Jóhannes Miðskarð

Action and thinking

- An investigation of how social workers influence school professionals regarding vulnerable children's issues

In memory of Johanna Hansen

People talking and communicating
with each other,
inhabit the earth.

Arendt (1968)

To visit, you must travel
to a new location,
leave behind what is familiar,
and resist the temptation
to make yourself at home,
where you are not.

Disch (1994)

Foreword by The Graduate School in Lifelong Learning

This PhD dissertation is a result of a 3 year study in the Graduate School in Lifelong Learning at Roskilde University. The research perspective of lifelong learning comprises learning through the whole life course in formal education, everyday life, work life, family life, civil society, etc. Thus research in lifelong learning calls for an interdisciplinary approach to learning as a subjective activity in a social context.

The Graduate School in Lifelong Learning was established in 1999 with support from the Danish Research Academy. Since the PhD-programme was established around hundred students have achieved the PhD degree and presently around 60 students are enrolled. It is an international research training programme. Academic everyday life comprises frequent visits by international guest professors and visits by foreign PhD students. Both students and supervisors are engaged in international research networks. Also, the Graduate School is part of a national network developing and coordinating educational activities for PhD students.

The Graduate School draws upon theoretical and methodological inspiration from traditions within the arts and humanities as well as the social sciences. Graduate School training addresses issues traditionally ignored by discipline-oriented research and professional knowledge. It particularly focuses on learning as the subjective mediation of objective, societal and cultural processes. Research in Lifelong Learning encompasses a variety of subjects and is equally broad in the perspectives it takes. The topics of the PhD dissertations are often quite far from what is usually associated with pedagogy, but help to co-establish an emerging critical and historically located important area of research. This often demands theoretical and methodological innovation. At the same time the programme aims to establish connections between existing traditions in pedagogical research and associated disciplines. Methodologically the graduate school concentrates on qualitative methods and interpretive methodology. Within a wide scope each project may choose and adapt quite different methods to the specific research problem.

A PhD dissertation marks the end of an academic apprenticeship. It proves that the author has been "conducting an independent research project under supervision" as stated in the "Ministerial Order on the PhD Course of Study and on the PhD Degree". It is the culmination of the process that is published here. PhD dissertations are however also part of the development and forming of new areas of research. PhD dissertations are necessary in the continuous creation of new knowledge and reading this dissertation assures that this process is well taken care of.

The PhD thesis "Action and Thinking" represents an important and original research work. It investigates the interprofessional work with vulnerable children performed by Danish social workers (*socialrådgivere*), school professionals/teachers (*lærere*) and reception class teachers (*børnehaveklasse-ledere*). Departing from a research question focusing on how consulting sessions with social workers influence school professionals' and further developing perspectives on how to deal with issues in vulnerable children's life worlds, the PhD thesis provides data from 'consulting sessions' between social workers and school professionals. In these sessions the social workers provide the school professionals advices on how to understand and deal with issues in vulnerable children's life worlds following a prevention and early intervention line of thinking. The phd thesis investigates what insights the complicated dynamics of the conversations in these sessions bring to the school professionals' and seek to enlighten how these interactions further influence their understanding of these children. In doing so we are able to learn much more about the concrete interaction and dialogue that characterizes these sessions. A number of issues emerge: different images and understandings of the troubled child, different strategies of what to do, different forms of knowing and not-knowing, but also transformations and new perceptions of children and their families and school setting. The theoretical framing of these questions and findings is a simple and yet sophisticated way to incorporate Hannah Arendt's intricate theorisations into a useable existential-phenomenological framework and herby the thesis make an important contribution to the further development and application of Arendt's conceptual work. The thesis concludes that not only the interprofessional work conversations between pedagogues, teachers and social workers appear to benefit the pedagogue's or the teacher's approach to the vulnerable child, but also that there is a lot of unused potential in these conversations.

The research is an important contribution to the Danish pedagogical knowledge on interprofessional working with vulnerable children – a field that is much in need of such contributions. The theoretical Arendt reception is likewise an original contribution to the ongoing international debate about how to conceptualise interprofessional working.

Contents

Acknowledgements

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Preface

During the last four years I have embarked on two new paths in my life journey. One path that hopefully will lead me to obtain a PhD degree and one path that has led me into the universe of Shakespeare's plays.

My path to try to obtain a PhD degree is a bit unusual in Denmark, because I received one of the internationally oriented PhD scholarships offered by the Danish Research Council during the 2000s. The scholarship implied that I should stay for one and a half years in Denmark enrolled at Roskilde University and another year and a half enrolled in a university outside Denmark. In my case the stay abroad was to be in Leeds in West Yorkshire in England. In Leeds I was first enrolled at the University of Leeds and secondly at Leeds Metropolitan University. Furthermore in the middle of my PhD studies I took an eight-month leave when I moved to the Faroe Islands. During this eight-month stay in the Faroes I held a full-time lecturer position at the Institute of Education at the University of the Faroe Islands.

The path into Shakespeare's plays started in March 2007 in Copenhagen when my aunt gave me a ticket to see a performance of Hamlet. Before this I was not particularly familiar with Shakespeare's plays; as a Faroe Islander I was not even aware of the fact that Hamlet takes place at the castle of the Danish city of Helsingør. However, the play fascinated me and therefore I started to read different books about Hamlet and Shakespeare. When I came to England I used the opportunity to see several of Shakespeare's plays in his homeland.

In the beginning these two paths took their separate routes through my life journey. However as my research gradually led me to read more and more of Hannah Arendt's books, I saw several similarities between Arendt's core ideas and some of the content in Shakespeare's plays. Reading further I saw that Arendt, unconventionally for a scholar, has included many insights from literature to support her way of thinking. One of the authors Arendt relies on several times is Shakespeare. Hence the two paths began to merge for me. This will become clear to the reader of this thesis as I start each chapter with a quote from Shakespeare. However, unlike Arendt, I will not use quotes from Shakespeare as a component in creating my line of thinking in this thesis, but will present a quotation from Shakespeare as a starter to each chapter. The Shakespearian quotations are to be regarded as a humorous yet substantial

starter which is meant to be digested before the main course of a chapter is taken in.

I will end this preface with a quote from Hamlet in which Shakespeare writes about the necessary linkage between acts and words, which is also one of Arendt's main goals. The quote is taken from Act 3, Scene 2 where Hamlet is arranging a play within the play of Hamlet. As Hamlet instructs the actors on how to perform the play, he says to them:

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Suit the action to the word, the word to the action;
with this special observance that you o'erstep not
the modesty of nature: for any thing so overdone is
from the purpose of playing, whose end, both at the
first and now, was and is, to hold, as 'twere, the
mirror up to nature; to show virtue her own feature,
scorn her own image, and the very age and body of the
time his form and pressure.
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Cleopatra:
My salad days, when I was green in judg-
ment: cold in blood,
To say as I said then!
But, come, away;
Get me ink and paper…
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<div align="right">William Shakespeare, *Antony and Cleopatra*</div>

Chapter 1: Introduction

In this introductory chapter I will first introduce my research field of interprofessional work with vulnerable children in Denmark. Then I will present my research focus of investigating the influence of consulting sessions with social workers on school professionals' perspectives on how to deal with issues in vulnerable children's lifeworlds. Thereafter I will define the central terms of the thesis and give a brief overview of the Danish school system and the main professions which appear in this thesis. Finally I will present an overview of the chapters in the thesis.

1.1 The research field

In Denmark during the last two decades several initiatives have been taken to rethink and restructure pedagogical work for vulnerable children who need much more urgent attention to their psychological and social development than the majority of children in Danish society.

A crucial factor in the rethinking and restructuring of the pedagogical work for vulnerable children is a focus on a prevention and early intervention strategy; this implies more collaboration between different services for children such as kindergartens, schools, afterschool activities, social services departments and crime prevention agencies. This collaboration has implied an enhancement of interprofessional work between the frontline professionals in these services. (Miðskarð, 2008B; Højholt, 2011, Højholdt, 2009).

