



IS THERE SUCH A THING AS ‘OBJECTIVE RECRUITMENT’?

Awareness of homosociality in the ‘test tool’ industry

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ABSTRACT

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Keywords: Homosociality, awareness, discrimination, test tools, formalised recruitment, similarity-attraction, migrant women.

Purpose: The purpose of this study is to explore test tools as a generally accepted practice used as part of formalised recruitment processes. We strive to understand in which ways test tools aim to counteract discrimination when introduced in the Swedish labour market and the implications of their use. This project is approached from a perspective of homosociality and of how awareness of this influences the test tools.

Theoretical Framework: The study's theoretical framework emanates from a homosociality perspective, building on the idea that people tend to orient themselves to others of the same gender. To further elaborate on this tendency, similarity theory is used to discern other prevailing attraction factors. In considering that homosociality often is inherent in organisational structures, the study is complemented with theories on gendered organisations, inequality regimes and intersectionality in order to critically explore and analyse the empirical findings.

Methodology: A qualitative research design has been applied with material collected through in-depth semi-structured interviews with professional test tool developers and consultants and the specialised documents which supports their work on test tools. The 10 in-depth interviews and 57 documents have been brought together through a grounded theory coding approach for which 'rich data' is required and through which we approach the analysis of this study.

Results: The results disclose awareness of homosociality - on an interpersonal level - among the test tool developers and consultants in this study. It is expressed that test tools aim to provide objective assessments and non-discrimination in the labour market. However, the findings reveal that there is still room for homosociality to occur even if test tools are used where migrant women are exposed to a higher risk of being discriminated. Amongst other factors, subjective timing of implementation phase among customers, western based development, subjective design of requirement profiles, selected language offerings, absence of results on test tools and digitalisation are shown to create and uphold inequalities in the labour market.

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1. INTRODUCTION

“Sweden is commonly known as a country at the front of equal opportunities in the labour market - especially related to gender”

(The Swedish Government, 2017)

As implied in the quotation above, a strong tradition of both academic research and public interest regarding gender equality have shaped an ‘equality climate’ and promoted Sweden as a leading country in this regard. Unsurprisingly, equality statistics from the Swedish labour market disclose that there still are barriers to shatter (LO, 2017). Figures show that women are still overrepresented in professions viewed as traditionally feminine and underrepresented in those that are traditionally masculine. Men are as highly overrepresented in influential positions in the Swedish Parliament, on corporate boards and in management positions (SCB, 2016a). Moreover foreign born women represent the lowest employment rates for any group in the Swedish labour market and nearly a quarter are outside the labour force (SCB, 2017). Wage reports show that foreign born women, as a group, earn approximately 150 000 SEK less a year, compared to Swedish born men, as a group (SCB, 2016b). The wage gap is significant even if they hold similar academic educations (Saco, 2017). The Government's Official Investigation highlights that one explanation for the lower representation of women in leadership positions is that recruiters do not recruit women to these positions (SOU, 2014:80). Similarly, a recent commentary from The Swedish Television channel SVT revealed that job coaches within the Swedish Employment Service often need to follow employers’ hidden requirements which exclude foreign born people. Job coaches are instead encouraged to choose applicants with names sounding Swedish (SVT, 2018). Although awareness of these problems is increasing, the change is characterised by inertia. In order to change the situation there is a need for knowledge about gender equality in working life and conscious actions to achieve change (SOU, 2014:80).

During the 80s, the formalisation of recruitment evolved as a method to counteract discrimination and promote diversity in the labour market by introducing objective evaluations in recruitment (Holgerrsson, 2003). Formalisation can for example take place through careful design of requirement profiles for certain vacancies by implementing tests to assess applicants or by implementing strictly conscious job interviews (Diskrimineringsombudsmannen, 2016). One current example is the tech

giant Google that has introduced independent hiring committees in their recruitment processes. All suitable candidates are assessed by the committee and individual hiring managers do not have authority to take recruitment decisions alone. The idea with this process is to create unbiased decisions as well as to obtain better matches in their recruitments (CNCB, 2018). The formalisation of recruitment processes cover many factors and this study will solely focus on test tools as an objective element in recruitment. The overall term used throughout the study when implementing test tools in recruitment is ‘formalised recruitment processes’. Formalisation is here understood as a method to implement correct and scientific assessments in recruitment, in order to find the best competence and avoid letting recruiters’ gut-feelings influence their recruitment decisions. When test tools are introduced, formally written applications, such as CV and cover letters are complemented, or sometimes even exchanged, with results from test tools in the assessment. The selection of applicants is to a higher extent based on knowledge and talent rather than previous working experience or education level (Undercover Recruiter, 2017).

In theory, test tools (such as competency tests, personality tests, psychometric tests) limit the possibilities to discriminate applicants in recruitment processes. Especially, when tests are used before the formal qualifications (CVs) are assessed (Diskrimineringsombudsmannen, 2016). Research, however, questions if test tools are the solution (Collison & Hearn, 1994; Jewson & Mason, 1986). For instance, Holgersson (2003) has in her dissertation examined management recruitment. She found that there was still room for discrimination, through homosociality, to occur even if job interviews were formalised and structured. Homosocial relations could take place among the board of directors through cooptation, rectifies and domination. This is an issue that for several decades has received attention in academic research since recruiters tend to employ people similar to themselves. When the similarity is related to gender, this social bond is described as homosociality. In addition, since homosociality can be inherent in organisational structures and practices (Holgersson, 2013; Hammarén & Johansson, 2014) it often occurs unintentionally:

“Homosociality is often an unreflexive practice (...) embedded in organisational structures and cultures, enabling men to simultaneously reproduce male dominance in management while portraying themselves as pro-equality”

(Holgersson, 2013:464).

Thus, Holgersson (2013) argues that homosociality, as an institutionalised structure, could create situations where one gender dominates a social context which excludes other genders. Homosociality and discrimination can thereby be seen as two sides of the same coin. As Bradley and Healy (2008) additionally explain, the intersectionality of gender with ethnicity and class are central to understand social processes in the workplace, such as homosociality and gender order. Whereas the social process of homosociality in recruitment processes can create and maintain gendered hierarchies, there is a risk that organisations are dominated by a certain type of gender. Additionally, to also be a foreign born woman constitutes an even greater probability for difficulties to both enter and advance in the labour market, since the group is especially disadvantaged and carries ‘multiple burdens’ (Bradley & Healy, 2008; Bradley et al. 2011). This is often the foundation of intersectional discrimination. As formalised recruitment processes, in theory, reduce the risk of inequality, gender domination and discrimination, it is accordingly interesting to investigate how an awareness of the phenomenon influences the test tools introduced to guarantee fair recruitment processes, due to the unreflexive and inherent characteristics of homosociality. There is a significant gap of research (see chapter 3 on previous research) investigating awareness of homosociality in formalised recruitment processes that this study attempts to fill.

1.1 Purpose and Research Question

The purpose of this qualitative interview study is to explore test tools because they are generally accepted in formalised recruitment processes. Our aim is to understand in which ways test tools counteract discrimination in the Swedish labour market when they are introduced to guarantee fair recruitment processes. We examine this from a perspective of homosociality, i.e. how does awareness of homosociality influence the test tools. Homosociality is in this study defined as the practice that employers tend to attract and employ candidates with the same gender as themselves. It is, therefore, connected to labour market opportunities and understood as preventing unbiased recruitment and, instead, resulting in gender discrimination. It is also important to observe that homosociality can happen as an inherent structure in work routines that attracts certain genders and, as well, by recruiters as an interpersonal attraction to others of the same gender. In view of our focus on gender, including women of different backgrounds, we emphasise that foreign born women, here referred to as migrant women, bear multiple burdens in the Swedish labour market. Thus, in order to understand test tools and their relationship to homosociality, an intersectional analysis is required. The intersections of the disadvantages these women experience needs to be considered with reference to formalised recruitment processes where test tools are introduced. In

turn, homosociality also needs to be understood in terms of attraction to same ethnicities, not only genders. This is further discussed in the theory chapter (chapter 4) as a contribution of this study.

In view of the above, we ask the following research question:

In which ways do test tools aim to counteract discrimination, and with what implications?

In response to this question, we will analyse how the awareness of homosociality influences the test tools that are devised to support a formalised recruitment process. By analysing:

- Existing documentation on test tools
- Awareness of homosociality among test tool developers
- Awareness of homosociality among consultants who provide customers with test tools

By drawing on a theoretical approach of similarity theory, intersectionality and inequality regimes our aim is to contribute towards a better understanding of the effectiveness of test tools aiming to combat homosociality as a form of discrimination. This, in turn, will also shed light on the intersections of the disadvantages and multiple burdens faced by women of migrant descent.

1.2 The Study's Disposition

This study will commence with a background describing test tools, their objectives and how they are integrated in recruitment processes. Thereafter, a literature review of formalised recruitment processes, drawing on international previous research will be presented. To narrow the context of the investigated topic, studies on homosociality in Sweden will be reviewed as well. The subsequent chapter introduces the theoretical framework and foundation for the forthcoming analysis comprising perspectives on similarity-attraction, homosociality, and organisational theory in relation to gender and inequalities. Chapter 5 describes the methodological choices with regard to sampling techniques, data collection, reliability and validity and ethical considerations before ending with a discussion on the methodological limitations. In continuation, the empirical findings and analysis are presented in chapter 6. The conclusion and discussion follows in chapter 7, which also covers the study's limitations and suggestions for future research.

2. BACKGROUND

As mentioned, the Swedish labour market is currently characterised by a gender gap since statistics on both labour income and employment rate display inequalities. The wage gap amounts to approximately 25% between men and women and around 5 % in employment. On the other hand, Sweden is ranked in the top when it comes to inclusion of the disadvantaged groups of disabled, young workers, old workers and mothers in the labour market. However, statistics on inclusion of people with migrant descent reveal that Sweden, instead, end up among one of the inferior countries since the employment gap is 28% compared to the group of prime-aged male workers (OECD, 2017). Moreover, migrant women as a group are overrepresented in unstable employments. Additionally, one study from Gothenburg could reveal that applicants with migrant descent needed to apply for jobs 26 times in order to be offered employment, compared to Swedish born applicant that only needed to apply four times (LO, 2008). However, organisations usually motivate to formalise recruitment to avoid discrimination and subjectivity in assessments (Rosalind, 2004), which makes objective assessment through test tools important in recruitment processes today.

Terms commonly used for describing objective ways of recruiting are; competency based recruitment, unbiased recruitment and anonymised recruitment (Umeå Universitet, 2008; Diskrimineringsombudsmannen, 2016; Företagsuniversitetet, 2016). As mentioned, formalised recruitment is used as the generic term in this study, as it refers to the implementation of test tools to receive correct assessments in recruitment. In formalised recruitment, the assessment is normally based (sometimes together with CV/ cover letter) on the applicants results from various tests, such as personality or competency tests. The market for test tools has expanded at a fast pace during recent years. Many organisations hire external consultants for introducing test tools in their recruitment and it is common for test tool providers to ISO- certify their test systems to guarantee validity and reliability (DNV GL, 2017). There are different test tools for different purposes, provided in the market, that are favoured for cost-efficiency, speed and effectiveness (Rosalind, 2004). Some test tools are developed to be used for personal development of existing employees, which are not in focus in this study. However, the most common tests used for recruitment are competency tests and personality tests. The purpose in competency tests is to test an applicant's G-factor; the general intelligence factor. The applicant's knowledge, performance, skills and abilities are tested through tasks such as numerical reasoning, verbal reasoning, spatial ability and

inductive/deductive reasoning. In such tests there is a possibility to answer right or wrong and the results are compared against a norm group (Level Recruitment, 2015). Competency tests are mostly structured with a future-orientation and the main focus is the applicant's skills (Rowe, 1995). The cognitive assessment is often corrected along a grading system (Rosalind, 2004).

Personality tests, on the other hand, are generally based on the “big five” theory testing one's experience, conscientiousness, extraversion, agreeableness and neuroticism. The tests are comprised of self-report items of one's personality characteristics and structured so that they determine an applicant's personality type based on these five main characteristics (Psychometric test, 2017). Furthermore, there are other popular personality tests structured along a bigger amount of personality characteristics, for instance OPQ (Occupational Personality Questionnaire). This test measures 32 different characteristics on a scale from 1-10 that are relevant to occupational settings (Level Recruitment, 2015). Another popular personality test is MBTI, Myers Briggs Type Indicator that is based on Jung's theory on psychological types. The test consists of 16 personalities that gives the applicant a four-letter type code describing one's personality type (Myers Briggs, 2018). Based on the results from these tests, the recruiters assess whether the specific personality type fits into the intended position or not. It is argued that the best way to assess an applicant's personality is through tests that measure stable traits that are normative in nature and have a “candidness” scale; giving the applicants the opportunity to portray themselves in an accurate way (Society for human resource management, 2015). One personality test that has received a lot of attention and critique in the last few years is the DISC- test which sorts personalities along four different colours; blue, red, green and yellow. The reliability of the test has been questioned since no research has been found that can present what the test results actually predict (Stardust Executive, 2014a).

In extensive recruitment processes, both personality and competency tests are used for so-called ‘screening’; to create a more manageable and better-qualified pool of applicants (Rosalind, 2004). Test tools are also common to use in Assessment Centres; where several different test tools are combined with simulation exercises to observe behaviour among applicants (Stardust Executive, 2014b). In concluding, this study will focus on competency and personality tests used in formalised recruitment processes. Since the aim of the study is to explore how test tools counteract discrimination, from a homosociality perspective, professionals working with both consultancy and development of test tools will be useful to interview.

3. LINKS TO PREVIOUS RESEARCH

Previous research of organisational and social-psychological origins covering perceived similarity, decision-making, homosociality and discrimination in formalised recruitment is presented in this section. Both international and Swedish research is covered to accurately map the major international themes as well as the local context.

3.1 Recruiting Similar People

3.1.1 Similarity-attraction

Research that could help to explain why recruiters tend to recruit similar people mainly originates from two perspectives that were developed in the US during the 1970s and 1980s. The first perspective, the attraction-selection-attrition (ASA) model, proposes that due to the fact that similar organisations attracts similar people, the organisations are to some extent compelled to select from similar candidates (Schneider, 1987). On an interpersonal level the Similarity-Attraction Paradigm, with its social-psychological foundation, proposes a distinct relationship between similarities of the recruiter and the candidate and that it may affect the decision process when applied to such a situation (Byrne, 1971). A closely related principle to the Similarity-Attraction Paradigm that is often discussed equivalently in research on similarity theory is ‘Homophily’. However, homophily, as a concept, is more focused on networks and social groups rather than individual similarity-attraction (McPherson et. al, 2001).

During late ‘90s, the similarity-attraction hypothesis was used in recruitment practices within the teacher labour market. This was done to attract and increase ethnic diversity among the applicants, so the recruitment practices were assimilated in line with assumptions from the hypothesis. The results showed that black applicants were attracted when the school administrator conveying the vacancy was female. When the recruitment message instead was presented by a male school administrator, white applicants were attracted to a greater occurrence (Young et al., 1997). Additionally, Singh and Yan Ho (2000) tested the similarity-attraction hypothesis in their study on people's approaches against strangers. It was found that people tend to judge the attractiveness to strangers both personally (liking someone) and intellectually (intelligence). When it comes to social attraction, dissimilar attitudes (24 attitudes were tested e.g. smoking, divorce, religion, careers of women and migration) were shown to be more game-changing than similar ones, since dissimilarity

lead to repulsion. Other research based on this paradigm has disproved the hypothesis expectations by suggesting that both male and female recruiters rate male and female applicants in the same way. Interestingly, female recruiters were shown to offer higher entry level salaries to male applicants than female applicants. This tendency is thereby conflicting with the similarity-attraction hypothesis (Russel Hardin et al., 2002). Lee and colleagues (2005) examined attractiveness and discrimination in selection decisions and found that when self-interest motives are taken into account in decision-making, decision-makers tend to discriminate both in favour of the same group of people as themselves, or against them, as long as it benefits them individually. More recent research has, on the other hand, confirmed similarity-attraction effects related to gender among recruiters (Roebken, 2010; McCarthy et al., 2010, Van Hoye & Turban, 2015; Palmer & Bosch, 2017).

