på vi har jo sånn tilbakemeldinger
6  å sånn der på befalsskolen å forsvaret å sånt eg tror å har
7  hørt sånt jeg er en person som folk får tillit til

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Fordi jeg anser meg sjøl som ganske ydmyk å har mye respekt for andre mennesker.

Å dermed også en ærlig person da som tydeligvis vekker folks tillit til meg då.

Ja, det er eg eg er jo veldig trofast det høres litt rart ut å så si det nå på et intervju men jeg er veldig trofast mot arbeidsgiver.

Ja, det er eg veldig seriøs i arbeidet mitt.

Ja, jeg tar veldig stor stolthet i det eg jobbe med uansett ka det er eg er jo veldig trofast.

Ja, så er eg veldig seriøs i arbeidet mitt.

Ja, det er eg er jo veldig trofast det høres kanskje litt rart ut å så si det nå på et intervju men jeg er veldig trofast mot arbeidsgiver.

Ja, det er eg er jo veldig trofast det høres kanskje litt rart ut å så si det nå på et intervju men jeg er veldig trofast mot arbeidsgiver.

Mot det firma jeg har vært i jeg har sida jeg begynte å jobbe i totusen å sju så har jeg vært på to forskjellige plasser å det er to yrker som du har potensiale til å bytte arbeidsplass en gang i halvåret hvis du vil det.

Ja, mot det firma jeg har vært i jeg har sida jeg begynte å jobbe i totusen å sju så har jeg vært på to forskjellige plasser å det er to yrker som du har potensiale til å bytte arbeidsplass en gang i halvåret hvis du vil det.

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Ja, mot det firma jeg har vært i jeg har sida jeg begynte å jobbe i totusen å sju så har jeg vært på to forskjellige plasser å det er to yrker som du har potensiale til å bytte arbeidsplass en gang i halvåret hvis du vil det.
IE: Eg syns så lenge eg føler eg har har kontroll på det eg gjør så føler eg meg sikker å det er
IN: Ja

6. (1)SCA10:07:58

IN: Ka ka er de ka de sterke egenskapene dine i den henseende
IE: Nei akkurat sånn er det at ikke jeg gir opp da ( ) jeg forsetter jo holdt jeg på å si jeg der for prøver jeg å ikke gå inn i for mye på en måte da jeg har jo kammerater som begynner med alt mye rart ikke sant så de begynner med noe sport begynner med ja så var det fjellklatring å så var det dykking å så var det fallskjermhopping å så var det
IE: pistosky ( ) Jeg vil ikke begynne noe for jeg tenker jeg hvis jeg begynner med det så forsetter som regel jeg da vet jeg
IN: Ja
IN: Ja ja
IE: Å det er jo etter hvert så går alle de bort å så sitter jeg alene
IN: Ja så er det all in å så
IE: Da sånn er det jo
IN: Ja
IE: Så jeg ( ) å så liker jeg jo helst tankegerier eller sånn taktikk å strategi å
IN: Ja
IE: Så jeg spilte faktisk poker spilte jeg faktisk også før jeg begynnte i ((NAME))
IN: Ja
IE: Men det var så på litt høyere nivå så måtte jeg det var så dårlig nett deroppe
IN: hja
IE: Du kan ikke vare to og kunne ikke vare to uker borte da vet du var liksom nøtt til å holde på sånn hver dag for å komme inn i
IN: Ja ja
IE: For det var jo liksom masse bøker mye teori der liksom jeg
IN: Ja
IE: Da så begynste jeg med kameraten han gad ikke å han bare spilte selvfølgelig så han stoppa jo selvfølgelig han begynste ( ) imot
IN: Ja
IE: Men da så spilte jeg helt til jeg kom dit da så det har jeg jo ikke spelt på seks år
IN: Ja
IE: Men det osse var jo sånn typisk eksempel då at jeg

????

IN: Intressant ellers andre personlige egenskaper som du vil trekke frem
IE: Tja
IE: Jeg er vel så tror jeg litt rolig sånn i forsamlinger eller sånn før jeg begynner å kjenne folk det er vel
IN: Ja
IE: litt sån typisk egentlig egentlig negativ ting men på klarer å komme ganske jeg kommer inn i de fleste miljøer da på den måten trur jeg ikke stormer inn i det
IN: Ja
IE: Så det var jo sånn som Manpower så ble jeg liksom brukt til mange vanskelige jobbar på en måte de hadde vanskelige kunder der for jeg havnet egentlig aldrig i konflikt med noen kunder
IN: Nei
Så nå vi var ute så fikk jeg være
Er det er det fordi du er tilpassningsdyktig
eller konfliktsky
Jeg er ikke konfliktsky
Jeg er Det er jeg ikke
Nei
Jeg jo tja tilbake til jobben så er jeg jo tillitsmand
på blant annet på pulja mi var jeg jo styrelsen er
ofte med styret deroppe ofte så er jeg jo ganske mye
vært i flere konflikter da
.hja
Ja
Det kan jeg jo komme i liksom
( ) jeg er liksom ikkje redd for å si fra da det er
danskje
Nej
Det blir man vant til kan jeg tenke meg deroppe på
svalbard
Ja det tror eg på
Det jo masse nordlændinger der då ja så så det helt
det er jo ganske direkte
Ja
Der ikke noe sån