In this thesis I investigate the newly developed interprofessional work for

vulnerable children between Danish social workers ("*socialrådgivere*") and school professionals (teachers & reception class teachers ("*lærere*" og "*børnehaveklasseledere*"). In several Danish municipalities[1] this has typically implied that social workers are available on a fortnightly basis to school professionals at their schools in order to advise them on how to work with specific vulnerable children. These visits from social workers have two aims.

The first aim is usually to inform reception class teachers and teachers about when and how to notify a concern for a child to the social services department in order to increase the number and the quality of received referrals. This aim can be seen as a response to campaigns in recent years by the Danish National Social Appeal Board where they claim that too few cases of vulnerable children are being notified to the Danish municipal social services departments (Ankestyrelsen, 2010; Zapera, 2009).

The second aim is usually to promote a prevention and early intervention line of thinking in school professionals' work with vulnerable children. This can be seen as a response to Sections 49 and 50 of the 2011 revised Danish Social Services Act which urges extensive implementation of a prevention and early intervention line of thinking in such work.

While many Danish municipalities have arranged for social workers to visit schools fortnightly, there are some which have the social workers pay more frequent visits. The qualitative data in this PhD thesis are from a municipality that sends social workers to each of its larger schools two days per week. Hence it can be concluded that this specific municipality is one which has embarked on an extensive collaboration between its social services departments and its schools. It is also worth noting that this municipality's collaborative effort has prioritised the aim of promoting a prevention and early intervention line of thinking while its secondary aim concerns information on notifying a child's situation to the social services to increase the number and the quality of received referrals.

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[1] A Danish municipality is in many ways similar to an English "local authority". However compared to an English "local authority" a Danish municipality has more control over finances and the ways it carries out its work. Thus I have chosen to preserve the term "municipality" throughout this thesis. (Hulgård, 1997; Pringle & Harder 1999).

1.2 The research focus

In my original PhD proposal I had a broad aim of wanting to research interactions between social workers and school professionals. After I embarked upon my PhD I visited five schools in the municipality mentioned previously in order to narrow my research focus. During these visits I talked with several school professionals and the five social workers who were based in the five respective schools.

I found out from these visits that the various social workers carried out markedly different tasks in the five schools. The tasks were directed towards the pupils, the professionals and the parents. However one common task was that all social workers gave one-off consulting sessions to school professionals who had concerns for vulnerable children in their classes. In these consulting sessions the social workers give advice on how to understand and deal with issues in vulnerable children's lifeworlds; "lifeworld" refers to the totality of ordinary and extraordinary incidents, people and things in a person's everyday life.

Because I initially wanted to research interactions between social workers and school professionals I specifically chose to investigate these consulting sessions in my empirical research. During my visits to the five schools I asked the social workers and the school professionals if there was anything they thought would be interesting to investigate in relation to these consulting sessions. I was intrigued by hearing from almost everybody that the school professionals' outcome from these consulting sessions varied considerably. In some respects the consulting sessions had inspired the school professionals with new ideas on how to work with the vulnerable children whilst in other respects the sessions seemed rather to disturb the school professionals' ideas as to their further work with the children. They also told me that they could not figure out the reason for this variance. Hence they signalled that their conversations in these consulting sessions were highly complicated in nature.

This coincided with my own experience and knowledge of conversations in interprofessional work. My interest in and knowledge of this subject arise from my own interprofessional work experiences as a care helper in a 24-hour care centre for children with autism, as a trained teacher and as a contact person[2] in a youth ward in a psychiatric hospital. In each of these settings I have

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[2] As a contact person I had the responsibility for coordinating the patient care for young people with psychiatric problems who were "first timers" in a psychiatric hos-

experienced that some aspects of the interprofessional conversations have been highly insightful but other aspects have been less so. However, I have had no clear explanation of the reasons behind the various outcomes. Hence I could relate to the social workers and the school professionals who stated that they could not figure out the variation in the outcome of the consulting sessions.

I therefore decided that the focus of my research would be to investigate extensively the complicated dynamics of the consulting sessions and how they influence and inspire the school professionals' intentions for their further pedagogical work with the vulnerable children. Due to time constraints I have chosen to specifically investigate the consulting sessions solely in relation to their influence on school professionals' perspectives on their further work with the children. Hence I will not investigate how the sessions influence the social workers in their further work on the schools.

1.3 Previous research

In Chapter 2 I will present a literature review of previous Danish research on interprofessional work. In this section I will briefly explain how findings from previous Danish research projects have shaped the starting point for my research in relation to the two crucial aspects of a further sharpening of my research focus and the methodological framework for my research.

Regarding the first aspect, the starting point for my research was further delineated by the fact that there are three research projects that indicate a need for more research into the conversations in interprofessional work for vulnerable children in Denmark.

The research project *"Hånd om alle børn"* revealed that conversations between social workers and teachers are often very complicated, because their respective systems work according to dissimilar principles. Hence this project calls for initiatives which focus on improving the understanding between teachers and social workers in Denmark (Brønnum, Mørck & Veen 2008; Mørck, 2008).

It is possible to conclude from Ejrnæs' (2006) vignette study that conversations between Danish social workers, teachers and school nurses are complex

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pital. Furthermore, during their hospitalisation I was responsible for providing environment therapy for their present and future everyday life routines.

because both professional judgements and personal stances are being forcefully activated in interprofessional work with vulnerable children. Therefore this research calls for the development of a nuanced approach to interprofessional work conversations.

Lastly Røn Larsen (in review, p. 272) has observed that interprofessional work conversations are true melting pots of diverse perspectives. Røn Larsen concludes that the participating professionals do not realise the nature of each others' diverse perspectives and this causes many misunderstandings in interprofessional work which the professionals themselves often do not realise. Hence this study calls for research which clarifies for the professionals the complexity in their interprofessional work conversations.

These three research projects lead me to conclude that conversations in interprofessional work are intricate and that the complexity plays out on many different levels. It is thus clear that previous studies call for more research into conversations in interprofessional work settings for work with vulnerable children.

With regard to the second aspect above, the starting point for my research has been influenced by Højholt's and Nielsen's (2001) methodological appeal. Højholt (2001; 2006) and Nielsen (2001) criticise interprofessional work and research into such work for not sufficiently including the issues in the lifeworlds of vulnerable children. This is because those involved become too occupied with professional group interests, organisational structures and legal frameworks for work with such children. They argue strongly that future research must give more prominence to vulnerable children's issues in interprofessional work and in research into this work.

This criticism encouraged me to adopt a research approach that was sensitive to the issues of specific children in my investigation of interprofessional conversations.

Previously I have investigated professionals' conversations in pedagogical work concerning vulnerable children with the help of two different approaches: a cognitive psychological approach and a post-structuralist inspired approach (Miðskarð, 2003; Miðskarð, 2006). However, both of these approaches involve the flaw described by Højholt. With the cognitive psychological approach I managed to focus on the professionals' way of thinking but I lost sight of the object of their thinking, i.e. the vulnerable children's issues. Using the post-structuralist inspired approach in my master's thesis, I managed to get closer to the vulnerable children by investigating the professionals' discourses about the issues in the children's lifeworlds. However my conclusion

was that it was hard to go beyond the discursive level and to extract something concrete for pedagogical work with vulnerable children.

Thus I decided that I wanted to develop an Arendtian approach in this PhD thesis for an investigation of the consulting sessions between social workers and school professionals on vulnerable children. Hannah Arendt's alternatively defined political theorisations share some aspects but oppose other aspects of my previous post-structuralist inspired approach (Allen, 2002; Villa, 1992). Both approaches share a main interest of focusing on the conversational level in people's interactions, but compared to the post-structuralist inspired approach, Arendt's theorisations contain a stronger emphasis on the need to associate speech with some concrete incidents that physically have taken, are taking or will take place somewhere on our shared Earth. Hence an Arendtian approach must create a strong link between the discursive level and the everyday life level.