It is not surprising that much research has shown a direct effect between gender and biased evaluations in organisations (Heilman, 2001). Findings in previous research from various times suggest that these interpersonal similarity effects, ranging from dimensions such as gender, ethnicity and skills, affect different types of decisions in different contexts. (Bagues & Perez-Villadoniga, 2012) *Gendered stereotypes*, coupled with the difficulty to alter such stereotypes and perceptions, have shown to play a critical role in these situations. (Dodge, Gilroy & Fenzel, 1995; Heilman, 2001; Leuptow, Garovich, & Leuptow, 1995)

3.1.2 Challenging the similarity attraction theory

Since the 1990s scholars have challenged the Similarity-Attraction Paradigm. A study on granting academic research proposals show that there is a bias in ratings where female evaluators rate proposals written by females lower, independent of the quality of the paper, while there is no significant correlation between male evaluators assessments and the gender of the proposal's writer (Broder, 1993). This indirect effect of gender bias has furthermore been analysed by Graves & Powell (1995) in their research on recruiters' evaluations of actual applicants in campus interviews. The results showed a negative effect on sex-similarity and a strong correlation between female recruiters and negative evaluations of female applicants. Female recruiters saw male applicants as more qualified than female applicants. Graves and Powell argue that individuals actively try to distance themselves from others, even if they are similar to themselves, in an attempt to strengthen their position in a context where such categories are believed to be perceived as a weakness. However, ten years later, Goldberg (2005) found contrasting gender similarity effects. His study showed that female recruiters had no preference on interpersonal attraction, while male recruiters

evaluated female applicants higher than males. Other results have shown that if male recruiters hold the same gender as the applicant, it plays a bigger role when assessing other competitors in the decision making process, compared with the applicant being female (Giovanni et al., 2015). This relationship has been further problematised. In their qualitative research on professorial appointments in Dutch universities, Brink & Benschop (2014) analyse how gendered networking practices, through formal and informal networking practices, produce inequalities within organisations and analyse how they are legitimised. In their research, the term gatekeeper is highlighted and both males and females prefer male candidates that live up to the current norm and success stories. Gatekeepers are high ranking academics with a great amount of influence in academic recruitment. The study suggest that the gender related networking strategies, with the gatekeepers, play an important role in which academics that are admitted to the most highly desired positions. These results suggest that the perspective of similarity-attraction have shifted through time and play more complex roles, such as being a part of defining competence rather than just the positive similar-to-me effect. The next paragraph will continue presenting how the closely related concept, homosociality, has been depicted in recruitment processes and organisational settings.

3.2 Homosociality in Recruitment Processes

3.2.1 An international context

When taking a standpoint in the international research field on homosociality, the phenomenon is largely described and investigated in relation to the controversial concept of hegemonic masculinity (Bird, 1996; Fisher & Kinsey, 2012). The concept hegemonic masculinity was coined in early 1980s by Raewyn Connell (Duncanson, 2015) and is defined as a structure that maintains practices that uphold and legitimise men's dominance over women (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005). There is also a large part of studies on the homosociality phenomenon which holds a linguistic perspective where observations on male-male relations are implemented. Investigations on male friendship disclose that homosociality structures usually occur in the inner circle of male corporate managers, where nicknaming and joking ties the inner circle together. This in turn creates distance to outsiders and shapes a visible masculine identity. On the contrary, it is also shown that even though male groups do not act in this typical “masculine way” (non-competitive and expressing intimacy) they still provide room for homosociality to occur in the inner circle of managers (Flood, 2008; Thurnell-Read, 2012; Pershings, 2016). In line with this perspective, Fabius Kiesling (2005) investigates homosociality among a group of men and confirms that men’s language, how they act and talk in order to attract other men, produces patterns and cultural discourses of dominance.

Looking at the homosociality phenomenon in recruitment processes, Powell (1987) classified existing studies regarding the effects of gender on recruitment. In recruiters evaluation of applicants it was found that male applicants were preferred for male dominated jobs. Moreover, it was shown that the more extensive applicant information there is for a management position, the lower the risk for preferring a male candidate and gender stereotyping. Similar results are presented by Gorman (2005) who determined that when selection criteria among recruiters include stereotypically masculine characteristics, a lower amount of women are hired. Homosociality phenomenon is confirmed since the study reveals that firms with female recruiters had a higher proportion of hired women; recruiters prefer candidates of the same sex as themselves. In their multinational study on ideal candidates for top management positions Tienari et.al (2013) reveal another reason for the exclusion of women; organisational core practices are gendered in executive search processes. This, in turn, contributes to male dominance in top management positions since executive search consultants and their clients reinforce this tendency. Generally, consultants were shown to be aware of the exclusion of women in their assignments, but failed to understand that the core practices contributed to exclusion. The work by Elliott and Smith (2004), as well as Stafssudd (2006), disclose that women and minorities face inferior opportunities to gain high workplace power since white men in superior positions engage in homosocial reproduction. This preference for similar others causes segregation among people within organisations (Kanter, 1977). Narrowing the research field, the next section will present the Swedish contributions on the homosociality topic.

3.2.2 The Swedish context

By reviewing the Swedish research field on homosociality in recruitment processes it reveals a relatively unexplored phenomenon where the first studies arose during the beginning of the 21st century. Holgersson (2003;2006;2013) has in her studies examined the concept of homosociality and male dominance among top managers. She describes homosociality as a 'gender order' where informal and unstructured features in recruitment processes create room for homosociality. It is argued that non-formalised recruitment processes, with unstructured interviews, open up for discrimination and explain why men are superior women in both society and leadership positions. In Holgerssons article from 2006, a discussion is held on homosociality research mainly has focusing on men, which makes it hard to determine whether we can talk about homosociality among women. She strongly stresses homosociality as a gendered process and emphasises the importance of not limiting the concept to male superiority. Holgersson argues that it is an empirical question

whether homosocial processes can take place among women. It should be mentioned that Sedgwick's (1985) pioneering book on homosociality does not include discussions on female homosocial relations. However, it should be kept in mind that the book was written more than 30 years ago. Further, a contrasting aspect from Lipman- Blumen (1976) asserts that women are not homosocial in the same way as men because of women's more inclusive approach. However, it turns out that more recent research within the field studies homosocial relations between women in several ways. For instance, Binhammer (2006) takes a historical approach and contrasts previous studies on female homosociality in relation to a novel written by Mary Robinson Walsingham. She argues that female homosociality and bonding occur when the friendship between women is passionate. Also, Sanders (2015) explore homosocial dynamics among women in a football team and finds that the gendered norms did not subscribe to heteronormativity, since the women engaged in both masculine and feminine endeavours. Furthermore, Hammarén & Johansson (2014) include female homosociality in their study and extend the homosociality theory by distinguishing on vertical and horizontal homosociality. Vertical homosociality is described as a phenomenon strengthening bonds between persons of the same sex that, in turn, maintain traditional male and female positions. Horizontal homosociality is presented as similar to "female homosociality" since it concerns relations based on emotions and intimacy (Hammarén and Johansson, 2014).

Holgerssons study from 2013 points to two types of homosociality. Firstly, through the definition of an applicant's competence; when recruiters are defining the criteria for certain positions this can be done in ways so that male candidates appear more important than female applicants, since what women do usually is defined as less important. Secondly, homosociality can appear in recruitment processes by doing hierarchy; when male recruiters have the benefit to define competence, it usually implies a selection to recruit younger men because of their preference. In turn, these men comply to the management norm and this process reproduces a specific masculine managerial culture and exhibits a homosocial relation that attracts men to other men (Holgersson, 2013). According to Scholten and Witmer (2017) another factor contributing to homosocial phenomena are organisations' recruitment practices. In their study on gendered leadership constructs, embedded practices that are firmly rooted in organisational norms and assumptions (that support gender division), have shown to contribute to an overrepresentation of men in leadership positions. In summary, it can be concluded that homosociality in recruitment processes occur in several ways within organisations. Courses of action have been introduced to confront these homosocial processes and prevent male domination; through increased gender awareness among male

executives. It has been proven that when awareness of gender equality increased within an organisation, constructions of management were adjusted accordingly (Wahl, 2014). Although research from Wahl and her colleagues earlier in 2003 showed that increased awareness among male managers was not enough for change, because even if awareness visualised the gender order issue, it meant that there must also be willingness for change (Wahl et al., 2003).

Since homosociality, as shown, usually implies a de-selection of a certain gender it is also relevant to determine additional reasons, or factors, that could explain recruiters' choices. As mentioned earlier, homosociality is often seen as a form of discrimination (Holgerson, 2013) and thereby the following section will present research on discrimination in recruitment processes.

3.3 Discrimination in Formalised Recruitment Processes

As shown, the Swedish labour market context is characterised by inferior conditions for migrant employees (Carlsson, 2010) since they face major obstacles in successfully integrating into the labour market due to various discriminatory mechanisms. Some examples are difficulties with ensuring foreign academic references and previous work experience (Knocke, 2000). Furthermore, in the research by Rydgren (2004) other mechanisms such as stereotypical thinking, homogeneous networks and institutional discrimination are brought up. Despite the fact that there is a certain amount of research on discrimination in recruitment processes, research on *how, why and with what aim* test tools are developed to prevent discrimination seems to be less extensive - especially on the basis of homosociality awareness. Additionally, no research on outcomes of using test tools to increase diversity representation can be found. Yet, research has shown that when competency based recruitment is introduced in organisations there is a tendency that the selection of applicants focus on the interview part, on application forms and by checking the applicant's references (Farnham & Stevens, 2000). In line with the purpose of this study, it is interesting to investigate how objectivity and homosociality is expressed among people working with test tools, since this tendency shown in research contradicts the whole idea with objective recruitment through test tools. It is also argued that changing existing recruitment processes within organisations to become more competency-based requires radical changes from the organisations' side (Ibid, 2000).

The reviewed study by Gouldin and Rouse in 2000 commences with an illustrative example of blind recruitment. Sex-bias was explored in the hiring of musicians to symphony orchestras. In the 1970s, most orchestras revised their audition policies and used a physical screen during the auditions to

hide the applicant's identity from the jury. Blind auditions appeared to increase women's probability to be advanced with 50% (Gouldin & Rourse, 2000). Six years later, Fasang (2006) implemented a similar study on German orchestras, since only 28, 5% of their musicians were female. She found that discrimination occurred in the decision making process, as fewer female applicants were invited to the blind auditions, probably because of gender stereotyping. Similarly, in a study by Carlsson and Rooth (2007), fictitious applications were sent in to real vacancies. It was revealed that applicants with Middle-Eastern names needed to apply for jobs fifteen times to be called for three interviews. Swedish named applicants needed solely to apply for ten interviews to get the same number of call-backs. Even these findings will be important to take into consideration during this study, since using test tools initially in recruitment should show contrasting patterns.

A major part of research covering formalised recruitment processes and test tools concerns the selection of participants for studies within the healthcare sector (e.g. Miller et al., 2010; Nattinger et al., 2010). Competency-based selections have shown to improve the quality among the workforce and reduce bias in the process. Applicants recruited through competency based selection have shown to perform better than applicants recruited through traditional recruitment methods (McGuire et al., 2016; Patterson et al., 2005; Garrett, 2006). Traditional recruitment processes have shown to possess inherent tendencies of discrimination; for instance by gender stereotyping; the tendency among recruiters to connect certain genders to certain jobs. Some occupations are characterised as masculine, which often cause women to face discrimination and the other way around (Liebkind et al., 2016). Further, it is shown that discrimination often occurs when applicants' CVs are reviewed, when criteria are established for certain positions and through the first initial contact with the applicant (Pager & Qullian, 2005; Bonoli & Hinrich, 2012). Even if the idea with formalised recruitment is objectivity, there are still both pros and cons to highlight.

3.3.1 Questioning objectivity

In theory, test tools reduce discrimination and bias by involving objective assessments in recruitment processes. However, research questions whether test tools are reliable, valid and totally unbiased. It is of great importance that test questions directly related to the specific job positions are asked, since discrimination could occur if questions are asked about gender, race, religion or disability (Garrett, 2006). Another challenge using test tools is people's self-insight, since some applicants may experience difficulties with assessing their own behaviour, feelings and knowledge, which does not give accurate answers in the tests (Furnham, 1988). Other research from Eddy and

Greg (2010) revealed that assessment tools testing cognitive ability have a tendency to limit minority representation. Due to the focus of this study, the findings by Eddy & Greg are important to take into consideration during the data collection. Moreover, research reveals other concerns inherent in test tools. When recruitment processes are formalised it is based on assumptions that organisations are power neutral. There is a lack of consideration about competence, since it is a question of interpretation; organisational actors (people assessing applicants) are required to interpret competencies and evaluate the applicant's (Holgerson, 2003; Kirton & Healy, 2009). This opens up for potential discrimination and bias. As Kirton and Healy (2009) reveal, recruiters tend to put great faith in that competency tests are neutral and objective, even if assessment of competencies in practice require subjective interpretation.

The understanding of homosociality proposed in this study draws on the above presented studies. As this study refers to migrant women, an intersectional approach is adopted and it is likewise crucial to understand the similarity attraction in terms of ethnicity, and the possibilities for ethnic discrimination. It can be argued that several interesting perspectives of homosociality have been investigated within the research field. However, there are still research gaps that need to be filled. No research has been found on awareness of homosociality in relation to test tools and how awareness, in turn, influences the test tools. Similarly, no research has been found on people's reasoning about how test tools counteract discrimination and explore the implications. By focusing solely on test tools in this study and applying the homosociality framework combined with an intersectional approach, new important aspects will be taken into account by implementing this study. The next chapter will introduce a detailed presentation of the study's theoretical framework that will be used as a tool to analyse and answer the study's research question and fulfil its purpose.

4. THEORY

This section will present the theoretical framework of the study and provide an overview of the development of the theories. The final part of this section presents how the theories are combined in this study.

In order to fulfil the purpose of this study, the theoretical framing relates to the central theme of homosociality and why perceived interpersonal similarity affects selection and decision-making in recruitment. By building our understanding on these theories, it will be possible to explore and analyse the ways test tools in formalised recruitment processes counteract these tendencies of subjectivity. Over the years, research in various academic disciplines have problematised underlying determining factors on decision-making where interpersonal similarity has received much consideration (Bagues & Perez-Villadoniga, 2012). Similarity theory is here applied as an analytical tool for exploring awareness of homosociality among people working with test tools, as well as to analyse underlying elements of homosociality in formalised recruitment processes and how they may be expressed. This is explored in relation to intersectionality and inequality regimes due to the fact that homosociality can be both unintentional and discriminatory against people with migrant descent in general, and especially, discriminatory against women of migrant descent.

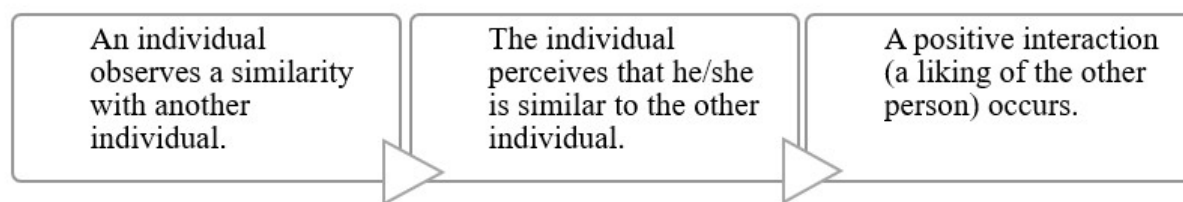
The first theoretical perspective, closely related to homosociality, will in this research be referred to as similarity theory. An overview of the development of the theories will be presented to provide a sufficient review on the ways perceived similarity may influence decision-making. Second, Ackers (1990) theory on gendered organisations and inequality regimes is presented. The theory offers highly relevant perspectives when analysing homosociality and contributes with a gender dimension to organisational theory. This study is further complemented with theories on intersectionality to be able to provide thorough analysis of the topic. The final section connects the theories together and presents what implications they will have in relation to homosociality in this research.