7. (1)SCA11@07:13
Ka: ka du anser som de sterke personlige egen\$skapene
dine.
Jå det jo en eg er arbeidsom eg ser ka som må gjøres
.hja
Ja
Å så er eg en veldig sosial person
Ja
Ja fysisk go form å lite sykefravær
Ja
Det nærmast null
Å
Liker å jobba i grupper
Ja
Så hadde eg jo Eg var i militaret så var eg i ((NAME)) der
hadde jeg jo en turnusordning derpå det gjorde meg
ingenting å være seks uker ute på sjøen å drive ( ) då
klart dette er en helt annen turnus dette her nå har eg
familie i tillegg så det eg glad for altså men
Ja
Eg har eg har har ingen problemer med å være væk fra
familie å
Riktig
.hja
Du har fungert som som arbeidsleder for for et par stykker
Ja

8. (1)SCA12@07:49
.hja hvis du tenker på på altså ser på deg sjøl ka vil du
si er dine sterke personlige egenskaper
Ja dem er vanskelige de der spørsmålene veldig vanskelige
Der kom det Der kom det
Dem er veldig vanskelige nei altså altså personlige egen
skaper for det første så så liker eg jo å jobbe altså sånn
praktisk både holdt på å si både hjemme å med sneker litt
eller skrur litt på en bil eller et eller annet sånn Så eg
liker jo å så vil jeg nå si at dat eg er lett omgjengelig
hvis det en del av sånne typer dokke tenker på

9. (1)SCA13@11:49

IN: Litt litt sånn om deg sjøl ka vil du si er dine sterke
personlige egenskaper
IE: Punktlighet det er vel der eg er mest stolt over sjøl
IN: Ja
IE: Eg er alltid eg har alltid været punktlig å helst å helst
ti minutter kvarter før
IN: Mm
IE: Så ja så der jo eg er jo veldig ja lojal å sånt Føler eg
sjøl eg er oppriktig med alle eg har med meg Eg forteller
å orienterer de ka ka de ka som foregår å kassen me ligger
an å eg tar prosjektstatus å ja så så Ja eg er veldig
tålmodig det er vel en nøkkel nøkkel nøkkelen opp i dette
her ska en være en leder

10. (1)SCA17@04:43

IN: Ka ka er de sterke egenskapene dine? .h
IE: Jeg lærer fort
IN: Ja
IE: Og jeg er glad i arbeid
(7.3)
IE: Og så er jeg ganske nøy
7
IE: Kanskje for nøy av og til

11. (1)SCA18@05:32

IN: Ka ka vil du si er de sterke egenskapene dine Ka får me
hvis me ansetter hvis me ansetter ((NAME))
IE: Altså
IE: Nei du får en som får til det meste å hvis han ikke får det
til så han ikke redd for å si fra om det heller
IN: Ja
IE: Tackler de fleste utfordringene
IE: Ja
IE: Å jeg er
IE: Hvis jeg ikke har sett med løsningen der å då så så finner
jeg som regel ut av det etter hvert med internett å sånne
ting
IN: Ja
IE: Altså
IE: Me får alle hjelp en plass
IN: Ja

12. L1_2022:27

*IN2: Can you maybe summarize and give me a couple
of your key strengths and a couple of your
key limitations in terms of your working
style
*APL: I'm a good teamplayer
13. L1_2029:23

1  *IN1: How flexible are you also from a personal perspective
2  *IN1: Can you travel
3  *IN1: Can you you do long hours
4  *APL: Very flexible

14. (1) SCA15@11:18

1  IN: K- Ka vil du si er de sterke personlige egen skapene dine.
2  IE: Nei Jeg tror vet ka jeg vil å Kan si ka jeg vil å kos jeg
3  IN: vil eller jeg kan gi klare beskjeder sånn
4  IN: Ja
5  IE: Det tror ikke jeg brener inne med så mye
6  IN: Nei
7  IE: Så Det ja Alpså jeg har jo ( ) Jeg har jo hadd mine år i arbeidslivet å å du vet jo kor styrkene å kor svakhetene
dine er til en hvis grad
8  IN: Mm
9  IN: Ja
10 IN: Å styrkene dine er
11 IE: Ja jeg jeg kan vite ka som jeg kan få til å ka jeg kan
12 IE: Alpså ka jeg må eventuelt ha hjelp til å ka å så gi beskjed
13 IN: Ja litt trygg trygge på deg sjøl
14 IE: Ja jeg vil si det
15 IE: Tenker sikkert Mere sikkert enn jeg gjorde når jeg var tjue
16 IN: for å si det sånn og
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