1.4 The research question

In accordance with my previously described field work, my research focus and my Arendtian approach I have generated the following research question for this thesis:

> **How do consulting sessions with social workers influence school professionals' further perspectives on how to deal with issues in vulnerable children's lifeworlds?**

It is important to stress that my research question expresses the fact that I did not decide beforehand which specific issues I would investigate in my field work. Rather my approach can be characterised as having an exploratory character in this matter. However the Arendtian existential-phenomenological research methodology directs me in my fieldwork to start my investigations with professionals' situated perspectives on issues in specific vulnerable children's lifeworlds. This should be seen as a counter perspective to research which starts by investigating school professionals' perspectives on vulnerable children in general.

The goal of my research is to come up with an understanding of how the dynamics between the social workers and the school professionals in the consulting sessions feed back to the school professionals' intentions for their pedagogical work with the vulnerable children. Hence I have constructed three levels for my analytical chapters. Firstly I will investigate the influence of the

sessions on the school professionals' further perspectives on how to deal with issues in the specific vulnerable children's lifeworlds. Secondly I will seek an answer as to how this influence is linked to the interaction between the perspectives of the social workers and the school professionals at the sessions. Thirdly, inspired by my Arendtian framework, I will suggest how consulting sessions can be developed further in order to secure the best outcome.

In my investigation of the dynamics between the professionals in the consulting sessions I will focus on how the professionals choose to make use of their past professional and personal experiences in relation to the issues raised. It is crucial for me to focus on how these experiences become a part of the interpersonal dynamics between the professionals in the sessions. This shows that my study is first and foremost a study on the interactions between social workers and school professionals and does therefore not belong to the body of research on profession studies (although I hope my research can provide insights into this field). Even though this study is not a profession study, in the context of my normatively minded existential-phenomenological Arendtian approach it is important to be aware of the fact that I still retain a certain perception of the concept of "profession". In Chapters 2, 11 and 12 I will explain different aspects of my approach to this concept.

To facilitate my analysis of the data collected from my Danish fieldwork I have undertaken research training in both Denmark and England. In order to make good use of my training period in England for my research I chose to present one scenario from my Danish fieldwork to English professionals in a focus group interview. At the end of this thesis I will use the English focus group interview to highlight differences and similarities in how Danish and English professionals act in a school setting when they are concerned about a vulnerable child. Hence I will also provide an interesting but limited contrastive outsider view of the way Danish social workers' consulting sessions are conducted.

1.5 Definition of central terms

Previous research has demonstrated that terms are not defined uniformly within the research field of interprofessional work for vulnerable children (Jespersen, 2006; Frost & Parton, 2009). Hence in this section I will clearly define two central terms in the thesis: "interprofessional work" and "vulnerable children". Furthermore I will also define my central term of "lifeworld".

In Miðskarð (2008A) I have stated that there are various terms for professional collaboration in the Danish literature, for example "*tværfagligt samarbejde*", "*interprofessionelt samarbejde*" and "*tværprofessionelt samarbejde*". Harker, Dobel-Ober, Berridge & Sinclair (2004) demonstrate that similarly various terms exist in the English-language literature, for example "interprofessional work", "joint up work", "integrated work" and "multi-disciplinary work".

Some researchers produce a continuum with some of the terms for collaboration in order to characterise more specifically the particular kinds of collaboration they are researching. One typical example is a continuum with three forms of collaboration ranging from moderate to intense collaboration: multi-, inter- and trans-professional work. But Harker et al. (2004) argue that it is difficult to apply such a continuum when extensive fieldwork is carried out in large research projects. Likewise it can be argued that Højholt (2005, p. 57) supports such an approach when she argues:

Jeg vil mene, at der en pointe i at anerkende, at forbindelserne på børneområdet kan organiseres på flere forskellige fornuftige måder (det er derfor at vi ikke lave en kogebog for "samarbejde" – vi kan derimod komme med overvejelser, ideer og problematikker som udgangspunkt for en <u>lokal</u> refleksion over organisering og fordeling). (The underlining is Højholt's accentuation!).	I would say it's important to recognise that connections regarding children can be organised in many different sensible ways (that's why we can't make one recipe for "collaboration" – but we can suggest considerations, ideas and issues as a basis for <u>local</u> reflections about organisation and work distribution). (The underlining is Højholt's accentuation!).

Because there are problems with defining such continuums, Harker et al. (2004) argue that we should rather use one broad term for all kinds of collaboration in an acknowledgement that each particular example of collaboration is unique in nature. Following the advice of Harker et al (2004), I have chosen to use the term "interprofessional work" which I define broadly with inspiration from Frost (2005) as simply referring to a collaboration form "involving a wide range of professionals attempting to work together". There is an emphasis that collaboration need not be perfect in order to be characterised as "interprofessional work"; it is enough that professionals are collaborating at the most basic level.

My English term "vulnerable children" refers to the same as the Danish term "*udsatte børn*". The term "*udsatte børn*" is used in Section 49 of the 2011 revised Danish Social Service Act. It is Section 49 which is the legal framework for the consulting sessions. In the guide to the revised Social Service

Act, *"udsatte børn"* is defined as follows:

udsatte børn og unge [er] defineret som dem, der bør modtage støtte efter serviceloven i form af forebyggende støtte eller anbringelse udenfor hjemmet.	vulnerable children and young people (are) defined as those who should receive help according to the Act in the form of preventative support or placement outside the home.

Because this definition is quite technical I have also chosen to make use of Bo, Guldager, Zeeberg & Ebsen's (2008) definition:

Børn, som lever i en udsat position og som tvunget af omstændighederne har brug for hjælp. De befinder sig i livssituationer, der er truende for deres psykologiske og sociale udvikling i forhold til det omgivende samfund.	Children in a vulnerable position who need help because of their circumstances. They are in life situations that threaten their psychological and social development in relation to the society around them.

I interpret this definition as maintaining that children are vulnerable when something negative is happening or has happened to them within their close environment. Hence they come into a strained life situation which implies that they need additional help in order to attain the same psychological and social development as other children. The definition does not state precisely what causes these strained life situations. In my study children may be in a vulnerable position due to their parents' personal, economic or social issues. The strained life situations can also be caused by neglect or emotional abuse from parents or other people. It is important to underline that I am not dealing with children who have been seriously abused sexually or physically. In such cases school professionals are obliged to immediately notify the social services department and hence they will not be involved in the kind of prevention and early intervention consulting sessions I am studying in this thesis.

My chosen definition of "vulnerable children" above further signals that I am not concerned with children's learning issues which primarily call for special educational support. Neither am I concerned with issues regarding children's congenital, physical or psychological disabilities. Although I wish to stress that such issues can be intertwined with the children's issues discussed in this thesis, they are not the focal point of my attention. My focal point is rather on issues which are caused by strain in a child's everyday life.

When Zahavi (2003) unfolds the concept of "lifeworld" from an overall phenomenological level, he states that "lifeworld" simply means the world a person lives in, the plain everyday life. Even though Hannah Arendt does not use the term lifeworld, Ashworth (2003) argues that this concept follows Ar-

endt's line of thinking with her emphasis on the primacy of people's everyday life.

For this thesis I have chosen to use Van Manen's (1997, p. 9) definition of lifeworld which fits in with the fact that I have embedded Arendt's theorisations in an existential-phenomenological tradition. According to Van Manen's definition, a person's lifeworld refers to the totality of what is physically happening in a person's everyday life. This physical aspect refers to the material objects, the people involved and both the ordinary and extraordinary incidents which a person experiences in everyday life. It is also important to underline that the totality of lifeworld also refers to how meanings are being ascribed to objects, people and incidents in the person's everyday life.

Hence when in this thesis I write about a child's strained lifeworld it refers to the fact that there are things in the child's environment which can stress the child to such a degree that there is a danger for the child's further psychological and social development.

1.6 Danish schools, social workers, reception class teachers and teachers

The consulting sessions I will investigate take place in schools in Denmark. Therefore for my English speaking readers I will now provide a brief description of the Danish school system and the main professional occupations mentioned in this thesis.