4.1 Similarity Theory

The Similarity-Attraction Paradigm has, since it was introduced as a concept by Byrne (1961, 1971), been both debated and criticised as well as applied and tested throughout various academic disciplines (Bagues & Perez-Villadoniga, 2012). The theoretical perspective was developed during

research investigating and theorising the phenomenon of the effect of attitude similarity and interpersonal attraction between strangers. The paradigm suggests that people are attracted to other individuals who they perceive to be similar to them in attitudes. Results from early studies confirmed that a linear causality between perceived attitude similarities had a positive impact on attraction (Byrne, 1961). The model shown in Figure 1 illustrates Byrne's Similarity-Attraction Paradigm and shows how attraction impacts job-related decisions. According to the theory, when the Similarity-Attraction Paradigm is applied to the employment interview, dimensions of similarity, such as gender, generate perceived similarity between the recruiter and the job-seeker which, in turn, causes interpersonal attraction that can lead to favourable outcomes (Graves & Powell, 1988)

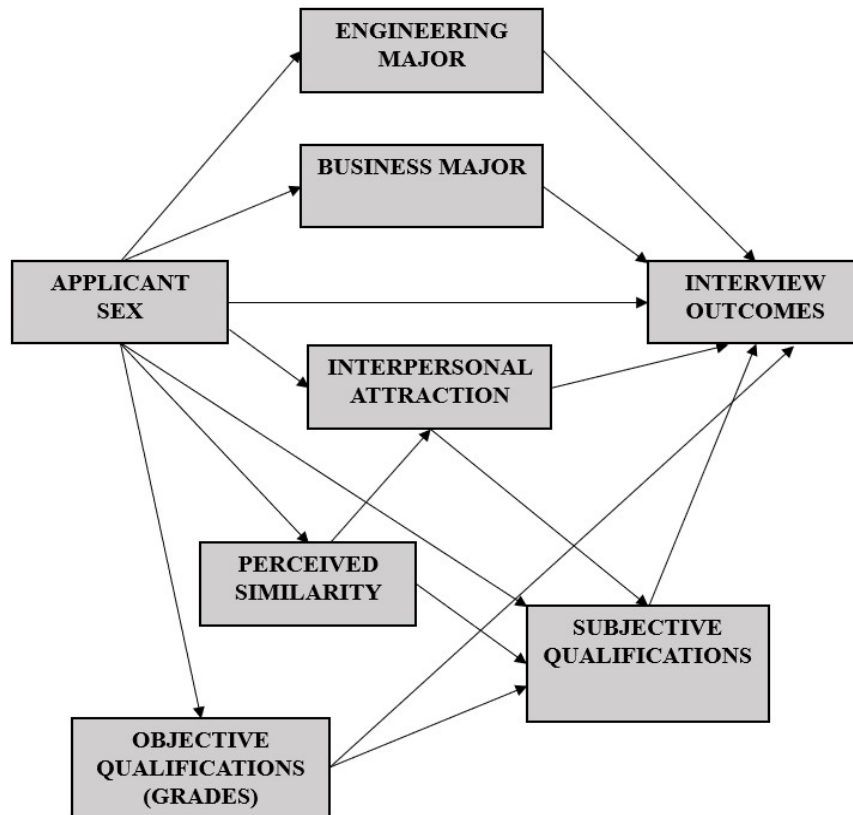
Figure 1.



The Similarity-Attraction Paradigm illustrated. Modified from Wade (2015:26).

The development of the theory, however, implicates that the relationship between similarity and attraction are more complex than originally described. The application of the theory has generated diverse results in different scenarios and the direct effect of gender, as similarity leading to attraction in recruitment processes, has both been confirmed and questioned (Graves & Powell, 1995; Powell, 1987). Looking exclusively at gender, Graves and Powell (1988) tested the Similarity-Attraction Paradigm based on different developed hypothesis but found no evidence of sex similarity influencing the recruiter's decision to hire a candidate. When applying the Similarity-Attraction Paradigm to a large quantity of recruiters and applicants, the sex of the applicant hardly appeared to be a significant factor contributing to interview outcomes. The theory was extended to include the indirect effects of similarity and attraction, even if the evidence of it was limited as well. Attraction was shown to be caused by other attributes than gender, which notably surpassed the level of influence that the gender of the applicant had. Gender therefore had a relatively small impact on the outcome of the interview either directly or indirectly through other dimensions such as subjective qualifications. This relationship is illustrated in the simplified model in Figure 2.

Figure 2.

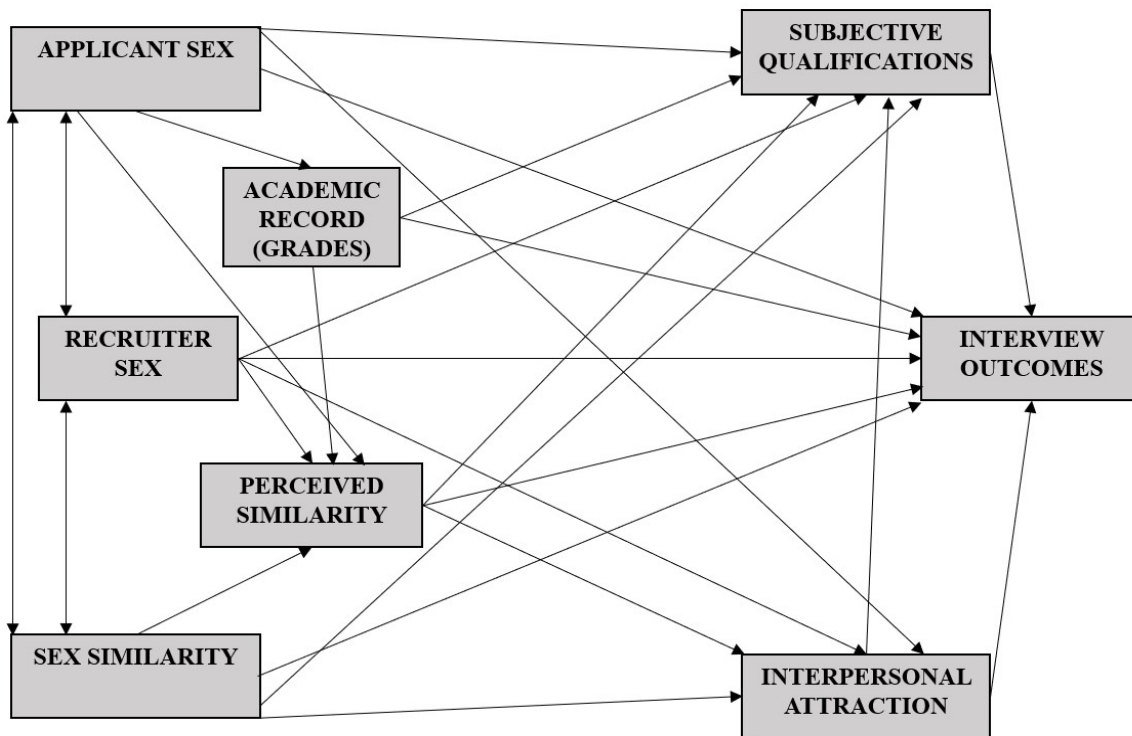


An illustration of factors influencing interview outcomes. Gender influenced interview outcomes directly and indirectly but with an insignificant direct effect. The figure is modified from Graves & Powell (1988:26).

A decade later, Graves and Powell revisited their previous research with the objective to fill the gap of research on the effects of sex similarity on recruiters' evaluations of job-applicants (Graves & Powell, 1995). They investigated the research topic by again applying the Similarity-Attraction Paradigm based on the assumption that similarity, in terms of sex, will eventually lead to interpersonal attraction. They hypothesised, using previous research such as Dipboye & Macan (1988) and Motowidlo (1986) that the attraction would generate biased questioning strategies to a greater extent (Graves & Powell, 1995). As in their previous testing of the Similarity-Attraction Paradigm, they again found that perceived similarity and interpersonal attraction were influential components on the decision processes. The previous study was, however, extended with the addition of the sex of the recruiter and sex similarity as factors as shown in the simplified Figure 3

below. Gender was therefore present as a dimension affecting decisions, but was doing so in an indirect manner and with a greater influence on interview outcomes.

Figure 3.



Gender with a higher significance than first expected, affecting decisions both directly and indirectly. Applicant sex and recruiter sex added to the model. Subjective qualifications showed the highest significance to interview outcomes. The figure is modified from Graves & Powell (1995:87).

When summarising the impact of Byrne’s (1971) Similarity-Attraction Paradigm, perceived similarity and interpersonal attraction do in many ways influence decisions. The direct effect of gender and interview outcomes is however limited and later research has found new multifaceted levels of gender influence. Among these, female recruiters regarded male applicants as more similar to themselves than female applicants and female interviewers rated male applicants higher (Graves & Powell, 1995). Previous research has explained this phenomenon by adopting a social identity perspective and that this may be a result of a strategic exclusion of an individual belonging to a more disadvantaged group even if the recruiter is belonging to this group (being a women, ethnic minority, etc.) (Ashforth & Mael, 1989; Graves & Powell, 1995; Tajfel & Turner, 1979). While the social identity perspective provides a likely explanation, we argue that homosociality contributes to the analysis further. Brink & Benschop (2014) argue that one explanation to the fact the female recruiters may prefer male applicants emanates from the idea of a male candidate, living up to

current success stories, to be the best fit for a certain position. Whether this is intentional or unintentional, it is highly relatable to some of the major assumptions of homosociality. A gendered approach to organisational theory is therefore necessary and can provide possible explanations towards systematic inequalities within organisations which follow in the subsequent section.

4.2 Gendered Organisations and Intersectionality

Acker's (1990) theory on gendered organisations was developed by capturing multiple feminist perspectives, theorising on how gendered structures and segregation at work can be produced and sustained through different organisational practices. Acker has integrated much of the previous theorising on gender related to organisations by Moss Kanter. Kanter recognises that gender differences in organisations are embedded in structures where men and women are designated to fulfil specific roles with the exception of tokens at the top of the organisation. This relationship will eventually result in the division of labour by men, maintaining male dominance (Acker, 1990, Kanter, 1977). This theoretical framework was one of the first contributions to organisational theory to include gender as socially constructed and provides valuable insights into how certain structures that appear gender-neutral are based on assumptions assigned to gender stereotypes. Acker argues that a barrier for a feminist academic approach to organisations is the fact that organisations were in many ways described as being gender-neutral. We argue that this further justifies the need for this study to explore and analyse awareness of homosociality and the implications. This problem has resulted in that gender-related inequalities within organisation are difficult to distinguish due to the fact that the male norm is often viewed as the neutral state (Acker, 1990, Smith, 1988).

Acker argues that unequal hierarchies are often both created and masked through policies in terms of an 'abstract worker', which in reality are based on traditional male norms and therefore not ultimately neutral. She argues that this concept is used in organisations with the objective to define desirable behaviours and that it excludes females, since it implies that it is necessary to act as a man (Acker, 1990, 2006). Acker refers to the creation and of inequalities as *gendering* which is done through at least five different, but closely related, interacting processes and divisions. One of these processes is the construction of abstracts such as the association of a successful manager to traditional male characteristics (Acker, 1990, 2012; Kanter, 1977).

The theoretical perspective was later extended to also include race and class, as interrelated constituents of inequality but acknowledges other bases such as sexuality to be of importance as

well. Acker develops an analytical approach to grasp how inequalities are produced and states that an intersectional approach is required for a comprehensive analysis of this phenomenon. Acker defines the interaction between multiple practices that maintains inequality in organisations as *inequality regimes*. According to Acker, these organisational regimes exist in all organisations and have negative consequences for individuals based on socially constructed categories such as gender, race and class. Inequality regimes are therefore especially disadvantageous for people that fit into many of the categories. The characteristics that constitute inequality regimes in individual cases may however vary. It is necessary to analytically approach the phenomenon of inequality with the perspective of it as a product of complicated, related and reinforcing practices as well as it is important to understand different shapes and degrees of inequality (Acker, 2006).

Organisational practices that may contribute to, and maintain inequality regimes are, besides discrimination in recruitment processes, wage setting and the definition of job requirements, where they may be both intentional and unintentional by the organisation. The relationships between different elements that may create inequalities do, however, result in the inability to effortlessly identify them (Acker, 2006). Notably, many of these organisational processes are both developed and carried out by HR-professionals in organisations.

Other researchers have further contributed to the intersectional analysis of inequalities in organisations. Similar to Acker (1990), Bradley and Healy (2008) argue that the intersectionality of ethnicity, gender and class are central to understand social processes in the workplace. Bradley, Healy and Forson (2011) applied Acker's theoretical framework in a study on the public sector in Great Britain when investigating how inequality regimes can be sustained even in more scrutinised contexts than private companies. Acker argues that the legitimacy of inequalities may differ depending on type of organisation where public sector organisations, to a greater extent, pay more attention to the issues of inequality (Acker, 2006). Building on Acker's arguments, findings in the research by Bradley, Healy and Forson (2011) indicate that, while public sector organisations do not formally legitimate inequalities based on gender and ethnicity, practices that reproduce inequalities are indeed present. The effects are, in this case as well, like Acker initially argued, especially disadvantageous for black and other ethnic minority women where these groups bear the multiple burdens (Bradley et al. 2005; Bradley & Healy, 2008; Bradley et al. 2011). Additionally, Bradley & Healy (2008) stress the importance, among people bearing multiple burdens, of having role models in a society dominated by white men. They raise the importance for black women to have role

models to identify with, since having someone to identify with helps to guide one's behaviours. A lack of role models could thereby constitute an obstacle for black women, since it becomes harder for them to visualize one's perceived possibilities in society.

The theorising of gendered organisations mutually expresses the importance of an intersectional analysis of inequalities. In more recent research, Acker argues that the analysis of inequalities on the basis of gender is incomplete without the inclusion of other dimensions that both create and sustain them (Acker, 2012). Inequality in organisations is by Acker defined as “*systematic disparities between participants in power and control over goals, resources, and outcomes; workplace decisions (...) security in employment and benefits; pay and other monetary rewards; respect; and pleasures in work and work relations*” (Acker, 2006:443). The different organisational practices that produce and maintain inequalities constitute *gendered substructures*. The substructures are vital in order to understand why inequalities between men and women still exist. However, these substructures are at the same time insufficient without analysing the consequences of complex intersections of race and class (Acker, 2012).

Both resistance towards efforts attempting to change inequalities in organisations, and organisational inertia in general, can block or hinder the development towards an equal organisation. Factors such as unwillingness to relinquish possessed advantage and the following unequal power balance between advantaged and disadvantaged groups complicate the process of change. A strategy that throughout time has shown to be somewhat successful is taking small steps and systematically adjusting one process creating inequalities at a time. However, without an intersectional approach to gender and ethnicity related issues, ignoring class, attempts of permanent change are often ineffective since they are not addressing the elemental organisational gendered structure (Acker, 2006).

4.3 Combining the Theoretical Frames

Both the similarity-attraction perspectives and Acker's framework on gendered organisations and inequality regimes provide valuable insights when analysing awareness of homosociality and discrimination in formalised recruitment processes. As mentioned in the previous chapter regarding similarity-theory, the theoretical development indicates a more complex structure than the somewhat obvious male preference of male candidates. It is therefore important to explore homosociality further and to elaborate on the non-obvious roles that gender may play in different

situations. Both early and more recent research have, for example, shown tendencies of women preferring male candidates throughout different contexts and therefore that perceived similarity may be experienced in different ways.

The direct and indirect ways in which gender may influence decisions in relation to homosociality are vital aspects to relate to throughout this study. A comprehensive analysis of this does however require an intersectional, and gendered, approach to organisational theory and inequalities within organisations. Acker's (1990; 1992; 2006 & 2012) theory on inequality regimes will therefore be beneficial in the analysis of homosociality and complement the similarity perspectives by providing insights in how gendered processes allow inequalities to survive. In order to achieve a comprehensive analysis of the investigated issues, the intersectional approach provided is adopted to identify and analyse the intersection of multiple disadvantages and burdens for certain groups.

Holgersson (2003) argues that structure, in general, may counter some informal elements in recruitment processes that produce homosociality and discrimination. However, she further argues that a formalisation of recruitment processes does not always equal a prevention of gender discrimination. According to Holgersson, the misconception that the organisational structures are gender-neutral and the lack of awareness of formalised procedures being influenced by interpersonal judgements, will not lead to positive change. She further problematise that competence can be a question of interpretation, job descriptions and requirement profiles can be formulated in certain ways to only be intended for a certain group of people without them qualifying for indirect discrimination. This study explores the formalisation of recruitment processes from the angle of test tools which are devised to be an objective element in recruitment, and not structured recruitment in general. The combination of the theories will therefore make it possible for a deeper analysis of homosociality, since homosociality alone is not sufficient to shed light on gender discrimination and the role of test tools in combating this. The next chapter will provide a detailed presentation of the methodological approach that has been applied in order to thoroughly break down and analyse the research question of this study.

5. METHODOLOGY

The following section introduces our research design, i.e. methodological choices, data collection and data analysis with reference to data quality concerns, limitations and ethical considerations.

5.1 Rationale Behind a Qualitative Study

A qualitative research design was chosen to explore how awareness of homosociality influences test tools and how they potentially may counteract discrimination. Thus, a purposive sampling strategy leads us to assess awareness of homosociality among professionals working with test tools, to guarantee a fair recruitment process. Relevant respondents for interviews are both developers, involved in the creation process of test tools, as well as consultants working with provision, training and sales of test tools. A qualitative method was used to intercept a deeper understanding of their thoughts, emotions, values and experiences. By giving the respondents room to recount their experiences (Flick, 2014) it created an understanding that was crucial for obtaining a deeper reflection of the phenomenon (Hakim, 2000; Charmaz, 2006 ; Flick, 2014). By this, it is argued that the most adequate way to answer the research question and understand, describe and explain social phenomena (Flick, 2014) was to apply a qualitative method. A further discussion about methodological critique and alternative methods is brought up in the later section on limitations.