The Danish "*grundskole*" is roughly the equivalent of a combined English primary and lower secondary school. Children enter these schools at the age of 5 or 6 and leave at 15 or 16. The first year the children are in a "*børnehaveklasse*" which in many aspects is comparable to an English "reception class" except that all children are obliged to start at the same time in the Danish "*børnehaveklasse*". The reception class in Denmark is sometimes referred to as year 0. After the reception class the children will attend year 1 through to year 9. A year 9 diploma from a Danish "*grundskole*" resembles an English GCSE certificate. After the year 9 diploma young people can enter a "*gymnasiel*" education which leads to a diploma that resembles the English A-levels.

The professionals working in year 1 through year 9 are traditionally trained as school teachers, whilst the professionals working in the reception class year

are traditionally trained as "pedagogues" ("*pædagoger*"). However in this thesis I refer to them by their professional title of "reception class teachers" ("*børnehaveklasse-ledere*").

In the following I will briefly describe the education of Danish social workers, pedagogues and teachers respectively.

Since 2001, social workers ("*socialrådgivere*") qualify by obtaining a 3½ year professional bachelor degree from a university college. The course is divided between learning in placements and in the university college itself. Major subject areas are social work (including social counselling), psychology, psychiatry, law and social science. Social workers are qualified to undertake professional employment in Danish public and private state-authorised social institutions, e.g. in municipal social services departments, job centres, street work with homeless people and work in drug rehabilitation programmes.

Since 2001, Danish pedagogues also qualify by obtaining a 3½ year professional bachelor degree from a university college, and the course is similarly divided between learning in placements and in the university college. Major subjects are psychology and pedagogy. Likewise there is a fair amount of education in sports, nature and arts and crafts. The students usually specialise in either social pedagogy, special pedagogy or early childhood pedagogy. Pedagogues are qualified to undertake professional employment in Danish public and private state-authorised institutions, e.g. kindergartens, schools and after-schools, sport and play activities. They are also qualified for professional employment in special therapeutic institutions and in social community work.

Since 2001, teachers qualify by obtaining a 4 year professional bachelor degree from a university college. Here the degree course is also divided between learning in placements and in the university colleges, but the placement periods are much shorter than in the education of pedagogues and social workers. It is possible to upgrade from another degree to become a teacher through a two year course, but this is much less common in Denmark than in England. Danish teachers have traditionally taught all classes from year 1 till year 9, although a recent educational reform aims to see the new student teachers specialising in two of the following three year ranges: years 1-3, years 4-6 and years 7-9. Teachers specialise in two to four main subjects and also receive education in psychology, pedagogy and methodology.

Prior to 2001 the professionals were trained in separate colleges and instead of a bachelor degree as a professional they received a diploma as a qualified practitioner. However the content of the courses was in general quite similar.

In addition to this brief description of the Danish school system and the

professions mentioned in the thesis, I will also use footnotes to briefly intro-
duce other Danish institutions and professionals as they appear in the coming
chapters. I have also produced an alphabetical overview of the Danish institu-
tions and professions in Appendix 2.

1.7 Outline of the chapters of the thesis

Following this introductory chapter, Chapter 2 describes the circumstances of
interprofessional work in Denmark and here I also present a literature review
of previous research findings on interprofessional work with vulnerable chil-
dren in Denmark. In relation to my research on the consulting sessions be-
tween school professionals and social workers I conclude that the limited pre-
vious Danish research has demonstrated that on an overall level interprofes-
sional work conversations are highly complex in nature.

In Chapter 3 I first explain why and how I have chosen to use Arendt's the-
orisations to investigate the consulting sessions between social workers and
school professionals. Then I present an in-depth introduction to Arendt's
three practical and three mental activities: *labour*, *work*, *action*, *thinking*, *willing*
and *judging* (because Arendt defines these terms in her own unique way I have
chosen to italicise these Arendtian terms every time I use them). Next I apply
these practical and mental activities to my research on the consulting sessions.
In this application I conclude that it is in particular the activities of *action* and
thinking which are relevant for my research. In line with the scope of my re-
search, I use *action* as referring to incidents in a consulting session in which the
two professionals reveal and make use of their distinct perspectives on a
common issue. *Thinking* refers to how the professionals after the consulting
sessions let their representations of the other's perspective interact with their
own perspective.

In Chapter 4 I embed my use of Arendt's theorisations into the research
project's methodology within an existential-phenomenological tradition. Fur-
thermore, I develop in more detail an Arendtian conceptualisation of "a per-
son's perspective on an issue" which I implant into the design of my method-
ological approach to researching the influence of the consulting sessions on
school professionals' further perspectives on issues in vulnerable children's
lifeworlds.

In Chapter 5 I give an introduction to the field site and my fieldwork. This
introduction serves as a framework for understanding the context of the data

from the consulting sessions I analyse in the following three chapters.

In each of Chapters 6, 7 and 8 I analyse data from a set of interviews with a social worker and a school professional respectively; the interviews being carried out on the basis of my observations of how the social workers gave the school professionals consulting sessions on their concerns for vulnerable children.

In the analysis I first investigate how the school professionals were influenced by having been given a consulting session on their concern for a vulnerable child in their class. Secondly I investigate how this influence is connected to what the social workers said at the sessions. Thirdly I apply theory from Hannah Arendt in order to reflect on how the interpersonal conversational issues raised in my analysis can be improved.

In Chapter 6 I analyse how Rie, a reception class teacher, was influenced by what Sara, a social worker, said when Rie raised her concern for six year old Jette who frequently displays an unusual sadness.

In Chapter 7 I analyse how Tine was influenced by what Sara said when Tine raised her concern for seven year old Amarjit who is generally passive and quiet in the classroom.

In Chapter 8 I analyse how Tanja is influenced by what Sigbritt said when Tanja raised her concern for Zhou whom Tanja thinks is being neglected by his parents.

In Chapter 9 I draw together the findings from the three analyses. Firstly I compare how the three school professionals' perspectives on issues in vulnerable children's lifeworlds were influenced by having taken part in a consulting session on their concern for a particular vulnerable child in their class. Secondly on an overall level I investigate how the influence on the school professionals' perspectives is connected to what the social workers said during the sessions.

Because I had the privilege of being able to undertake part of my PhD research training in England I have included an English contrast to my investigation of the Danish consulting sessions in Chapter 10 of this thesis. For this contrast I carried out a focus group interview in England in which I exposed English professionals working with children to the scenario with Amarjit in Denmark in order to find out how they would have acted if they had come across a girl like Amarjit who was remarkably passive and quiet. From this English contrast with the Danish scenario I conclude that, compared to the English setting as described by my interviewees, the Danish consulting sessions I observed do not seem to be excessively steered by standardised proce-

dures and methods which according to Arendt limit the influence of interpersonal activities. However I also demonstrate that the English standardised procedures and methods appear more efficient in serious cases in which neglect or abuse must be stopped immediately.

In Chapter 11 I discuss the relationship between my findings and similar findings in other Danish research projects. Furthermore, I discuss strengths and weaknesses of the Arendtian existential-phenomenological framework I have developed. I then draw my main conclusion which is that the consulting sessions influence the school professionals by enlarging their perspectives, but that the influence is limited compared to the potential of such sessions. I conclude further that in my research I have identified six reasons as to why this influence is limited. These six reasons all have their origin in the complexity of the interpersonal conversational dynamics in the consulting sessions. At the end of Chapter 11 I put the findings of my research in perspective by making some recommendations to municipalities that wish to embark on giving school professionals the opportunity to receive consulting sessions from social workers on their concern for vulnerable pupils.

Chapter 12 is a chapter which is different in nature from the rest of the chapters in this thesis. In this chapter I present a "work in progress" article which is being written for publication in a Danish peer review journal. It is however included because it applies the Arendtian framework developed here to a subject similar to the main topic of this thesis. In the article I demonstrate how Arendt's theorisations can be used for training and interventions with regard to collaboration in contemporary workplaces. I present this Arendt-inspired collaboration training as a counter perspective to the fact that much current training and intervention regarding collaboration makes use of personality tests. I conclude that, in contrast to personality-test inspired collaboration training, Arendt-inspired teaching and intervention brings people's uniqueness solidly to the foreground.

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Queen Gertrude:
Good Hamlet, cast thy nighted colour off,
and let thine eye look like a friend on
Denmark.
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<div align="right">

William Shakespeare, *Hamlet*

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Chapter 2: Literature review of Danish research on interprofessional work

In this chapter I will give a characterisation of the circumstances of interprofessional work in Denmark. I will also present a literature review of previous Danish research findings and apply this to my research on the consulting sessions between social workers and school professionals on vulnerable children.

2.1 Interprofessional work in Denmark

Hansen (1999) states that interprofessional work has been used for many decades in services for Danish children. However it is only during the last two decades that interprofessional work has been extensively promoted and legally demanded in Denmark. In the following I will briefly present some of the main driving forces behind interprofessional work for vulnerable children in Denmark.

   In the period 1994-2008 The National Board of Social Services (*"Servicestyrelsen")*[3] was responsible for a scheme which offered considerable financial support to Danish municipalities for new initiatives for vulnerable children; one of the central themes in the scheme being the promotion of interprofessional work for such children. The scheme was called SIBU which refers to "*Særlig*

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[3] *"Servicestyrelsen"* is an independent subdivision of the Ministry of Social Affairs.

Indsats for de svagest stillede Børn og Unge" (A special effort for the most vulnerable children and young people). During the last two decades there have been other similar schemes which also have promoted interprofessional work for vulnerable children in Denmark.

The first legal demand for interprofessional work in children's services appeared in 1996 in the Health Act. This act stated that the task of school doctors and nurses of securing children a healthy development needed to be carried out in collaboration with professionals from other services for children. In 2000 the Higher Education Act started a process which has brought together the education of teachers, pedagogues, nurses, social workers and similar kinds of education in university colleges. This act stipulates the implementation of an interprofessional work module across the different types of education in the university colleges.

In 2001 the revised Social Service Act required each municipality to have interprofessional advisory groups where the various professionals involved with children could raise a concern for a child anonymously. The goal was to give these professionals advice on how to work with the vulnerable child from an interprofessional work perspective.

The interprofessional advisory groups stipulated by the 2001 Social Service Act were formally abandoned in 2010 when the Danish Parliament agreed on a reform called *Barnets Reform.* Now a revision in the Social Service Act allows professionals in some specific children's services to have a one-time discussion of common themes around a named child without formal consent from the parents/caregivers. However this may only be done if the discussion is considered necessary in order to help an obviously vulnerable child according to a prevention and early intervention line of thinking. The child services involved are the school, the afterschool care, the municipal health service, the day care and authorities which work with cases of vulnerable children (e.g. the municipal social service department). (Holm-Petersen and Rytter, 2011).

In this section I have indicated that the boosting of interprofessional work for vulnerable children started as voluntary projects in the 1990s but during the last decade it has been more and more written into the legal frameworks for child services in Denmark.

2.2 Previous Danish research on interprofessional work in child services

This section is based upon my review article from December 2008: Miðskarð (2008B). Here as the first Danish researcher I have reviewed Danish research studies on interprofessional work in child services from 1999 until mid-2008. Included in my review was the work by Hansen (1999) who reviewed Danish publications on interprofessional work prior to 1999.

Only significant publications which deal with interprofessional work as their main theme were included in my review. This implies that books on work with vulnerable children which have a short chapter on interprofessional work and individual short articles on interprofessional work were excluded from my review article.

In the article I categorised all studies as either primary research, secondary research or practice and commentary publications. These categories were imported from a review of English research on interprofessional work by Nick Frost (2005). The primary research category covers large studies where the methods are clearly described. The secondary research category includes publications which are mainly theoretical, but draw on the research of others, and/or provide commentaries on other research. Secondary research can also include small studies where the methods are more weakly described. The commentary and practice category includes publications based on practice initiatives and may include a minor element of primary research and/or a review of primary or secondary literature. It is important to stress that during the categorisation I focused mostly on how much fieldwork was carried out and hence the categorisation is not a measurement of the quality of the different publications.

For my review article in 2008 I managed to identify three primary research publications, six secondary research publications and two practice and commentary publications on interprofessional work in children's services in Denmark. In this section I will outline the brief reviews I presented of these studies in my review article. In addition I will include reviews of two primary research studies which have been published since 2008: Alenkær (2010) and Røn Larsen (2011). At the end of this chapter I will draw out relevant knowledge for my research on the consulting sessions between social workers and school professionals on vulnerable children.

Table 1 on the next page presents an overview of all the studies reviewed. Here the studies are classified in the three categories of primary research, secondary research and theory, and practice and commentary publications.

	Study	Method	Main objective
Primary research	Brandi (2007)	Observations, interviews and documents	- To study "organisational learning" in a municipality during a reorganisation which promoted interprofessional work
	Ejrnæs (2006)	Vignette survey	- To study how members of different professions make decisions in complicated cases
	Højholt (2001)	Practice research (semi-structured interviews and observations)	- To generate knowledge about how children (aged 6-8 years) move between different spaces with different professionals
	Alenkær (2010)*	A quantitative survey & semi-structured interviews	- To study how school professionals collaborate with other school professionals specialised in providing help for children with emotional, social and behavioural difficulties
	Røn Larsen (2011)*	Practice research (semi-structured interviews and observations)	- To study what happens in the borderline between ordinary schools and special needs schools
Secondary research & theory	Alleboern.dk (2008)	Semi-structured interviews	- To contribute to the enhancement of "good interprofessional work" for vulnerable children
	Hansen (1999)	Earlier research and other publications (e.g. practical and legislative)	- To sum up previous knowledge and research on interprofessional work in Denmark
	Lauvås & Lauvås (2006)	Based on research from a long career in Norway	- To give ideas for developing interprofessional work
	Lyder et al. (2005)	Documents and untranscribed interviews	-To find relevant topics for training students in interprofessional work
	Egelund & Sundell (2001)	Building on others' research	- To sum up research findings for work in Child Protective Services
Practice and commentary	Nielsen & Knudsen (2001)	An anthology of articles rooted in practices	-To inspire further development of interprofessional work
	Dansk Pædagogisk Forum (2001)	A anthology of 17 short articles (each 3-4 pages)	- To give pedagogues strategies for working with other professions for vulnerable children

Table 1 demonstrates that only five studies can be characterised as primary re-search: Brandi (2007), Ejrnæs (2006), Højholt (2001), Alenkær (2010) and Røn Larsen (2011). It must further be underlined that Højholt (2001) and Alenkær (2010) do not have interprofessional work as their main theme; they are how-ever included in this review because their main focus is on collaboration in Danish child services. Further, Hansen (1999) demonstrates that no Danish primary research publication in this field can be found before 1999. In con-trast Nick Frost in 2005 categorised 35 publications as primary research on interprofessional work in the UK. In Norway there is similarly much more primary research on interprofessional work than in Denmark (Hansen 1999). Hence my first conclusion is that there is a shortage of research studies on in-terprofessional work for vulnerable children in Denmark.

The small amount of Danish literature covers a variety of issues which arise in respect of interprofessional work. This large number of different issues in so few publications makes it hard to make any comparisons between the pub-lications. Therefore in the following sub-sections the reviews are mostly pre-sented separately under the heading of their main category.

The main focus of the review follows my research question and hence con-cerns the interplay between the professionals on an everyday level. The re-views have partly been carried out from a critical stance to illuminate and de-fine weaknesses and deficiencies which future Danish research can address.

2.2.1 Primary research studies

Brandi (2007) studied organisational learning during a reorganisation in the municipality of Gladsaxe. Brandi concludes that the coordination between the Social Service Department and the School Department improved, as they es-tablished a new separate "visitation office" which deals with both extensive support in schools and placements for children who need to be removed from their homes. There are few other Danish municipalities that have such a "vis-itation office".