The study originates from an abductive approach that is a constant comparative method to reflect on sampling, coding with the analysis, including reading and consulting relevant scholarship. Departing from previous theoretical understandings, this study hopes to shed light on illusive phenomena (Svenning, 2003; Charmaz, 2006; Tracy, 2013). Thus, the study's research question is initiated from a theoretical pre-understanding of homosociality, but has looked towards additional theories along the data collection process required to understand the data collection (Charmaz, 2006). Conclusions are derived from both theory and empiricism, and it has been understood that the research design is a reflexive process that evolves through each step of the project (Flick, 2014).

5.2 Sample Selection and Access

Since the study aims to investigate the mindset and reasoning among professionals working with test tools, respondents from several different 'test tool companies' were contacted. A purposive sampling was done to select which organisations to contact (Ibid, 2014). It was crucial to select

organisations that in an instructive way could help to study awareness of homosociality among their professionals. One selection criterion was that the organisations business idea draw on providing, selling and developing test tools for formalised recruitment processes. Also, that the test tools aim to guarantee fair recruitment processes. To get access to one initial contact at each organisation, a gatekeeper was determined through websites and LinkedIn. In Sweden, there are a limited amount of established and well-known companies within the test tool sector internally developing their test tools. There are also smaller consultancy companies providing their test tools. In an initial phase, a request email was sent out to one gatekeeper at eight different companies in Sweden that was later followed up by a phone call. It was kept in mind to keep the written correspondence professional and a broad overview of the research interest was provided (Tracy, 2013). What quickly could be realised were difficulties with obtaining access. The most frequent response received was that people had a lack of time, or that the interviews could not be provided during the study's time frame. There were also organisations declining access because of a fear to reveal "business secrets", even if anonymity was promised from the researchers' side. The sample ended up with respondents from five different organisations. Four of these organisations constitute the large-scaled companies, which was important for obtaining a development-perspective. The sample was advantageous for analysing the data in an objective way and not risk bias because of organisational settings or cultures. Also, this sample gave room for analysing motivations and arguments among professionals in relation to various ways of developing and consulting test tools.

5.2.1 Sampling units

The sampling process of respondents for interviews was a meticulous choice of professionals working with the development or consultancy of test tools. As researchers, the interest is people who are concerned with the issue of the study. In line with the ideas of Flick (2014), the aim was to create a sample where the respondents represented the relevance of the phenomenon studied, in terms of their experiences and concerns. It was central to create an understanding of their mission, motivations, assumptions and thoughts on the subject. Further, it was important to understand how their working methods, development processes and evaluations of their ways of working reflected their motivations. In order to make meaningful comparisons regarding homosociality awareness, it was striven to create a heterogeneous sample (Ibid, 2014). To not end up in a situation with an overwhelming amount of data that could impact transcriptions and interpretations, or a too superficial and thin contribution, a number of twenty interviews was the initial ambition. This decision was tied to the specific purpose of the study as well as with respect to being two

researchers in the project. Using Tracy’s (2013) calculation, we estimated the interview process (planning, scheduling and conducting interviews, transcribing and analysing the transcripts) to approximately 400 research hours per person. The objective with interviewing twenty respondents was to answer the study's research question by grasping the awareness of homosociality among the respondents and how it influences the development and consultancy of test tools. It was decided that if data saturation happened to be reached earlier along the process, additional interviews would bring fewer insights (Charmaz, 2014; Tracy, 2013).

As mentioned, a snowball sampling method was used initially (Tracy, 2013) to get one first interview. From this, a strategic sampling was sought for in the second sampling phase. Contact information to other respondents within the firms was asked for and gatekeepers sent our emails further to other possible respondents. In few cases, some respondents contacted us on their own to announce their interest. Throughout the process, additional respondents have been searched for without success, which is why the number of interviews ended with ten. Even if the outcome did not meet the initial quest, the data received from ten expert interviews constituted comprehensive material for the analysis. By applying a grounded theory analysis approach, data saturation was reached (Charmaz, 2014) by a careful analysis of the data. Recurring themes were identified in all interviews, even if more interviews probably would have provided an even more profound analysis. Furthermore, a document analysis has been implemented as a part of the methodology. A table with information about the respondents is presented below.

Table 1. Respondents

Code (Title, gender, years old)	Title	Education	Tenure (years)	R&D	Consultancy/ Implementation	Clinical psychology	Sales
Consultant, female, 44	Consultant	Other	1.5	✓	✓		✓
Consultant, female, 42	Consultant	HR	11	✓	✓		✓
Psychologist, male, 29	Consultant	Psychology	2.5	✓	✓		✓
Psychologist, male, 26	Consultant	Psychology	1	✓	✓		✓
Consultant, male, 49	Consultant	Psychology	15		✓		✓

CEO, male	CEO	-	25		✓		✓
Psychologist, female, 29	Consultant	Psychology	1	✓	✓		✓
Consultant, female, 26	Consultant	Psychology	2	✓	✓	✓	✓
Manager, male, 49	Partner	Psychology	9		✓		✓
Manager, female, 40	Head of R&D	Psychology	16	✓			

5.3 Data Collection

5.3.1 Interview process

All respondents were given the same opportunity to give accounts of their opinions, experiences and actions, which attend to the research goal (Ibid, 2013). 9 out of 10 interviews were held in person, visiting the respondent's offices in Stockholm, Sweden, during March. The remaining interview was held over Skype later the same month. The length of the interviews was approximately 60 minutes and all interviews were recorded following the respondents' permission. During the interviews, one of the researchers was responsible for interviewing, while the other wrote manual field notes. All interviews were held in Swedish, except the one over Skype that was held in English. The Swedish interviews were translated into English.

The interviews were semi-structured with clear, open ended and in-depth questions and flexible with the possibility to ask supplementary questions (Charmaz, 2014; Tracy, 2013). The ability to understand and critically reflect upon the respondent's answers increased by using semi-structured interviews (Svenning, 2003). An interview guide was designed (see appendix 1) in line with the purpose and the theoretical framework of the study. The framework provided by Tracy (2013:141) was used as help for structuring the interview guide. The idea with the interview guide was to stimulate discussion and receive developed responses (Svenning, 2003; Tracy, 2013). Big topics and probes were avoided in the interview guide and questions were broken down appropriately with different themes.

5.3.2 Document analysis process

Apart from the interviews, a document analysis of 57 texts has been implemented to achieve a profound analysis and to give context and background information to the study (Flick, 2014). Extant

texts were used to investigate working practices among the ‘test tool companies’ and to discern possible homosocial structures. Usually, practices are used as a way for organisations to constitute their reality. It should be highlighted that we have kept in mind that even if the texts provide useful information, they may be partial (Charmaz, 2014) since most of the documents are directed to customers (that implement test tools in their recruitment). Before the expert interviews were held, the official documents were read and kept in the background during the interviews. Afterwards, the interview data served as a guide for the selection process of the most relevant documents to create a maximum variation. The table presents what type of official documents that have been used.

Table 2. Document Analysis

Type of document	Document description	Amount
Test tool manual	Description of the service offered	13
Official homepage	Information of relevance to the study's purpose	5
Blogpost	Blog posts from the official websites	27
Youtube Video	Demonstration of the company goals	2
Article	Text about inclusiveness and diversity	10

5.4 Data Analysis

In checking the interview data, sample saturation was searched for to find a saturation point. This was gained when we kept hearing same things over and over again (Charmaz, 2014). An iterative approach, that gave space for reflection, was used during the data analysis (Tracy, 2013). All interviews were transcribed verbatim to avoid systematic bias. The transcription process has been limited to vocal behaviour which focuses on verbal component (the words spoken), the prosodic component (how the words are spoken; loudness/duration) and the paralinguistic component (if nonverbal behaviour accompanies the words; breathing/crying/laughing) (Flick, 2014).

Later, the interview transcripts have been analysed, systematised and labelled through grounded theory coding (Charmaz, 2014). This means that the material has been reviewed twice to distinguish

the most important elements in relation to the study's purpose. Through grounded theory coding, common patterns, keywords and analytical categories have been searched for (Ibid, 2014) in order to explain the awareness of homosociality and how it influences elements in working with test tools. Since formalised recruitment is a process, grounded theory coding served as an important analysis tool to break down the data and create a clear overview of the empirical findings. The data was broken down properly through initial and focused coding. During the initial coding phase, the transcripts were read line by line and the data was carefully analysed. Every sentence, word and statement was assigned a label in order to separate, sort and synthesise the data. This was done quite independently from the theories in order to explore all analytical possibilities. During this phase, it was possible to compare the most frequent codes among the transcripts which, in turn, could help to define core categories during the second focused coding phase. Here, a theoretical sample was made where the most relevant and expositive codes were focused on in order to sift out the data (Ibid, 2014). For example, some initial codes identified described how test tools are used. After comparing these codes, it became clear that test tools can be used in several ways, which impacts objectivity. This comparison between data and data developed the focus code of "Implementation Process".

Additionally, by paying analytical attention to the extant texts, it provided a chance to make sense of organisational practices and structures. Using the same process as for the expert interviews, all documents were thematically analysed through grounded theory coding, in order to understand the social settings. Attention has been paid to what purpose the documents serve and if any cultural values are connected to them. To analyse the content of the documents, frequency of words, key themes, use of language and patterns was searched for during the process. It has also been important to analyse how the documents are structured as well as what function they constitute (Ibid, 2014).

The focused codes that appeared constitute the major analytical categories. Some examples are *traditional recruitment methods*, *developing test tools*, *contributions to equality*, *requirement profiles* and *room for subjectivity*. A systematic codebook was developed during the grounded theory process to create an overview of the data, which can be found in Appendix 2. The sub-codes are presented under each theme and are closely related to the study's purpose and research question. From the coding process it was understood that test tools used in recruitment runs through the different stages of: development, introduction, implementation and outcomes. The focused codes have been compared among the respondents to investigate similarities and differences. Throughout the coding process a constant comparative method was used, where the codes consistently have

been reviewed and modified to avoid definitional drift (Tracy, 2013). The material was examined selectively to find answers that illustrate the theoretical themes that can help to achieve the purpose of the study (Svenning, 2003). The expert interviews are compared with the written documents in the study's final chapter and have obtained insights about the possible congruence, or the lack of it (Ibid, 2014). The different sources of evidence combined have shed light on the purpose and research question and created a convergence of evidence (Yin, 2014) while contributing to knowledge within the field of homosociality and test tools used in formalised recruitment processes.

5.5 Data Quality Concerns

To investigate what was meant to be investigated from the beginning the interview questions have been open and kept as close as possible to the theoretical framework and the study's purpose, to receive extensive and versatile answers (Svenning, 2003). A detailed review of the theoretical framework helped to analyse the data accurately. Another way to secure validity was by recording and transcribing the interviews to save all material to be able to recede to the material if needed. In order to achieve good reliability, we as interviewers have sought to be objective in our roles to avoid subjective bias and personal assumptions. To further ensure reliability, different concepts and notions were explained to the respondents if something was perceived as unclear. Additionally, they had the opportunity to ask questions during the interviews (Svenning, 2003). Furthermore, similar main questions were asked to all respondents in order to reliably compare and analyse the answers and to avoid asking leading questions. During the data analysis process, objectivity and impartiality was sought through grounded theory coding. The answers that were deemed to give the most actual contribution in relation to purpose and theory, were sought in the sample. The respondents were offered the right to make contact afterwards if adjustments were desired.

5.6 Ethical Considerations

The relationships with the participants have been one of the top priorities throughout the process. Collaboration, communication and honesty have been in focus. When exploring awareness of homosociality, people's knowledge and experiences are investigated. The research topic is dependent on self-disclosure and is highly likely to generate discussions about sex discrimination and how to overcome this barrier. It was kept in mind that the respondents may experience it as sensitive to confess their abilities and reasonings on the topic, as it raises ethical considerations. Aside from honesty and transparency, other universal ethical actions have been adopted throughout the process; to not harm participants, to avoid deception, to get informed consent and to ensure

confidentiality (Tracy, 2013). Specific data has been protected; interview transcripts have been anonymised and coded with names separate from the documents. The interviews did not disclose any respondent and all respondents were given the opportunity to interrupt during the interview. Ethical considerations have been taken in mind and professional integrity as researchers has been required by showing our ethical position and by minimising dishonesty. It has been important to use our own moral intuition and to promise to protect the privacy of informants and also give respondents access to the report (Charmaz, 2014).

5.7 Limitations

To obtain in depth-material and grasp the awareness of homosociality, individual's experiences, interactions and documents needed to be analysed (Flick, 2014). Counting and transforming data into numbers (Tracy, 2013) would not have given foundation to reach the study's purpose. One limitation that needs to be underlined is that it is hard to make general conclusions from qualitative research, due to the limited number of units (Svenning, 2003). Another risk is the eventuality of not getting as extensive answers that were sought after in order to draw general conclusions from the collected data. The sample size was limited for two reasons. First, a decision was made to prepare and plan the study before conducting the interviews extemporary, which shortened the time frame. As the research question emanates from a theoretical standpoint, it was decided to focus on the analysis part rather than a large sample. Second, the limited number of respondents both depends on difficulties obtaining access as well as the limited size of the test tool sector. However, the major organisations working with test tools are represented in the study and the grounded theory analysis approach helped to obtain a meticulous and precise analysis of the data. We further argue that adequate saturation was reached in consideration of the limited size of the sector. Moreover, another limitation is that we as researchers have been involved throughout the whole process. One such circumstance is the presence as interviewer, since there is a possibility that it can affect the respondent's views. Also, some questions can be experienced as deep or sensitive which may cause the respondents to feel that they do not dare or feel like answering some questions (Ibid, 2003). Further limitations are eventual mistranslations in the translation of the transcripts. Hence, all translations have been controlled and read several times by both researchers in order to avoid mistranslations. The following chapter will present the data received from the chosen methodology. The empirical material that has been collected will be reviewed along with the theoretical analysis.

6. EMPIRICAL FINDINGS & ANALYSIS

We turn towards our presentation of the empirical findings. The theoretical framework, based on similarity theory, intersectionality and inequality regimes, will be used to present the analysis of the data. The chapter is structured and based on the main themes that emerged during the grounded theory coding process and quotations are used to exemplify viewpoints throughout the chapter.

First, we analyse the official viewpoints from the test tool companies, based on grounded theory analysis of the documents published on their websites. Second, we turn to the awareness of *homosociality* among the test tool developers and consultants. This section, will serve as a guiding framework throughout the rest of the chapter. The subsequent sections will focus on the different stages of working with test tools - *development* and *implementation*. This is followed by an analysis of some identified *implications and outcomes* using test tools and the chapter ends with a *summary model* providing a clearer overview of the main findings.

6.1 Existing Documentation on Test Tools - The Official View

This section aims to clarify some background information on the idea of test tools, as well as to exemplify some following implications. This section also aims to identify possible inherent homosocial structures in the working practices. The general picture displayed from the test tool companies' official homepages reveals a great focus on relatively "hard values" such as sales, productivity, effectiveness and profit. A frequent message is that test tools are much more time-saving compared to traditional job interviews. Thus, many documents somehow refer to research and science, especially blog posts, generally connected to the Big-five Theory (presented in the background chapter), subjectivity, or other cognitive biases. Plenty blog posts cover aspects of Similarity attraction theory, which indicates an awareness of homosociality among the authors. On the contrary, no discussions covering vulnerable groups on the labour market, such as migrant women, are held.

Moreover, all organisations are expressing that their test tools aim for non-discrimination and objective assessments. One company declares on their website that their tests "are based on norms for a large number of countries". This indicates that not all countries are covered. Presumably people whose specific country norms are not covered may therefore be disadvantaged, which opens up for discrimination, or even intersectional discrimination. Test tool practices may therefore

contribute towards reproducing inequalities. We note that this may particularly be the case with women of migrant descent, facing multiple burdens (Bradley et. al, 2011). In line with the research question, this is also one example of an implication using test tools. This will be brought up further in the chapter.

In some test tool manuals the organisations market that they can help their customers to find personal characteristics that are common for ‘successful employees’ within the firm. In one of the YouTube videos it is also highlighted that the test tools can help to chart ‘significant characteristics of high performers’. In line with the approach of Graves & Powell (1995), perceived similarity and interpersonal attraction are often influential components in decision processes. Since one aim of using test tools is to search for people that are similar to the existing workforce, it indicates a tendency for recreating an ideal candidate. If similarity and attraction are pronounced to guide recruitment decisions, it could be questioned how this go in line with the expressions about objective assessments and elimination of bias?