Brandi (2007) presents very few observations on the interplay between the professionals in the interprofessional work. A relevant finding is however that some professionals felt they were forced to undertake tasks which formerly

belonged to other professions than their own; giving rise to problems with the distribution of tasks in interprofessional work settings. However, Brandi's interpretations of the interviews are not deep enough to allow further elaboration on the main focal point of this literature review, i.e. the interplay between the professionals.

The research of Ejrnæs (2006) is based on quantitative research methodology using the vignette method. Firstly, Ejrnæs presents a finding showing that different professionals working with vulnerable children do, surprisingly, broadly agree on the main issues regarding child protection. Secondly, when studying the details we find the same inconsistency within each of the professions as there is between the different professions. Hence Ejrnæs concludes that the expertise of the different professionals and their separate bodies of knowledge are not major factors for misunderstandings and conflict! Ejrnæs demonstrates in his research that the misunderstandings and conflicts are rather linked to the professionals' personal attitudes, although these misunderstandings and conflicts may be clothed in the professionals' discourses about each others' professions. However, I suggest that the differences within the professions could also be explained by the existence of different sub-bodies of knowledge in each professional group. I argue that Ejrnæs cannot test this because he presupposes the unity of each of the professions, stating for example on p. 19:

[D]e fire faggruper [lærere, pædagoger, sundhedsplejersker og socialrådgivere] adskiller sig afgørende fra hinanden med hensyn til det vidensgrundlag, de har for deres arbejde.

The four professions [teachers, pedagogues, paediatric nurses and social workers] differ significantly from each other with respect to the knowledge bases they have for their work.

The study could however from the beginning of the research alternatively have addressed the question of how united the bodies of knowledge of each profession really are. There may thus be partly separate sub-bodies of knowledge within each professional knowledge base which are determined by e.g. specific lengthy work experience and further education, which are similar to other professions' sub-bodies of knowledge. For example, within the teachers' body of knowledge there can be sub-bodies of knowledge among special needs teachers and teachers with administrative responsibilities which prompts these teachers to act in a similar way as pedagogues with similar working remits. However, the number of respondents in Ejrnæs' study is too small to perform research on such groupings within the professions.

My claim is supported by Alenkær's (2010) findings. He focuses on the work being carried out in schools in Esbjerg with children who have emotional, social and behavioural difficulties[4]. For the work with these children there are some teachers and reception class teachers who have received specialised in-service training. These specially trained school professionals act as advisers for teachers of children with such difficulties. Alenkær concludes that the specially trained school professionals most commonly use "the organisational paradigm" in talking about how to solve the children's problems. The other school professionals who receive support however do not necessarily share this view as they tend more to rely on the use of a "psycho-medical perspective" when discussing the children's problems. The study urges that if this discrepancy is not dealt with properly it can harm the quality of the work with children who have emotional, social and behavioural difficulties.

Charlotte Højholt has made many comments about interprofessional work in her significant volume of writings on collaboration with and for children in Danish child services (Højholt, 2001, 2002, 2005, 2006).

In Højholt (2001) there is a large section on interprofessional work. The context of this study is that the author followed some children in the transition from kindergarten to school; some of these being categorised as vulnerable children. She claims that in the professionals' discussions on interprofessional work the children often "disappear" and hence she calls for research that puts the children and their issues at the centre. She also claims that interprofessional work often individualises the problems without taking into account the everyday context and a holistic view of the children's lifeworlds. Furthermore, Højholt (2001) concludes that a distinctive feature of interprofessional work is that the direction in the conversations changes constantly. This is due to the different institutions and positions of the various trained professionals.

The overall theme of Røn Larsen's (2011) research is to investigate the borderline territory between Danish mainstream schools and special needs schools. She analyses the participation of children, parents, teachers, pedagogues, psychologists and bureaucrats across a range of different settings in the borderline territory. Her conclusion is that the work intended to help the children is often oriented within individualising categories of understanding which seem to disregard the children's everyday life as an object of the peda-

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[4] "Emotional, social and behavioural difficulties" is Alenkær's English explanation of the Danish terms of "*Adfærds, Kontakts og Trivsels-problemer* (AKT)".

gogical work. Hence the pedagogical initiatives which are designed to help the children sometimes seem to aggravate the very difficulties that they were meant to solve. Furthermore, Røn Larsen claims from her observations that interprofessional work meetings are a true melting pot of diverse perspectives and concludes that the participating professionals do not realise the nature of each others' diverse perspectives; this leads to many misunderstandings in interprofessional work of which the professionals themselves are often not aware.

2.2.2 Secondary research studies

The project 'Hånd om alle børn' was initiated by the Danish Union of Teachers and the Danish Association of Social Workers. I will not here review the project as a whole, but rather concentrate on some of its' outcomes as described in some teachers' and social workers' published articles written under the guidance of a researcher.

One feeling consistently expressed during the referral process was that "nothing is happening", even though parents and school professionals knew that something was happening! The explanation in the research is that the parents and the school professionals feel impatient because the problems are highly urgent. The research proposes as a solution to these problems better communication skills between teachers and social workers. It is also stated that there is a need for more attention and greater financial resources in order to improve teacher-social worker collaboration when working with vulnerable children (Brønnum, Mørck & Veen 2008).

It is also suggested that professionals are very good at judging when and why a case should be brought up anonymously without the consent of the parents. However due to wider societal concerns Mørck (2008) urges that this option must seldom be used and calls for professionals to inform the parents before they raise their concerns with other professionals. She also urges that the parents should always be encouraged to participate in the interprofessional work network meetings around their children's cases. Furthermore, the child or young person should be invited if appropriate, although experience has shown that the children and young people involved do not often attend interprofessional work meetings. Mørck (2008) further suggests the possibility that the parents could bring other relatives or friends to the meetings in order to reduce the imbalance between the numbers of parents/caregivers and professionals.

Likewise, there are critics of the "early intervention" strategies prevalent in interprofessional work. In some cases the child's problem is only temporary and there is no need for an intervention which would add further stress. Brønnum, Mørck & Veen (2008) give as an example that if a divorce is managed properly it should only temporarily disturb the children involved and hence it is advisable not to intervene too strongly too early.

This study can be characterised as having an idealistic perspective with an emphasis on making the right choices, e.g. always involving the clients concerned, and likewise there is a strong emphasis on keeping client matters confidential. Others, for example Hansen (2001) and Lauvås & Lauvås (2006), frankly state that it is not appropriate to involve all the clients concerned in some situations. Moreover, they also draw attention to the fact that various professionals often interpret confidential matters in different ways as part of their hierarchical struggle.

The book by Hansen (1999) covers many different perspectives on interprofessional work with the main theme being a presentation of an overview of the development of interprofessional work in Denmark. He states that the first steps in the 'new' interprofessional work approach with emphasis on prevention and early intervention were taken voluntarily by some Danish municipalities around 1980. Before that, interprofessional work was only established when a case became too difficult for one professional or one institution to handle. Such cases often involve a complexity of social problems and Hansen warns against the tendency of seeing interprofessional work as THE solution to these problems. Rather, he stresses that interprofessional work is but one way of working.

Much of the material in the book comes from evaluations of municipal projects which have developed new interprofessional work routines for vulnerable children; these projects being initiated with help from the SIBU[5] scheme in the period 1994-1999. Hansen (1999) demonstrates that the municipal projects did lead to an organisation of new interprofessional work routines in a variety of different ways, and also shows that the outcome of one of the large SIBU projects was a finding that it is crucial that all frontline interprofessional work professionals are willing to collaborate. Moreover it is vital that they are open to the approaches of the others. A single employee can ruin good interprofessional work if that person adopts an uncompromising stance. Otherwise

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[5] "*Særlig Indsats for de svagest stillede Børn og Unge*" = A special effort for the most vulnerable children and young people.

Hansen (1999) emphasises, on the basis of evaluations of various projects, that it is necessary to highlight prejudices against others' professions. Even though these findings inspire us to important reflections, Hansen's (1999) claims may be considered weak as there is no presentation of fieldwork which comprehensively demonstrates examples of some of the prejudices and uncompromising stances employed.