Further, a majority of the organisations’ customers are comprised of big and well-known companies within various industries. The organisations provide test tools in both the public and private sector. Examples of public customers are different municipalities, The Swedish Social Insurance Agency, The Swedish Customs Service as well as The Swedish Prison and Probation Service. Within the private sector, customers are spread among various industries. For instance, there are customers using test tools in the education sector, sports sector and the tourism sector. There are also customers within the IT-sector where examples are Siemens and ComHem. Within economy and audit, some well-known companies are Ernst & Young, Deloitte and Nordea. Additionally, staffing agencies such as Academic Work, Manpower and Oddwork use test tools. Further examples are IKEA, Scania, Audi, L’Oréal and Securitas. For instance, if a customer using test tools would happen to be an IT-company, dominated by men among their workforce, a ‘successful employer’ in this case probably would originate from a man with similar characteristics. This organisational practice could, in turn, maintain inequalities that constitute what Acker (2012) refers to as “gendered substructures” explaining why inequalities between genders still exist - and again, constituting an implication of using test tools. Also, it could constitute one possible element engendering what Hammarén & Johansson (2014) refers to as “vertical homosociality”, since it maintains traditional male and female positions. On the other hand, the IT, economy, sports and transportation sector are known for being characterised by male dominance. However, it is hard to

generalize if most customers operate in industries traditionally dominated by a certain gender, since they are so widely spread among occupations and sectors. Yet, if test tools happen to be used more often in male dominated occupations, it could obstruct possibilities for women if they have inferior habits of doing tests or are not invited to do tests at all.

Another emphasised term that arose in the document analysis is the importance of a "requirement profile". It is announced in one test tool manual that customers themselves determine parameters, such as characteristics, of the employee they are looking for. Hence, the customers using test tools are given discretion to define important criteria for certain vacancies. In some way, this could imply that the person determining parameters does so from individual preferences which, again, open up the possibility for homosociality, similarity attraction and discrimination. This aspect will be covered more profoundly in the interview data analysis presented later in this chapter.

Lastly, with the help of the grounded theory coding process, we coded 'that which is not said' in the official documents. For instance, there were no discussions (except in one blog post) on the actual implementation process of test tools. Similarly, no evidence, such as statistics, was presented or used as marketing for exhibiting how test tools results in greater diversity representation or non-discrimination. The analysis of the interview data will display more complex and transparent views of the development, implementation and contribution of test tools. A comparison between the official view and the respondents' view is found in the discussion in Chapter 7.

6.2 Awareness of Homosociality among Test Tool Developers and Consultants

Turning to the respondents' view, the collected data suggest that awareness of homosociality, on an interpersonal level, is generally extensive among the respondents in comparison to the main themes and assumptions of previous research. The respondents demonstrate an awareness concerning some of the implications that homosocial and other biased behaviours may have on recruitment decisions. The respondents highlight different cognitive biases affecting people's decisions and declare its constant presence, in both private and work-related contexts.

As expressed by the respondents below, stereotyping, selective perception and an over-reliance on the first piece of information are examples of biases influencing decision-making in a subjective way. In accordance with the theoretical development of the Similarity-Attraction Paradigm (Byrne,

1971; Graves & Powell, 1988; 1995; Powell, 1987), the response put forward by the Manager below indicates an awareness of both the direct and indirect ways of similarity-attraction influence:

“There are thousand things to keep track of when meeting a new person. The first impressions and your evaluation of the person is based on other things you’ve experienced that are completely irrelevant in recruitment.” **(Psychologist, male, 29 years)**

“The minute people start talking, there is a potential bias. It could be you and me talking, either we’re attracted to one another or not, in the sense that we find what we’re talking about as interesting.” **(Manager, female, 40)**

These expressions are examples illustrating the respondents awareness of the multifaceted ways of perceived similarity and how it may influence decisions. Previous studies have both opposed (Graves & Powell, 1988; Powell, 1987) and confirmed (Graves & Powell, 1995) gender as a significant factor influencing decisions positively. Whether it is a direct or indirect effect, the responses above indicate an awareness of both forms on how perceived similarity may influence decisions through other dimensions such as perceived subjective qualifications, etc. The quote below further demonstrates an awareness of this:

Manager, female, 40 - “For some reason I might over interpret an applicant and say that I will hire xxx no matter what, because she would be excellent here because we share interest in something”

Capacity tests are, in general, devised so that candidates need to surpass a certain cut-off limit to be regarded as competent enough for a specific position. The employer then defines, or collects, the personal characteristics suitable for the position to find the applicant that will get the highest match. Many of the respondents working as consultants said that they, at times, are responsible for giving their customers second opinions on candidates that are about to be hired. Holgersson (2003) and Kirton & Healy (2009) argue that competence, in many ways, is a question of interpretation which the respondent below demonstrates an awareness of when asked about how to be objective in second opinions:

“I suppose I can't be completely objective. I'm subjective per definition because I'm human. I evaluate people based on my own preferences.” **(Consultant, male, 49 years)**

All respondents identify and discuss biases which may affect recruitment decisions on an interpersonal level. The above quote is an example confirming the similarity attraction and justifies both theory and previous research on the topic (Brink & Benschop, 2014; Graves & Powell, 1995). The respondents also consequently justify the need for test tools as a mean to counter tendencies of subjectivity and discrimination as exemplified below:

“The whole recruitment business is kind of based on people which believe they're 'people-persons' who knows how people work - which is impossible” **(Psychologist, male, 29 years)**

“There are simply differences when it comes to how you see people. Based on name, sex, sexual orientation and other things and if we can eliminate that, we should” **(Consultant, female, 42 years)**

With reference to homosociality awareness, it is shown that the awareness is expressed naturally without the interviewer explicitly asking about it. Although homosociality is not expressed specifically as a term among the respondents, many argue, as presented, in terms comparable with the main themes in the research by Holgersson (2003; 2013) and Graves and Powell (1988; 1995, Powell, 1987). However, the coding process identified that only a few respondents brought up the organisational context when debating these issues. Here is one example by one consultant:

“I feel that a lot of customers hide behind arguments like 'women don't apply for positions in our organisation'. They put an ad out with classical male adjectives and say 'we only got 10 male applicants so we're forced to choose one of them even we'd rather hire a woman (...) and if you have two candidates for a management position where both are white males you got your back free. It will then of course be a white man which will get the job. That is kind of the fundamental problem of this” **(Consultant, female, 26 years)**

In accordance with Acker (1990, 2006) and Kirton and Healy (2009), the respondent's interpretations strongly suggest an awareness of organisational practices reproducing inequalities. The response put forward by the consultant reflects the perspective of organisations not being gender-neutral entities. Inequality regimes are based on the intersections of organisational disadvantages such as gender, race and class. Acker's perspective recognise that organisational hierarchies are created and sustained through practices which may appear as gender-neutral but are, in fact, based on traditional male norms (Acker, 1990). Furthermore, Bradley and Healy (2008) argue that the intersectionality of ethnicity, gender and class are central to understand social processes in the workplace. Inequality regimes are therefore especially disadvantageous for people bearing the multiple burdens of these categories, such as migrant women. However, even if most respondents show an awareness of the difficulties migrant women face in the Swedish labour market, they cannot mention any active actions being implemented to take migrant women as the most disadvantaged group, into account.

Similarly, the Manager (male, 49 years) also addresses organisational inequalities and highlights an issue faced by one of their customers within the oil industry. The customer company had a male dominance among its line managers and decided to analyse their recruitment selections in relation to gender. It was shown that they tended to rely on the test results and recommendations provided by the test consultant when it came to female applicants. The higher score the women had on the capacity tests, and the better they were rated in second opinions - the more likely it was for them to get the job. With the men, there was a completely different scenario and a hailstorm. There was no correlation to either the tests or the recommendations from the test consultants. As expressed by the manager:

“What probably happened with the women is that they don't have any identification process ongoing at all. 'I don't recognise myself in you'. So, therefore, you tend to listen more to the consultants, 'I'm relying a bit more on the tests to base my decision on.' While I as a man, meeting someone similar to myself, a variety of biases are launched and other parameters than the recommendations will be the basis of my decision” **(Manager, male, 49)**

Corresponding with Acker's perspective on gendered organisations, the response by the Manager strongly suggests an awareness of organisations not being gender-neutral, as problematised by

Holgersson (2003) and Kirton & Healy (2009). The response is also expressed in line with the theoretical development of the Similarity-Attraction Paradigm. The respondent highlights the perspective of Hammarén & Johansson (2014) since the reasoning indicate an awareness of both vertical and horizontal homosociality, which was apparent among many respondents. Vertical homosociality is the phenomenon strengthening bonds between persons of the same sex that, in turn, maintain stereotyping. As expressed by the manager above, male-to-male connections tend to result in a man recruiting another man, which maintain traditional male job position. Horizontal homosociality implies that relations in recruitment can be based on an individual's emotions which influence them to make certain decisions (Hammarén and Johansson, 2014). The respondent explicates this by meaning that females have another capacity to switch off their biases and where men, on the other hand, produce what Hammarén & Johansson (2014) and Binhammer (2006) refer to as “female homosociality”. This also corresponds with Goldberg’s (2005) findings that female recruiters don’t show preference based on interpersonal attraction. To further extend this analysis, many of the respondents’ answers emphasise an importance of identifying to others within organisations. From this perspective, the quotation above highlights an obvious attraction to people of the same gender and implications of not recognising oneself in another person. As argued by Bradley & Healy (2008), people bearing multiple burdens in an unequal society stress an even greater importance to identify with similar people. As role models often serve as guide for people's behaviours, it could be an additional explanation as to why people are attracted to others similar to themselves. By applying an image of a role model in various situations, for instance a Swedish-born male, this may impact biased recruitment decisions among men. The fact that female recruiters showed to rely more on test results, compared to men, could possibly be because they do not have anyone similar to identify with.

This section has focused on determining the awareness of homosociality among the respondents. The two following sections will focus on the two critical stages of working with test tools in formalised recruitment processes and continue with a section highlighting some of the implications in relation to the development and implementation of test tools.

6.3 The Aim of Using Test Tools in Recruitment

In connection to the research question, it is important to understand in what way organisations aim to counteract discrimination with their test tools. First, it is central to discern why traditional recruitment processes were deselected to begin with.

On an overall level, it can be concluded that all respondents somehow agreed that traditional recruitment processes; using CVs, cover letters, interviews and references is an outdated method. An example is given by one of the respondents:

“This whole method of traditional recruitment processes is outdated, it has to be removed, it’s just that, and there we have a job to do” **(Consultant, female, 42 years)**

It is clearly exposed why the respondents criticise traditional recruitment processes; since it gives room for discrimination and subjectivity to occur to a much greater extent. This corresponds with the previous research presented. For instance, Holgersson’s (2003; 2006; 2013) research shows that non-formalised recruitment processes open up for discrimination and specifies this as one explanation as to why men are superior to women in management positions. The respondents further reason, closely to Acker’s (1990) approach, using old practices causing inequality reproduction. Here are some examples:

“As soon as we meet people, we get affected. If we start with meeting people we can never be sure that the person gets an objective response (...) Both companies and in-house HR love conversations and getting to know people, like “Who are you? Tell me more, tell me more” (...) and believe they’re good at it. But it’s not like that, this is where your biases kicks in. The more people you’ve interviewed, the greater the risk of doing something wrong. Your brain fools you that you are aware and on top of things” - **(Consultant, female, 44 years)**

“Who came up with the personal letter? It was just nonsense...what does it give? And I’m thinking, what do you get from a CV then? It’s mostly nonsense, but there you get previous experience etcetera, but you could skip that also and just ask on your website, do you have this education? Yes or no?” **(Psychologist, male, 29 years)**

The respondent below argues in similar terms:

“We’re trying, in a nice way, to get customers to skip CVs and cover letters because they have such a bad accuracy and discriminates people - there’s a lot of research on it.

And we want, partly because we make money on it but also because it actually works, our customers to implement tests as early as possible.” **(Psychologist, male, 26 years)**

From a similarity-attraction perspective (Graves & Powell, 1995), the respondents argue that old recruitment methods open up for bias and eventual similarity and interpersonal attraction when deciding which applicant to recruit and which not to. A clear awareness of homosociality, especially “horizontal homosociality” (Hammarén & Johansson, 2014) is expressed in this discussion, often referring to previous research in cognitive/psychological terms. In line with some previous research presented, discrimination often occurs in the review of CVs (Pager & Qullian, 2005; Bonoli & Hinrich, 2012), as the respondents argue. Going back to this study’s research question on which ways test tools aim to counteract discrimination, it can be ascertained that the main arguments for introducing test tools in recruitment is for eliminating discrimination, reducing bias, subjectivity and false assumptions. Before continuing the later analysis on *how* it actually counteracts discrimination, there is one contrasting perspective pronounced:

“I still think that CV and cover letters are important, but now I’m over xx years old, so it’s possible that I think it becomes more important when I see something in a historical perspective... But, I would never come to mind not having a CV at the bottom” **(CEO, male)**

Even if the respondent seem to be self-aware and argues that age may impact the approach, starting with a CV and cover letter contradicts the whole idea of eliminating bias by using test tools. Following Acker’s (1990) analytical and intersectional approach on inequality regimes, individual perceptions could be one reason producing inequalities. What would happen if all test tool users eliminated CVs and cover letters in the initial recruitment phase? Even if test tools are used as a formal element in recruitment processes, room for discrimination is still there if CVs and cover letters constitute the basis of the recruitment decision, since it opens up for horizontal homosociality (Hammarén & Johansson, 2014) and constitutes one implication of using test tools.

As Acker (1990) states, inequality regimes exist in all organisations and have negative consequences for individuals’ based on socially constructed categories such as gender, race and class. In turn, this means that inequality regimes are especially disadvantageous for people that fit into many of the categories; in this case, migrant women bearing the multiple burdens (Bradley et

al. 2005; Bradley & Healy, 2008; Bradley et al. 2011). Continuing this analysis from a contradicting homosociality perspective, that people tend to recruit people similar to themselves in terms of gender, and ethnicity, how will migrant women ever enter management positions if managers holding the positions today are white, middle-aged men? Probably, in line with what previous research show, the formalisation of recruitment processes seems to be based on assumptions that the organisation is neutral in power (Holgersson, 2003; Kirton & Healy, 2009). This seems to be the case even when implementing test tools, since CVs and cover letters are still used in the assessment of applicants. As Scholten & Witmer (2017) argue, these embedded recruitment practices are often rooted in organisational norms that support gender division and contribute to male dominance in leadership positions. Perhaps, this could depend on a lack of knowledge, or awareness, among test tool users, since they may believe that solely introducing test tools in recruitment reduces discrimination. However, for a completely objective assessment, CVs needs to be removed. Leaving this discussion for now, to get back to it later, the development processes of test tools will be presented and analysed in the following section.

6.4 Development of Test Tools

In an overall summary of the expert interviews, it is shown that development teams normally consist of an average of 11 people, where a majority is represented by men. From what is explained by the respondents, the test development is very structured and standardised, and there seems to be no room for gender discrimination in this process. The tests are as well carefully developed to provide equal opportunities for people with different physical disabilities. This is said to be assured through continual controls, measures and follow ups of the test questions. It is also described that massive literature reviews on previous research are implemented before the actual development begins. One of the psychologists is summarising the development process in an illustrative way:

“When developing a new test, the steps consists of a literature review, testing of items, a concept validation study against another well-known test, to ensure we are measuring the same construct.... when that is done, we need to continue with statistical analyses to ensure that nothing deviates. After this, we will do some form of criteria validation study to check that the test actually measures the right constructs” **(Psychologist, male, 29 years)**

It is also described that the development is designed in line with digitalisation trends and technological developments. The respondents are sharing some examples:

“Let's say our latest new personality test we're marketing, that was initiated to make a more modern personality test. The market trends are moving into a new direction and starting to become more digitalised, and the big data issue, the whole GDPR issue, all this issues. The demands from the new system are different, so we wanted to create a personality test that was IT” (**Manager, female, 40**)

“Right now we're working hard with transferring our tests to tablets and cell phones. We have many candidates looking for simpler services, since they don't have computers” (**Consultant, female, 26 years**)

Moreover, none of the development departments are located in Sweden. They are all located in other Western European countries; Denmark, Germany and Great Britain. One of the respondents highlights an issue that was already highlighted in the document analysis, in the development of culturally independent tests tools:

Manager, male, 49 -“(...) all tests are developed in the same countries. We got reactions from our customer that the further away from the country of origin you came, the more reactions you got from the applicant's saying “these were strange questions”. This means that tests today are based on a very western tradition and additionally 99,9% men who sits down and creates these tests, so it's a western culture and personality that you have based these tests on. It doesn't give us dispersion. This problem we all have and it's not enough with norm groups.”