Although most cases in Lauvås & Lauvås (2006) are taken from the field of health care, the book is being promoted for health care, social care and educational settings. In 2008, this was the only book written in Danish which could be called a pure textbook on interprofessional work. However, it is worth noticing that this is originally a Norwegian publication. The book's strength is that it covers a number of perspectives on interprofessional work, e.g. those of social psychology, professions, organisational sociology and the sociology of knowledge. Some of the issues taken up in the book are trust versus mistrust, teambuilding and communication.

The book often promotes the idea that the individual professions most not lose their characteristics when engaged in interprofessional work. On the other hand, some chapters state that the professions' characteristics are often obstacles in interprofessional work (see for example pages 42, 108 and 197). No attempt is made to bridge these contradictions or even to recognise them in the book. By contrast, Laursen et al. (2005) are aware of the contradictory tensions during interprofessional work and they argue for the simultaneous presence of both deprofessionalisation and further professionalisation.

However, Lauvås & Lauvås (2006) make an important contribution to interprofessional work in the section on communication. They stress the importance of being aware of two different levels of communication with regard to interprofessional work. One level is the actual case and the other level is the relationship between the professionals. The reason for making this distinction is that although professionals sometimes assume they are communicating about the case, the focus is actually on the power relations between them.

A remarkable thing about this book is that there are very few references to primary research on interprofessional work. The knowledge is rather built on theoretical perspectives, which mainly date back to the 1970s to 1990s. This must be partly because the first Norwegian version of the book appeared in 1995.

The only Danish research study which deals with training in interprofessional work is Lyder, Grønbæk, Christiansen, Hinrichsen & Danchell (2005). They carried out a study with the objective of finding relevant topics for training

student teachers, student social care workers and student pedagogues in interprofessional work. They found that professionals have insufficient knowledge of the characteristics of other professions. Likewise they observed the existence of a hierarchy between the professions.

Egelund & Sundell's (2001) focus is on the referral process, the investigations and the subsequent actions of the social services in work with vulnerable children. In a chapter on interprofessional work Egelund & Sundell (2001) point to the fact that the very term "interprofessional work" has a very positive ring to it. Nevertheless, no research indicates that the outcome of interprofessional work is more effective than other methods. Rather, research reveals that it is extremely hard to establish good interprofessional work. Egelund & Sundell (2001) state that there are few regulations and formal procedures on interprofessional work in Denmark compared to England. Further, they highlight how research findings from Sweden reveal that social workers often claim that they had interprofessional work with members of other professions during the referral process and the subsequent actions of the social services although the other professionals did not claim they had interprofessional work with the social workers. Moreover, social workers are more satisfied with interprofessional work than other professionals (Sundell & Colbiörnsen 1999; Boklund 1995).

2.2.3 Practice and commentary literature

Nielsen & Knudsen's (2001) compilation of articles is written by consultants, researchers, civil servants and practitioners. Here I will only review three articles, one by a consultant and two by practitioners. To a certain degree these selected articles represent the contents in the anthology.

Nielsen (2001), a consultant, states that interprofessional work often shifts focus from the real case, i.e. the children's issues, to organisational matters. He goes on to claim that the core issue is to deal with the different professions' pride in their own expertise. This implies that each profession has to investigate its own place in the hierarchy with the other professions and how it is involved in the difficulties experienced when boundaries are set up between professional areas in interprofessional work settings. Nielsen sees a way forward if professionals are honest with each other about their shortcomings. He argues that this will probably better equip the professionals to face and deal with the shortcomings of the family situation for these children and young people.

Knudsen (2001) explains that it is usually easy to state the overriding purpose of interprofessional work, but on the everyday level it usually gets more complicated. Therefore when enhancing interprofessional work it is important to prioritise it with extra time and effort, both by the individual professionals and the management involved.

Hansen (2001) claims that it is often seen how the matter of client confidentiality is used by professionals to promote their particular professions' rights over those of others. She also argues that there are multiple perspectives in interprofessional working and she urges that professionals need to be more aware of their multiple perspectives. She believes in a way forward for interprofessional work because nowadays legislators are aware of it and the different types of training are more varied in content than previously. Hansen's article can been seen as having been written from a normative stance in which she is promoting interprofessional work by using an argument about serving children and young people in the best way.

Dansk Pædagogisk Forum (2001) is an anthology of 17 short articles. The aim is to give pedagogues strategies for cooperation with other professionals. This publication points out that pedagogues are sometimes viewed as being at the bottom of the hierarchy of professions in interprofessional work.

2.3 Summary and relevance for my research

I will now draw attention to some tendencies which arise in several of the publications. However it is first important to underline that my literature review has demonstrated that there exists limited research on interprofessional work for vulnerable children in Denmark. Hence one should be careful about making too firm general conclusions from the small amount of research studies carried out.

The review has demonstrated the existence of many different interprofessional work practices in Denmark. This variety of practices is probably due to the special Danish relationship between the national government, which is responsible for legislation, and the municipalities, who to a very high degree decide how their services are carried out locally (Hulgård, 1997).

The literature review also demonstrates that several sources point out that legislators and practitioners are often mistaken by thinking that interprofessional work is a new intervention. Moreover, the review reveals the presence of more problems in interprofessional work than we often initially anticipate.

This is something to be aware of when attempting to improve interprofessional work.

Many of the publications contain a theme about an ongoing fight for a place in the hierarchy between the professions, which may for example arise with the distribution of tasks and different interpretations of client confidentiality matters. However so few of these studies have any extensive empirical data on this. Hence there is a call for research to investigate this theme.

In relation to my research on the consulting sessions between school professionals and social workers, previous research has on an overall level demonstrated that interprofessional work conversations tend to be highly complex in nature.

In the following I will focus on some concrete findings from previous research which are relevant for my research. Firstly, I will elaborate on previous research findings on the issue of information sharing in connection to my research on the consulting sessions. Secondly, I will discuss previous findings relevant to school professionals' and social workers' interprofessional work conversations on vulnerable children.

Until 2011 the general rule in Denmark was that specific information could only be shared between different children's services with parental consent. It was however possible for a professional to raise a concern for a child anonymously to another professional in a different area of child services to obtain advice about how to deal with a child's strained lifeworld. But there is no doubt that the old version of the Social Service Act primarily advocated that as far as possible consent needed to be obtained from the parents if the problems of a child were to be discussed among professionals from various services for children. However my review revealed different ways of interpreting how to obtain parental consent. Furthermore, Hansen argued in 2001 that a discussion on confidentiality matters was sometimes used as an excuse for not working together so as to maintain a hierarchy between the professions. In order to make interprofessional work run more smoothly Hansen (2001) argued for considering an easing of the confidentiality rules. Whereas Mørck (2008) and Brønnum, Mørck & Veen (2008) argued for maintaining the strict rules about information sharing in order to protect the family's private matters. They also warned against an overuse of the possibility of raising concerns for children anonymously without the consent from the parents/caregivers.

It is now possible to conclude that *"Barnets reform"* from 2010 has made it easier to share information between different child services following a prevention and early intervention line of thinking. The 2011 revised Social Ser-

vice Act permits a one-time discussion of a concern on a named child without consent from the parents/caregivers. It can be argued that this change helps the professionals to keep the specific child in the centre of their conversation as a counter to the fact that previously specific children's lifeworlds often "disappeared" in interprofessional work conversations as demonstrated in the research of Nielsen (2001). However in line with Højholt (2001), one may criticise this easing of confidentiality rules as it allows a conversation on the children and their families' private lifeworlds without enabling the children's and the parents' voices to be heard. Yet we must not lose sight of the fact that the law permits only a one-time discussion without parental consent which must take place following a working routine that draws upon a prevention and early intervention line of thinking. Hence it can be stated that there are still strict rules about information sharing in interprofessional work in Denmark!

In relation to this discussion it is important to stress that even though there have been and still are strict rules about information sharing between different professionals who work with children there is also an overriding section on such professionals' obligation to notify the social services department if they suspect any serious form of neglect and/or abuse of children.