Since the tests are based on a Western culture, this seems to indicate that people from outside the West struggle to succeed in the tests. If tests are built so that a certain personality is connected with a Western culture, migrant women again face more difficulties than any other group in this regard (Bradley et al. 2005; Bradley & Healy, 2008; Bradley et al. 2011). If an applicant's test result does not correspond with the certain personality that is sought after, they will not proceed in the recruitment. This could be one example of an organisational practice producing and maintaining inequalities (Acker, 2012). In line with what the Manager (male, 49) emphasises, the other respondents seem to argue that norm groups are enough to ensure that tests are culturally adapted, since it is given as a pervading argument for objectivity. Usually, all test results are compared

against the norm group to determine whether the applicant proceeds or not. However, one respondent is sharing a problem with their norm groups:

“We tend to not test talent so often; it’s controversial in Sweden, since we don’t want to discuss consequences of someone with low talent compared to someone with high. This means that our norm group is not really normally distributed, or not working on an average citizen, it’s TODAY highly academic, as for instance architects, IT and other more technical complex university educations” **(Consultant, female, 44 years)**

This statement opens up some interesting reflections. All respondents are arguing that test tools in recruitment contribute to objective assessments, but if the test in itself is not distributed to the whole population, how can it then contribute to equal representation? In line with the research question, this illustrates an important implication. Looking at statistics on technical university educations, such as IT and engineering, it shows that men are highly over-represented (SCB, 2016c). The norm group could thus be one factor reproducing similarity attraction and homosociality, since people holding similar educations proceed. Again, Acker’s (1990; 1992; 2006 & 2012) perspectives on processes creating inequalities in organisations, in this case similarity reproduction, could be a further explanation to gendered processes allowing inequalities to survive, also hindering migrant women to enter such positions.

The applicant is also given the opportunity to choose between several languages and the amount of languages differs among the organisations. An interesting viewpoint is shared:

“Well, even if tests are free of discrimination since an algorithm presents the candidates with the highest match, but if you don’t have computer experience for example, then you will probably perform worse. You have the opportunity to choose your own language when you do the test, so there we get rid of discrimination in that sense. But, we don’t have all languages, we have 40 different languages, but I mean... there will be occasions where you’re language is not available. Yeah, there was one having Punjabi, from Pakistan, and then it was very hard to give that person a fair judgement when we don’t have the language” **(Psychologist, male, 26 years)**

This illustrates another implication and example showing that migrant people are disadvantaged, since people who do not have Swedish as their mother tongue probably are being constrained to use English or another universal language if their native language is not offered.

In summary, in terms of the practical development process and the formulation of test tool questions, this certainly is done objectively and in a gender-neutral manner. However, it could be questioned whether using test tools contributes to a greater representation on the labour market. Until now, several possible spaces for discrimination of applicants, and various implications, have been brought up. First, old assumptions seem to contribute to organisations not completely removing CVs and cover letters in their recruitment processes. It has also been shown that computer experience and the access to a computer seems to play an important role for succeeding in the tests. Additionally, the focus on the digitalisation of test tools could possibly imply a bigger focus on the development of tools in line with digitalisation, rather than improving the equality and diversity questions. However, research on digitalisation has revealed that technological change increases polarisation in the labour market, where middle-level workers suffer the most (OECD, 2017). Also, people with migrant descent are shown to be exposed to higher uncertainty and lower wages as a consequence of digitalisation (Blix, 2017). Since migrant people are often found in this segment of the labour market, digitalisation is shown to constitute another obstacle for persons bearing the multiple burdens (Bradley & Healy, 2008). By combining homosociality with an intersectional approach in this study, it is revealed that the theoretical framework of intersectionality does not cover any aspects of digitalisation, which will be further discussed in the concluding chapter. Moreover, the tests are built upon a western culture and on an academic norm group, which, in turn, make the norm groups not normally distributed. In other words, it seems to be surrounding elements of the development of tests that complicates objectivity. The possible ways for discrimination to occur, through similarity-attraction and homosociality, during the *development process*, is connected to norm groups, digitalisation, and the possibility to search for similar successful profiles as well as the restricted language offerings. The organisations are following new digitalisation trends and are updated on new technologies, but what about the work with fundamental issues to counteract discrimination? The following section will turn to the implementation phase of test tools.

6.5 Implementation of Test Tools

The empirical material suggests a number of discrepancies in relation to the implementation of test tools. Most of the respondents emphasise the need to implement the tests in an early phase in

recruitment processes, in order to optimise the contributions of the tests. However, most respondents simultaneously highlight challenges they face in this matter. The customer organisations possess the discretion to adopt the tests to their existing recruitment processes where they see fit. This has resulted in some organisations using them in the first selection phase, while others will apply them later, or when the choice has come down to a limited set of candidates where the employer must decide who to hire. All, except one of the respondents, express the need to implement the tests in an early phase in order for the tests to contribute to the most informed and objective decision. It is emphasised that total objectivity can only be assured if the tests are implemented early. The respondents below both exemplify the need to implement tests early on and highlight the risks of a late implementation in the quotes below:

“We don’t encourage our customers to use tests in a final phase. The tests will not provide a predictive analysis or forecasts of any kind if they are applied at a later stage. You then tend to assess the candidate based on your previous dialogue instead.”

(Consultant, female, 42 years)

“We strive for it since that is when the tests works optimally, have the highest validity and you get the most for the money.” **(Psychologist, male, 29 years)**

The quotes above highlight an awareness of homosociality among the respondents as mentioned in the first section of this chapter. The quotes are also in line with previous research, which has revealed that dimensions such as gender, ethnicity and skills, etc. affect decisions either directly or indirectly (Bagues & Perez-Villadoniga, 2012; Graves & Powell, 1995; Powell, 1987). An early implementation will limit the information about the applicants such as gender and ethnicity before stereotyping, which is difficult to change, takes place (Dodge, Gilroy & Fenzel, 1995; Heilman, 2001; Leuptow, Garovich, & Leuptow, 1995). It is reasonable to argue that the implementation process is a critical moment in order to best utilise what the test tools are designed to contribute with. However, all of the respondents in this study work with selling their tools and services to other organisations and it is important to consider the possibility that some of the answers can be slightly biased. Implementing test tools in an early phase, testing all candidates, will most likely generate higher profit for the companies this study’s respondents are working for. The respondent below highlights the importance of both possessing the knowledge of what the tests are designed to deliver and the need to sell tests in order to deliver results.

“They’re free to do however they want, and we’re bound to the fact that we need to sell tests and make money. But I would really like to emphasise that we push really hard for the customers to use tests early in their recruitment processes whenever we get the opportunity” (**Consultant, female, 44 years**)

As discussed below, many organisations using tests seem to have an incomplete picture of what the test tools aim to provide. It is exemplified that customers often talk about an applicant's test results as a relief where the results served to reassure the recruiters gut-feeling. This dialogue is emphasised as another major challenge, since there seems to be a lack of understanding among their customers. Thereby, it is argued by one consultant that tests should be involved as early as possible in the recruitment, since this minimises the room for subjectivity.

“That’s what we always hear - that the tests should confirm gut-feelings. Then we say ‘No, no no, that’s not what they’re supposed to do.’ That dialogue can be very challenging. We need to talk with our customers and make sure they see the purpose with our test tools properly, we still have a lot to do there” (**Consultant, female, 42 years**)

As argued by the respondent, testing is not proposed in a later or final phase in recruitment processes, since the recruiter tends to also assess the dialogue you have had with the applicant during the previous steps in the process, which may cause discrimination. The respondent stresses this as a difficult challenge in their work.

“You’re sitting there with the final candidate that you’ve subjectively evaluated with your biases. Of course you like this person, whom has invested a lot of time in the process. But what happens if the tests don’t show what you want? The answer is that you ignore the test result and assume the person will do fine anyway” (**Consultant, female, 42 years**)

The answer coincides with the development of the Similarity-Attraction Paradigm (Graves & Powell, 1988; 1995, Powell; 1987) where different biases and perceived similarity may influence decisions directly or indirectly. Late implementation increases the risk of homosocial behaviour even though the processes is considered to be formalised (Holgerson, 2003). Subsequently, this is a

great opportunity for recruiters to strengthen homosocial bonds and maintain traditional male or female positions through vertical homosociality. The later the tests are implemented, the bigger the risk for subjective recruitments, since getting to know applicants may cause relations shaped by emotions and intimacy that possess horizontal homosocial behaviour (Hammarén & Johansson, 2014).

There are likely to be numerous different reasons explaining why organisations do not implement tests in the early phases of recruitment and selection. One possible reason is that the economic cost of testing every applicant to every position would be considered to be too high for many organisations. Another challenge is the lack of data among their customers which is required for test tools to work optimally. In order for the tests to find what they are designed to find, the organisations need to have identified specific competencies and personality traits that they want to acquire in their organisations. The respondents exemplify this:

“A lot of customers use tests at the end of their recruitment processes because they don't dare to let the process become automated” **(Psychologist, male, 29 years)**

“The validity of the process actually goes up if it's done correctly. But it requires that the organisation uses automated processes of what capabilities and characteristics they are looking for to see if it fits with the vacant job.” **(Manager, female, 40)**

Another respondent problematise this further:

“You need the data to match towards the applicants. So the first time, before you have the numbers, it's usually a best guess” **(Manager, male, 49)**

The answer put forward by the female Manager particularly highlights a problem of test tools in recruitment processes that occurs when the necessary information that is required when integrating tests with existing recruitment practices is not available. Although the data can be gathered rather quickly, the quote by the Manager (male, 49), indicates a possibility that there is room for homosociality throughout the entire implementation process and not exclusively when using tests late in the selection process.

The respondents collectively express that the underlying idea behind test tools is to identify the applicant who is most likely to succeed in a specific position within the company. In that sense, the tools are efficiently contributing to objective assessments and counteracting tendencies of similarity-attraction in general and, more specifically, homosociality. However, considering the shortcomings and risks of an inadequate implementation indicates that there is indeed room for subjectivity and homosociality even when using test tools, which are considered to be a legitimate method of formalisation. Structure is highlighted by many of the respondents as a method for objective evaluations of candidates. The quotes below exemplify this:

“What I try to do is to create a structure which I’m forced to stick to so that I at least get the same kind of information from the people I assess.” **(Consultant, male, 49 years)**

“Both structure, design and the reports should be simple. They should not provide people the possibility to make their own interpretations.” **(Consultant, female, 42 years)**

However, Holgersson (2013) argues that the formalisation of recruitment processes does not guarantee objectivity and that it does not automatically limit the possibility of discrimination. While Holgersson discusses the implications of formalisation in general, such as structured interviews, test tools fit into this category. The empirical findings of this study expose that the implementation of test tools is not enough to guaranteeing objectivity. Both Holgersson and Acker (1990; 2006; 2012) argue that the idea of formalising recruitment processes as a method for objective evaluations is based on assumptions of power and gender-neutral organisations. Previous studies have shown that homosocial tendencies may influence the definition of competence and that competence, in reality, is subject to interpretation (Holgersson, 2003).

6.5.1 Implementation from an intersectional perspective

Even if test tools are carefully developed to work on all people, there still seems to be room for homosociality and discrimination, where only one problem is related to the implementation of tests into the customers’ recruitment processes. When the situation of migrant women, as a group, in the labour market was brought up, the respondents demonstrated awareness of the problem but, at the same time, showed a degree of ambivalence regarding whether the tests are contributing to equal opportunities.

The Female Psychologist (29 years) expressed that there is an observable difference between the final candidates that have passed through a recruitment process where tests have been implemented early, with the results subsequently guiding the employer, and those that have gone through a relatively unstructured recruitment processes. Organisations with formalised recruitment processes and test tools get a lot more migrant applicants compared to organisations with customers that ask for second opinions on their two final candidates. The respondent shares that in the case of the latter, she has never found a person with migrant descent among the two final candidates. However, when test tools are introduced late in the process, it becomes difficult for migrant workers to reach the stage where they are tested.

There are, however, other concerns regarding the implementation and contributions to equal opportunities of tests from an intersectional perspective. One consultant problematise cultural differences in relation to test tools and issues that are difficult to solve no matter how much the tests are adapted to different cultures, translated into different languages and validated to local cultures:

“I’ve worked a lot with tests in the middle east. All tests are somewhat developed in individualistic countries, most often in Europe or in the US which for example means that you have an advantage if you’re reading from left to right, even for abstract figures you believe aren’t culturally dependent” **(Consultant, male, 49 years)**

The respondent argues that the implementation of tests in an early phase will minimise the risk of women in general, and specifically migrant women, being cut-off in screening processes which will result in it becoming harder to reject them at a later stage:

We still have a meeting that will occur and it’s usually women that are being cut-off in those, at least for higher positions. But if it’s possible to get more women to actually get to the interview-stage, we have succeeded in a small way at least”.
(Consultant, male, 49 years)

When asked about recruitment processes for the highest management positions, it is argued in similar terms:

“If you look at their recruitment procedures, they start with something like a lunch and ask questions on how you like your current job and then present what you have in mind. It’s so unstructured. You won’t choose the woman with foreign background because you believe that it won't work if you can't sit there and talk about sailing boats.”

(Psychologist, male, 26 years)

These ideas correspond with previous research results showing that homosociality structures usually occur in the inner circle of male corporate managers, where male-bonding ties them together (Flood, 2008; Thurnell-Read, 2012; Pershings, 2016). When tests are not implemented for management positions, it is much more likely that subjective recruitment decisions are taken. Furthermore, if the recruiter happens to be male, and personally identifies a leader as a man, this could be one factor influencing attraction to the same gender. Further, Acker (1990; 2006; 2012) and Bradley & Healy (2008) argue that a feminist analysis of gender inequalities in organisations is insufficient without an intersectional approach, capturing both ethnicity and class. Since previous research has shown different types of jobs being characterised as male, the quote above indicates the multiple burdens migrant women bear (Liebkind et. al, 2016). The implementation process of test tools is vital in order for the tests to actually deliver what they are designed to. Many of the respondents express an extensive awareness of homosocial behaviour and discuss some implications of how perceived similarity may affect decisions in line with theory (Graves & Powell, 1988, 1995; Powell, 1987). Both the development phase and the implementations phase allows homosocial behaviour to take place. During the implementations of test tools, the design of requirement profiles is an example of one step allowing homosociality to occur. In accordance with Holgersson (2013), the development of requirement profiles is where competence is being defined and that competence can in many ways be a question of subjectivity. Previous research has shown that gendered networking practices maintain inequalities and that gatekeepers may counter equality within organisations (Brink & Benschop, 2014; McPherson et. al, 2001). The quotation above highlights this perspective while reasoning about difficulties for women of migrant descent to be recruited to the highest management positions. The implications following the use of test tools in formalised recruitment processes will further be presented and analysed in the following section.

6.6 Implications and Outcomes of Using Test Tools

Throughout this chapter, various implications of the formalisation of recruitment by implementing test tools are presented. Another major factor that received attention during the interviews was the

implications that follow the design of requirement profiles for certain positions. This section will focus on objectivity from the customers', or test users', perspective in order to understand how their objective assessments are assured. During the interviews, requirement profiles were frequently referred to as an important objective element among all respondents.

When it comes to the assessment of applicants, it is emphasised that this is done objectively when test results are compared against a requirement profile. One consultant recounts this:

“Setting the requirement profile is always the basis of work, the solution to all problems. Many are working with requirement profiles, I would say, but are somehow slightly forgetting the tests. You only test at the end and see that “Oh, Kalle was extrovert, but should he be? Does it say so in the requirement profile? Well, maybe that was not so important anyway” **(Consultant, female, 42 years)**

The respondents are explaining that holding on to a requirement profile throughout the recruitment process eliminates, or reduces, subjective thoughts. Thus, no further reasoning takes place of the eventual subjectivity in the design of requirement profiles. However, the interviewee opens up the discussion by questioning the determination of important characteristics and the evaluation of applicants. As Holgersson (2003) intends, requirement profiles can be formulated in certain ways that attracts certain groups of people, which leads to indirect discrimination. It is also argued that competence requires some kind of personal interpretation that is later used when evaluating the applicant's results (Holgersson, 2003; Kirton & Healy, 2009). Some excerpts are illustrating the respondents' mindsets on this:

“I'm not going there and making a personal assessment, it's not interesting and I don't have enough knowledge of the service as such either, but I assume that this is the requirements that the customer has set for the position... that's what we're assuming” **(Consultant, female, 42 years)**

“That's a mined field, assume that you have a recruitment process where you're testing 2000 applicants and you have ONE person at HR creating the requirement profile. If that person creates the requirement profile in an inferior way, there will be a bad recruitment” **(Psychologist, male, 29 years)**

Likewise, the **CEO (male)** expresses:

“We sit together with the management team to create the ideal requirement profile. Focusing on, this is how we believe that the person who will succeed with the job looks like. Then you run it with the xxx-test and get a discrepancy and that discrepancy in itself leads us to recommend companies.”

Thus, the responsibility, or a part of the responsibility, of the requirement formation is often left in the hands of the customers. As the CEO expresses above, it is from the organisation’s view, combined with the customer’s view, that the “ideal candidate” is created. It should also be noted that the person expresses “*how we believe*”, as well as the Consultant “*assumes*”. How is it assured that personal assumptions and values do not influence the creation? In line with Acker (2006), the definition of job requirements is usually a practice upholding inequality regimes. Even if it is not intentional from the organisation’s side, it can occur unintentionally. The Psychologist (female, 29 years) deems that it is within the creation of requirement profiles that the biggest bias can occur and the Manager (male, 49) likens the design of a requirement profile to “tuning the sound on a stereo”. The CEO continues:

“A nonchalant HR-assistant can create 24 questions in five minutes and then they’re ready. Then he gets a profile from this and I’ll go there and ask the questions, then it turns out that one allocated five on a scale should have been a one because he did not think properly. And that’s the difference in making a requirement profile correctly and sneaking through. It’s absolutely decisive.” **(CEO, male)**

Also, the Female Psychologist (29 years) highlights the tendency among customers to hold circular reasonings when creating requirement profile, since they tend to identify their best employee and then search for this person’s twin. The Manager (female, 40) is also describing that top performers are used as guides for future recruitments - which causes re-enactment of already existing employees. These reasonings correspond with the official picture that was displayed in the document analysis. These are clear examples of what Acker (1990) refers to as policies creating unequal hierarchies, since the organisations emanates from one “universal worker” that is not ultimately neutral. One implication in this course of action is that organisations search for similar persons, which makes room for homosociality and discrimination. From a similarity-attraction

perspective (Byrne, 1971) this is a further example of when perceived similarities and interpersonal attraction influences the organisation's decisions. Again, following Holgersson's (2013) viewpoints, homosociality is done through the process of defining competencies. Recruiters are shown to define criteria for certain positions so that male candidates appear more important than women, since women's actions are often defined as less important. Additionally, this creates room for horizontal homosociality since people's homosocial tendencies, in the design of requirement profiles, may result in the maintenance of traditional female and male positions (Hammarén & Johansson, 2014) when assigning important characteristics to certain vacancies.

Additionally, one Female Consultant (26 years) describes that if a customer's requirement profile is not created in a not gender-neutral way, where elements of male bias are involved, the customer will find a man. This is highlighted as a big source of error:

” If you as recruiter are going to describe a salesperson or manager, you do it in a certain way. You will say “yes, a boss should be driven, forward, pointing with the whole hand” and then you think that close constructs to someone pointing with the whole hand is a big man, and then it becomes discriminatory” **(Psychologist, male, 29 years)**

Hence, a requirement profile that favours certain candidates will guide the test to select persons who match it. In this manner, the organisation's way of structuring their work, by carefully holding on to the requirement profile, may, in line with Holgersson's (2003) reasoning, constitute an informal and inherent element in recruitment processes that actually produces homosocial behaviour and discrimination. It is described that the way that respondents can impact their customer is through education and support, although it does not seem to be sufficient. It is emphasised frequently that there certainly are a lot of biased and odd requirement profiles, with trendy words created in the customer's own head, which causes oblique recruitments.

An implication highlighted in the previous section is further brought up by the Female Consultant (42 years), who describes that their organisation contends with the problem that the recruiter, in the end, has the opportunity to overlook the test result if it does not match with the recruiter's gut feeling or preconception of the candidate. Additionally, the CEO (male) brings up the exact same thing regarding ignorance and further describes that if there is a bad match, the customer gets a

model, or a “question battery”, of things they should think of before making a decision. The manager pronounces some concerns in line with this problem:

“There’s something gnawing in me, that when you do screening based on tests, you always put some kind of requirement profile based on one type of personality. The obvious positive is that you remove all human bias but at the same time, it becomes paradoxical since you get extreme uniformity because you’re matched against that profile. I’m not sure it’s positive, it causes some kind of paradoxical exclusion”
(Manager, male, 49)

The consultant below reasons in the same way:

“Somewhere, there will be a correct answer and it will be very normative, like “what do we think?”. For example, if you get a question in the test as finance manager, that one person at work is feeling bad - what are you doing? You get three options and there will be a correct answer that we want you to choose. So, in that way, it’s not objective”
(Consultant, female, 26 years)

So, even if there sometimes seems to be room for reflection within recruitment decisions, there also seems to be room for homosociality and similarity attraction to occur, even if a requirement profile is properly prepared and test results checked accordingly. This corresponds with the ideas of Holgersson (2013), who clarifies that homosociality occurs when male recruiters have the advantage to define important competencies, since their preferences usually imply a selection of younger men. This process reproduces a specific masculine culture and homosocial relations where men are attracted to other men (Holgersson, 2013). Moreover, Holgersson (2003) argues, in line with Acker (2006), that organisational structures being gender-neutral are a misconception. She argues that there is a low awareness of formalised procedures being influenced by interpersonal judgements, which does not lead to positive change (Holgersson, 2003). Findings in this study indicate that awareness on homosociality, subjectivity and bias is quite high among people developing and providing test tools. Thus, this seems to be limited to an interpersonal level. The awareness of homosociality and similarity-attraction on an organisational level cannot be confirmed in the same sense, since there seem to be inherent phenomena in the organisational structures and practices contributing to the reproduction of male dominance (Holgersson, 2013; Hammarén & Johansson,

2014; Tienari et. al 2013) and consenting recruiters to obstruct possibilities for migrant women. Finally, another surprising finding in this study is that the test tool companies are marketing their tools by emphasising non-discrimination, diversity and objectivity while, in fact, no follow-ups exist in regards to charting which applicants that actually are recruited through their test tools and if this actually leads to diversity. The quotations below illustrate this:

Manager, male, 49 - “I would say, we give customers opportunity to follow up diversity by collecting information in a consistent way that we can analyse. But if it’s checked automatically? - No, but if I should sell you a test, I would say it does - but no, nobody can say it does.

“You can only check those candidates that you actually have plowed on. That’s the problem. We can follow them, evaluate them, but everyone that gets “no thank you” you just let go. So, there’s a distortion in their analyse to” (**Consultant, female, 26 years**)

Seeing this, together with the fact that requirement profiles are designed from existing star employees, it can be questioned how diversity is created on the labour market by the implementation of test tools. From an organisational perspective (Acker, 2006), the lack of follow-ups could constitute another inequality practice that hinders people bearing double burdens to enter the labour market, when such important implications are not announced. As awareness of homosociality and similarity attraction can be confirmed in the study, it is astounding that follow-ups are not executed and that deficient emphasis is put on implementation, since it is shown to be decisive for objectivity. Besides, the study by Gouldin & Rouse (2000) that was presented in previous research revealed that blind recruitment increased women’s probability to be advanced with 50%. It had been interesting to see if test tools indicated similar results if results was followed up. The next section ends the chapter with a summary model of the findings.

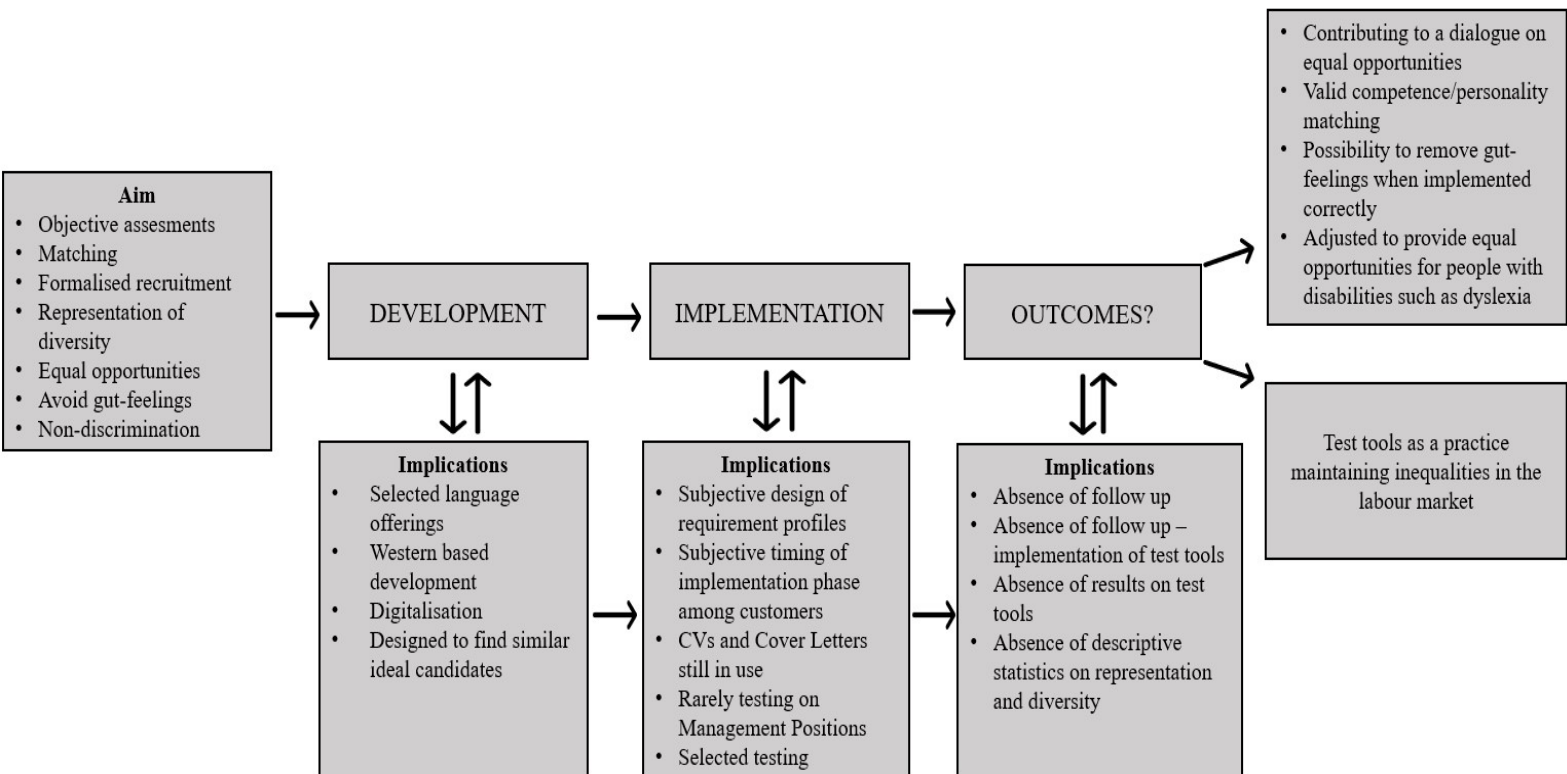
6.7 Explanatory Model and Summary of the Study’s Findings

The model below illustrates the findings of how test tools aim to counteract discrimination on the labour market, and the following implications. As intended, formalised recruitment is used to receive correct and scientific assessments of candidates, to avoid relying on a gut-feeling and instead let proven best competence guide recruiters’ decisions. It can be summarised that the study’s findings determine that the inherent functions in the test tools eliminate gut-feelings in the

assessment of people’s competence. However, the several implications presented (summarised in the model below) prohibit recruitment from becoming completely formalised. This is because the implications, of e.g. the subjective design of requirement profiles or customers’ choice of implementation phase, allow gut-feelings to guide subjective decisions, which does not create a scientific assessment by using test tools.

Initially, the model presents the different aims (discovered in the data collection) of using test tools to counteract discrimination in the labour market. Thereafter, the three main steps of the formalisation of recruitment (through test tools) follow: development, implementation and outcomes. Below each box, the implications of each step are presented. These implications illustrate where and how homosociality, similarity-attraction and intersectional discrimination can occur. The overall outcome, derived from the empirical findings and analysis, as opposed to just considering the intentions of test tools, is that test tools can form a part in recruitment practices that maintains inequalities in the labour market. Thus, it should be highlighted that the positive outcomes, displayed in the upper hand box, can prevail if test tools are used correctly. A further discussion and problematisation is presented in the next and final chapter.

Model 1. Summary model of findings



7. CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION

This concluding chapter summarises the study's main findings in relation to its purpose. The theoretical framework and its limitations are discussed, with the ambition to clarify the importance of the exploration of homosociality in formalised recruitment processes. The new insights this study has contributed with to the identified gap of research, concerning homosociality and test tools, will be encapsulated and discussed more argumentatively throughout this section.

7.1 Summary of Main Findings

This study has identified and analysed several issues which may arise within the implementation of test tools in formalised recruitment processes. Implications of different phases of development and implementation results in that test tools are not unconditionally objective. The intention was to describe the ways in which test tools aim to counteract discrimination and with what implications. This was done by exploring awareness of homosociality among test tool developers and consultants providing customers with test tools and analysing how awareness influences the test tools devised to support a formalised recruitment process. By emanating from the theoretical view of similarity-attraction and homosociality, in combination with intersectionality and inequality regimes, the findings of this study have contributed to a research gap by revealing how homosociality awareness influences the ways test tools are being developed and implemented. An overall extensive awareness of homosociality is discernible among the respondents. The awareness is most frequently expressed from an interpersonal perspective, described in closely related terms such as subjectivity, bias and similarity-attraction. From an organisational perspective, the awareness of possible inherent homosociality structures does not appear as clearly. It can, however, be ascertained that homosociality awareness influences test tools on multiple levels. By applying grounded theory coding and keeping the analysis close to the data, some ulterior findings concerning contradictions and challenges in the implementation have been identified.

The analysis of the development phase revealed that the respondents demonstrated explicating examples of conscious and meticulous development of test tools which continually is backed up with extensive research reviews and cultural adaptation to ensure gender-neutrality. The awareness among consultants working with implementation was shown to influence their ways of working as they attempt to impact their customers through education and support in order to influence them to use test tools in the most accurate and efficient way. Although the empirical findings disclose

homosociality awareness, there is still room for tendencies of homosocial behaviour and similarity-attraction in formalised recruitment processes. Largely, because of several technical limitations of test tools and the discretion among customers.

The respondents argue that test tools counteract discrimination by ensuring objective assessments free from bias and subjectivity. The findings do, however, indicate several implications interfering with a completely objective assessment and formalisation of recruitment. While many tests can be adjusted to provide equal opportunities for people with disabilities such as dyslexia, there is an inability of the tests to be objective when dealing with other structural factors. For instance, selected language offerings are shown to disadvantage people with migrant descent to a greater extent and test tools appear to be based on a western culture and personalities, which further complicates the opportunities for people from other parts of the world. Habits of doing tests and working with computers in general are as well impacting people's performance on the tests. Access to a computer is therefore another relevant dimension to consider where people, unaccustomed with digitalisation, may suffer. The access to computers could also indicate a class-issue considering differences in terms of economic capabilities. The fact that the habit of taking tests impacts the performance raises further questions in regards to equal opportunities as tests are less common within occupations dominated by women.

By applying the intersectional perspective of Bradley & Healy (2008) to the findings, it can be concluded that when exploring present labour market challenges, it is required to combine intersectionality with the perspectives of digitalisation, polarisation, and other modern occurrences. This is important in order to fairly illustrate and analyse the conditions for people with migrant descent in the labour market. Furthermore, the study's findings reveal other gaps where tendencies of homosociality can emerge. Particularly, the fact that requirement profiles, just as in traditional recruitment methods, are shown to be significant even in formalised recruitment where test tools are used. The design of requirement profiles has shown to be a critical phase resulting in various consequences for objectivity throughout the whole recruitment process. The implementation phase is shown to be decisive for objectivity even if the respondents express an apparent awareness of homosociality. Customers are responsible for the implementation by adjusting algorithms to measure characteristics that they find most important for a position as well as choosing when to implement the tests. This will allow room for recruiters' gut-feelings to guide their recruitment decisions.

To sum up the fulfilment of the study's purpose, it can be concluded that formalising recruitment by implementing test tools occurs as a generally accepted practice to guarantee fair recruitment processes. In line with the theoretical framing of this study, it has been shown that organisations using test tools tend to search for 'ideal candidates' by reproducing existing 'star employees'. An additional implication, from an equal opportunities perspective, is that many organisations do not use tests in the recruitment of managers which allows for highly subjective recruitments. At the same time, there are also problems which may arise when only using tests when recruiting management positions. An employer may then desire to reproduce a 'star-employee' and one possible issue is that the employer unintentionally desires to reproduce an employer based on classical male characteristics. Migrant women may then be disadvantaged on this level since they, as a group, are extremely underrepresented in such positions. Therefore, some aspects of test tools work as barriers rather than as an opportunity to become objectively evaluated. In line with Acker's perspectives (1990; 2006; 2012), there is a possibility that test tools constitute a practice maintaining gender inequalities in certain situations in the labour market. Especially because the lack of follow-ups may lead to 'gendered substructures'. Using test tools as a recruitment practice can therefore seem to maintain unfair conditions for migrant people, and especially women, in the Swedish labour market. We set off this study by asking if there is such a thing as objective recruitment? When considering the findings of this study, it suggests that the answer to that question is no. It appears that, even if test tools are implemented in recruitment to formalise the process, the movement towards total objectivity seems to be characterised by inertia, which makes it hard to state that there is such a thing as completely objective recruitment.

7.2 Discussion of the Theoretical Framework and the Study's Findings

Certainly, previous research has investigated similarity-attraction, homosociality and inequalities within organisations and light has been shed on many of these issues. The applied theoretical frameworks have both now, and historically, proven to be excellent analytical tools for discerning different aspects of how perceived similarity may influence attraction in recruitment, resulting in biased decision-making. The theoretical framework has contributed to the field of organisational theory in relation to gender and an intersectional approach towards inequalities in formalised recruitment. Similarity theory provided valuable insights to some underlying factors of homosociality and homosocial behaviour. While the Similarity-Attraction Paradigm allowed for an in-depth understanding and analysis of the effects of perceived similarity, in relation to gender, one limitation of this perspective is the lack of an intersectional approach. Perceived similarity based on

gender has shown to affect decisions, both directly and indirectly, but there might be other dimensions influencing decisions to a greater extent, such as ethnicity and class. Due to this drawback, the study's theoretical approach was complemented with an intersectional perspective focusing on multiple burdens.

A comprehensive analysis was made possible by exploring different dimensions of disadvantage rather than exclusively looking at gender. The intersectional approach was helpful by minimising tunnel vision in the study since too great of a focus on a single disadvantage may mask other forms of disadvantages (Bradley et. al, 2011). The study has contributed to the research field by combining homosociality with an intersectional analysis and additionally choosing to explore this from a perspective of awareness. While the intersectional approach was useful, one limitation of this theoretical approach was identified when analysing the findings; the absence of elements related to class in a modern context. The limitations of the theory were therefore visible when analysing disadvantages in the labour market in relation to technological developments, as well as other conditions in the present labour market. Digitalisation and polarisation need to be taken into account in order to clarify dualisation on the labour market.

Although restricted in some areas by Swedish and European labour law, this study does not neglect the right of the employer to freely choose the person they find most suitable for a specific position. The usage of test tools may certainly be an effective method for organisations to find the most suitable candidate to hire, as well as to deal with subjectivity and discrimination in certain aspects. As shown, structure has been highlighted among the respondents as a beneficial approach for objectivity and test tools do contribute to structure and formalisations of recruitment processes. This study has, however, attempted to highlight some implications that can follow the implementation of test tools.

The comparison between the organisation's official view and the respondent's view revealed that disparities, not surprisingly, are remarkable. It was important to create an overview of the official marketing of test tools in order to be able to objectively illustrate underlying implications and reasonings of the implementation of test tools. The document analysis served as a guiding framework to understand the aim of test tools, as well as for trying to analyse homosociality awareness in the companies' organisational practices. Understandably, official homepages are not that transparent or consummate compared to individual reasonings. However, the distinction is

surprisingly separated. The findings reveal that the distance from the respondent's homosociality awareness to the end-user of test tools is tortuous. Even if homosociality awareness influences test tools in terms of the continuous development of technological functions, there are many fragments along the way which allow homosociality to flow along the process. The respondent's awareness of homosociality does not influence their customer's work directly, since test tools are still shown to be implemented late in recruitment which allows for homosociality. This could depend on lower awareness of homosociality on an organisational level, since a lot of the organisational practices and work routines seem to have inherent tendencies of homosociality. When test tools are implemented late in customer's recruitment processes, CVs and cover letters still constitute a part of the initial assessment of applicants which enables discrimination opportunities to flow. This finding corresponds with previous research displaying that the selection of applicants, when using test tools, still tends to focus on the interview or by checking the applicant's references (Farnham & Stevens, 2000). This complicates a completely objective formalised recruitment process by introducing test tools and likewise complicates opportunities for migrant women.

Finally, realising one's individual tendencies to feel more comfortable and similar to another person of the same gender in a recruitment context is fairly easy to be aware of. It is, however, more difficult to, on a deeper level, understand how one is influenced by ulterior attraction factors such as gender and ethnicity, though believing other factors such as personality or education are the factors attracting the recruiter. The respondents also show an awareness of the disadvantages people of migrant descent face as well as an awareness of test tools not being universal in that sense. The intersectional approach thereby helped to conclude the contradicting result that migrant women are disadvantaged even in formalised recruitment processes where test tools are implemented to guarantee fair recruitments. Especially, the digitalisation of test tools constitutes one barrier for equal opportunities. This result, as well as reasserting previous findings, demonstrates that assessment tools limit minority representation (Eddy & Greg, 2010).

7.3 Limitations and Implications for Future Research

This study can most likely benefit organisations, developers and consultants working with test tools to further develop their objectivity by identifying implications, providing insights and by increasing the awareness of the topic. It should thus be highlighted that the study is implemented in a Swedish context, where equality and diversity are common topics on the agenda, which may cause other

research outcomes elsewhere. Additionally, some questions in the interview guide could have been further developed and more profound to receive a deeper understanding.

Finally, due to the different views among test tool developers and consultants versus their customers, in regards to what test tools are designed to deliver, we believe that this study can serve to support future studies in different ways. One concrete example would be to address the issue of test tools as a practice maintaining inequalities in the labour market through a single case-study, focusing on awareness of homosociality from the customer perspective. Exploring the implementation process within an organisation and analysing it from similar theoretical viewpoints as in this study, would most likely yield interesting results and discussions. The lack of follow-ups on test tool results also immediately invites studies focusing on diversity representation. By proceeding from the end-users and observing their work during a certain period, it would be possible to follow up which applicants that actually are recruited thanks to test tools, and in what ways test tools contribute to objectivity and diversity. Another suggestion for future research is to explore and further elaborate on the implications of test tools being developed in a Western culture. Moreover, as this study was implemented in a Swedish context, there is the possibility for future research to undertake a similar study in another country and culture.

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APPENDIX 1 - INTERVIEW GUIDE

Presentation of research project

- Final semester on the Master's Programme in Strategic HRM and LR
- The thesis subject of particular relevance for our future careers within HRM. We have experience from participating in recruitment processes where test tools have been used. However, we want to gain a deeper understanding on how professionals that develop and consult these tests reason about diversity and equal opportunities.
- In the study both psychologist, other developers, as well as consultants providing tests to customers are participating.

Presentation of interview structure and formalities

- The interview is estimated to take about one hour
 - Topics that will be covered throughout the interview is some *background*, questions on *development and assessment*, *personal experiences* and some questions on *diversity*.
 - We guarantee anonymity if desired
 - The interviews will be transcribed afterwards and the data analysed with the help of our chosen theoretical framework
 - You can of course interrupt and ask questions during the interview if something is unclear.
 - Do you feel that it is okay if we record the interview?
 - Start recording!
-

OPENING QUESTIONS: BACKGROUND

Educational background:

Current job title:

Job description:

Tenure:

Why did you choose to work with this?

OPENING QUESTIONS: DEVELOPMENT PROCESS

1. Could you briefly describe the development processes of your test tools?
 - How big is the development team?
 - How diverse is the workgroup in terms of age/gender/ethnicity?
2. How are the tests developed/interpreted depending on occupation?
3. How do you determine which questions to ask in the tests to avoid discrimination or stereotyping?
4. How do you consider individual differences in the tests? (E.g such as experience, gender, background, personal conditions)

GENERATIVE QUESTIONS: OBJECTIVENESS & MOTIVES FOR INTRODUCING TEST TOOLS

5. Now we will provide you with a scenario we would like you to reason about. Sometimes, organisations completely remove, or anonymise, CVs and cover letters during the initial recruitment phase. This is done to solely let test results determine if the applicant persists to the next step and also to prevent discrimination.

- What is your opinion on this?
- What problems or possibilities do you see follow this method?
- In what way do you believe it influences diversity?
- In what part of your customers recruitment processes are your test tools usually involved? Why?
- How would you describe the main issues of recruitment processes that does not use test tools?

6. Following this, in such recruitment processes, the importance of a well structured "requirement profile" is high:

- Whom are designing the requirement profiles?
- How are they designed in a objective way?

- How is it ensured that personal assumptions and valuations does not impact the formulation? (Example: If I am structured and excessive as person there is a risk that I will value similar characteristics of a candidate)

7. In what way are your tests free of bias?
8. What do you personally believe is important in the assessment of applicants?
9. How do you keep personal assumptions away when working objectively?
10. In what way would you describe that the tests remove "gut feeling" in the assessment?

DIRECTIVE QUESTIONS: REFLECTIONS ON DIVERSITY & REPRESENTATION

11. How do you talk about equality within the organisation? Amongst leaders/colleagues?
12. How do your test tools contribute to a more equal and diverse representation on the labour market?
13. How do you verify and follow up test results in connection to diversity (so that it works for all genders, ethnicities, ages etc.)?
14. Would you say that there is a pattern of certain people or groups struggling with succeeding the tests?
15. Research show that migrant women as group struggles the most to enter the labour market. How does your test tools provide fair opportunities for this group?

CLOSING QUESTIONS: DEVELOPMENT AND CHANGE

16. What future goals you strive for when it comes to the development of test tools in relation to diversity?
17. Could you describe some obstacles you face in this?

CLOSING QUESTIONS: CONCLUSION

18. Is there anything that we have not asked that you would like to share before we finish?
19. What did you feel was the most important thing we talked about today, and why?
20. Do you have any questions before we finish?
21. Would it be okay if we contacted you again if we need to add some follow-up questions?

Thank you very much for taking time for this interview, we really appreciate your participation!

APPENDIX 2 - CODE TREE & CODE BOOK

CODE TREE: Based on the Focused Coding Phase

Traditional Recruitment Methods (T)

Outdated
Overestimating
Discriminating
Fuzzy assessments
Pre- assumptions
Gender bias
Comfort
Fear to automate recruitment

Developing Test Tools (D)

Digitalisation
Structuring
Delegating responsibility
Outsourcing
Language offer
Inertia
Western based development

Homosociality Awareness (HA)

Subjectivity
Interpersonal level
Similarity
Gender attraction
Confirmation bias
Situational judgement bias

Implementation Divergence (I)

Early phase (IE)

Sifting out
Screening
Advocating

Contributions to equality (C)

Correct implementation
Justice
Equal opportunities
Objectiveness
Inclusiveness
Universally
Eliminating subjectivity
Labour market representation

Final stage (IF)

Wrong perception
Re-assure gut-feeling
Few candidates

Requirement Profiles (RP)

Structuring

Formalising
Person job fit
Applicant's behaviour
Equivalency
Matching
Eliminating bias
Ideal candidate
Uniformity
Paradoxical

|

Room for Subjectivity (RS)

Bias
Oversight
Similarity in characteristics/behaviours
Assessing subjectively
Thinking subjectively

|

Future Challenges in Implementation (FC)

↙

Expressed visions (FCE)

Old structures
False perceptions
Overestimation
Inertia
Predictions

↘

Unconscious challenges (FCU)

Defining abilities & characteristics objectively
Copying star employees
Lack of experts
Customers discretion
Lack of follow-ups
Room for adjustments/ Coding tests
Implementing in final stages
Personality-type- attraction

CODE BOOK

CODE	DEFINITION/DESCRIPTION AND EXAMPLE OF CODES
<p>Traditional Recruitment Methods (T)</p>	<p>The respondents view of traditional recruitment processes compared to using test tools in recruitment</p> <p><i>Examples: "So, this whole method of traditional recruitment is outdated, it has to be removed, it's just so, and there we have a job to do"</i></p> <p><i>"The one that came up with the idea of a personal letter, it was just nonsense, because what does it give?"</i></p>
<p>Developing Test Tools (D)</p>	<p>Descriptions of the development process of test tools</p> <p><i>Examples: "Compared to a foretime, today, we put out much more responsibility on the customer, for better or worse."</i></p> <p><i>"The average time to produce an effective test for ten years ago, took 5 years. Today, we are down in 63 days, and just that tells us how digitalisation helps us in the development of tests"</i></p> <p><i>"The candidate chooses language when they log in. They can choose for instance Swedish or Arabic and that is not something we control"</i></p>
<p>Homosociality Awareness (HA)</p>	<p>How homosociality awareness is expressed</p> <p><i>Examples: "By definition, I'm subjective because I'm a human. I judge people based on my own frame of reference and what I'm trying to do is to create structure that forces me to make sure that I get the same information about every applicant"</i></p> <p><i>"In a lot of research, discrimination between sexes is observed, but an even higher discrimination is linked to a person's length, for example, wage levels are higher if you are tall and women are generally shorter. All of this goes into that you assume a tall man will be more successful as boss"</i></p> <p><i>"Sometimes, I'm involved in second opinions for person assessments. Usually, I prefer to make the interview by phone to avoid meeting the person and get feelings that the person looks like in a way I'm attracted to or that I like. I would like to have as little background information of the person as possible"</i></p>

<p>Implementation of Test Tools (I)</p> <p><i>Early Phase (IE)</i></p> <p><i>Final Stage (IF)</i></p>	<p>Discussions on when the implementation of test tools should be involved, and are involved, in customers recruitment processes</p> <p><i>Examples IE: "The tests are always optimal in the beginning. But most often, they are used late even if it fits best in the beginning because then you have volumes and can scale of people who have the least like hood to complete the job"</i></p> <p><i>"As early as possible, this is very natural in certain types of recruitment, for example in trainee- recruits, when you're working with people with few years of working experience"</i></p> <p><i>Examples IF: "For a lot of our customers, the tests are used in the end of the recruitment process because they often don't dare to take the step to allow the process to be automated"</i></p> <p><i>"It's up to the customer, they can do as they want, and there we are a little in the hands that we actually need to make money, unfortunately, BUT I really want to be clear. In ALL the chances we get, we press hard that you should use the tests early, and why. We are teaching them, that we should not sit in interviews, it's not there we should work"</i></p>
<p>Contributions to equality (C)</p>	<p>How the implantation of test tools contributes to greater equality on the Swedish labour market</p> <p><i>Examples: "A test creates equality in the sense that everybody gets the same opportunity to self-report, right?"</i></p> <p><i>"I think that test contribute to a greater representation on the labour market and not at least in terms of talent testing. I think it reduces the risk of women being sown away at an early stage, and then it also becomes harder to say no to them, even if you do"</i></p> <p><i>"If everyone had used tests and used it as a criterion in the selection process, the representation would have been more equal."</i></p>

<p>Requirement Profiles (RP)</p>	<p>The importance of a good requirement profile in connection to the use of test tools in recruitment processes</p> <p><i>Examples: "It's an important part to have a requirement profile, it permeates the whole recruitment since what you've said is important is what you actually need to stick to"</i></p> <p><i>"We work with something called XX – this means that we sit together with the management team and create the ideal profile, for instance, this is how we believe that the person that will succeed best with the job looks like"</i></p> <p><i>"There will always be people who think that some unimportant things are very important, one can look at anything actually. I would say that the requirement profile is where biggest bias can be"</i></p>
<p>Room for Subjectivity (RS)</p>	<p>Spaces where there seems to be room for subjectivity even if test tools are used in recruitment processes</p> <p><i>Examples: "Even if the test-supplier tells you that there are no right or wrong answers when it comes to a personality test for a selection or recruitment process, there actually is. Otherwise it would be impossible to actually select anyone. And to be honest, you are taught to tell the candidates that , but I believe that it counts as fooling the candidates"</i></p> <p><i>"We need to talk with our customers and make sure they see the purpose with our test tools properly, we still have a lot to do there"</i></p> <p><i>"At HR, you want to stand on the applicant's side and then it's difficult to take a test, and then you don't want to say if the test was good or bad, then you want to see "ooh, it confirmed my gut-feelings". That's what we always here, that the test should confirm gut-feelings. Then we say "No, no no, that's not what is fore, I'm sorry".. So, that dialogue is challenging, I can say"</i></p>

<p>Future Challenges in Implementation (FC)</p>	<p>Challenges that are brought up from the respondent’s perspectives, as well as unconscious challenges that appears during the interviews.</p>
<p>Expressed visions (FCE)</p>	<p>Examples FCE: <i>“Because it’s the tests that should go before a personal assessment, even if you’ve been working for 50 years and you think you can. The problem is, thus, that you just think that you can, but you don’t know that you can. People think they are human connoisseurs”</i></p> <p><i>“Ehm... people have a very strong believe in their existing processes where they don’t use test tools today, where there is a change of their processes internally, that is of course a challenge, that people have a strong believe in what we do is perfect, and okay they think so but the biggest challenge is say if people are not willing to change.</i></p>
<p>Unconscious challenges (FCU)</p>	<p>Examples FCU: <i>“One thing that we do not talk so much explicitly about , but what is in back of our mind when we develop our tools, to help organisation to understand diversity does not only include ways of being but also ways of knowing and bring that to light”</i></p> <p><i>“In situation-based tests, we sit down in workshops with staff and managers and create different scenarios that are relevant. We do ALL that job and then someone makes sure it actually works. So in that way, we are actually involved in building a whole test”</i></p>