In the literature review I stressed that previous research of Brønnum, Mørck & Veen (2008) shows that school professionals often have a feeling that "nothing happens" when they have notified the social services department about their concern for a vulnerable child. Mørck (2008) and Brønnum et al. (2008) explained that this is because the problems are very urgent. Hence one could argue for earlier action with notification of issues in the children's lifeworlds before the problems became so pressing, using a prevention and early intervention line of thinking. However these authors also criticise this line of thinking because common issues may then be indicated as problems at a too early stage, leading to a danger that such initiatives may stigmatise the children concerned.

These two last paragraphs on information sharing and on the prevention and early intervention line of thinking in interprofessional work reveal that the organisation of such work with vulnerable children is filled with dilemmas and ambiguities. Thus it is not surprising that my review has clearly demonstrated that interprofessional work conversations are highly complex in nature.

Before I investigate what previous research says about the complexity of such conversations it is important to keep in mind for my research the emphasis of Mørck (2008A), Hansen (1999) and Nielsen (2001) that this complexity is not only a matter of complicated interactive dynamics in the conver-

sations. They argue that interprofessional work conversations on vulnerable children are also complex because the problems discussed are in themselves highly complex. Hence Mørck strongly argues that a solution requires not merely an improvement in the professionals' communication skills but also additional resources in child services in order to make a real change in the strained lifeworlds of vulnerable children (Mørck 2008B).

Now I will draw out findings from Højholt (2001), Røn Larsen (in review), Alenkær (2010) and Ejrnæs (2006) which have characterised the complexity of interprofessional work conversations and then I will apply them to my intended research on the conversations in the consulting sessions between social workers and school professionals.

Højholt (2001) concluded that a distinctive feature of interprofessional work conversations is that the direction in the conversations constantly changes. Similarly Røn Larsen (in review) concluded that the conversations in interprofessional work meetings are a true melting pot of diverse perspectives, and that professionals do not always realise the nature of each others' diverse perspectives, leading to much misunderstanding in such conversations. These research findings imply that during my data collection and analysis I must be very focused on obtaining all the nuances of the professionals' perspectives.

In Alenkær's (2010) and Ejrnæs's (2006) research there are further clues on the nature of the diverse perspectives. Alenkær (2010) concludes that there are several different frameworks in operation among Danish teachers when they discuss children's strained lifeworlds. Hence in my observations and subsequent interviews I must not assume that I understand the school professionals' framework on vulnerable children even though I worked as a trained teacher for two years. Rather I must be aware in my observations of subtle differences between the various professional frameworks employed. Ejrnæs's (2006) research also urges me be to aware that individual stances play a crucial role in the professionals' judgment of vulnerable children's issues, which leads me to focus strongly on such stances applied in the context of the professional frameworks employed.

The last paragraph demonstrates that I will work with a conceptualisation of "profession" which allows for a strong focus on the differences between individual members within a profession. In Miðskarð (submitted) I have explained that within an Arendtian framework I view a profession as characterised by a similarity between the members' educations and work experiences, but it is also crucial that such similar professional characteristics are always seen in conjunction with the members' unique characteristics which stem from their

unique collection of personal experiences.

Hence it is made clear that I am not primarily following any of the two historically dominant views on "profession", i.e. those of the functionalist and neo-Weberian school. These two views rather tend to focus on what the members of a profession have in common.

The main representative of the functionalist view referred to by most researchers is Talcott Parsons. From his point of view, it is alleged that users and society are best served by specialised functions and therefore professions need to develop their specialities separately. In order then to provide a holistic service to the clients, there is a need for good coordination and communication between the different professions, according the users' needs and the professionals' ethos (Parsons, 1951; 1968).

The main claim in the neo-Weberian view is that professions primarily want to protect and expand their own professional territory. Max Weber's concept of *social closure* is used to explain how a profession makes a closure around its tasks, so that the territory is not attainable by members of other professions. The neo-Weberian view explains that these social closure processes lead to many difficulties in collaboration between different professions (Abbot, 1988).

Salling Olesen (2007) and Hein (2005) argue that for research in interprofessional work there is a need to add to these two traditional views of profession alternative approaches which focus more on how the individual professionals act together in their everyday work. In this thesis, I am following Salling Olesen's and Hein's advice; for this choice I am making use of Hannah Arendt's theorisations which focus precisely on how different people interact with one another in their everyday life.

During the battle of Agincourt in France Shake-
speare lets Henry V give this statement to some
ordinary soldiers one evening he himself is dis-
guised as a soldier:

'For, though I speak it to you, I think the king
is but a man, as I am: the violet smells to him
as it doth to me: the element shows to him as it
doth to me; all his senses have but human condi-
tions: his ceremonies laid by, in his nakedness
he appears but a man; and though his affections
are higher mounted than ours,yet, when they
stoop, they stoop with the like wing. Therefore
when he sees reason of fears, as we do, his
fears, out of doubt, be of the same relish as
ours are: yet, in reason, no man should possess
him with any appearance of fear, lest he, by
showing it, should dishearten his army.'

William Shakespeare, *Henry V*

Chapter 3: Theoretical vantage points for the development of my Arendtian approach

In this chapter I will first briefly introduce Hannah Arendt and her author-
ship. Secondly I will explain why and how I have chosen to use Arendt's theo-
risations in my investigation of a contemporary interprofessional work activity
in the Danish welfare state. This will lead to the third main section which is an
in-depth introduction to Arendt's three practical and three mental activities:
labour, *work*, *action*, *thinking*, *willing* and *judging*. Finally these activities will be ap-
plied to the interprofessional work activity.

3.1 Hannah Arendt and her authorship

Hannah Arendt was born into a German Jewish family in 1904 in Linden and grew up in Königsberg and Berlin. Arendt studied philosophy with philosopher Martin Heidegger at the University of Marburg. She wrote her doctoral dissertation at the University of Heidelberg on the concept of love in Augustine's writings and was supervised by the existentialist philosopher and psychologist Karl Jaspers.

From her educational background it seems most natural to regard Arendt as a philosopher. But Arendt did not want to consider herself as such. Instead Arendt unconventionally labelled herself as a "political theorist" (Pahuus, 2010). This label tends to imply that Arendt is classified by discipline as a political philosopher. But in Miðskarð (submitted) I have demonstrated that Arendt is not a conventional political philosopher, as she frequently crosses over in her writings into other fields such as work studies, literature and sociology. Hence beside the area of political philosophy, Arendt's works are also used in the areas of work studies (e.g. Negt (1985), Sennett (1999) and Busch-Jensen (2011)), literature (e.g. Swift (2009)) and sociology (Bowling (2011)).

In recent decades Arendt's works have furthermore been studied and used within many other disciplines than those mentioned above. For example, her writings are currently being increasingly introduced into the fields of social work (e.g. Dwoskin, 2003; Froggett, 2002; Stivers, 2008) and educational studies (e.g. Gordon & Gordon, 2001; Hansen, 2002; Hansen, 2008; Knutas, 2008; Lauritzen, 2010; Schutz, 1997; Schutz, 2001). My intention in this thesis is to apply Arendt's theorisations to my concrete field of analysis of the interaction in the consulting sessions given by social workers to school professionals on issues in vulnerable children's lifeworlds. Hence the approach I have developed places itself at an intersection between the fields of social work, educational studies and work studies.

Before I further develop my approach I will introduce Arendt's line of thinking by presenting the three issues she is most known for: I) her concept of "the banality of evil", II) her threefold division of practical activities and III) her atypical political philosophy. Subsequently I will present what I consider the main theme in Arendt's authorship.

It was in connection with her observation of the Eichmann trial that Arendt developed her concept of the banality of evil (Arendt, 1963). Briefly explained, the banality of evil refers to the fact that individuals can perform evil deeds without being truly aware of what they are doing. The explanation for this is

that one is just following the ideas of a system instead of making use of one's lived experiences with fellow human beings.

The second issue which Arendt is commonly known for is her practical activities of *labour, work* and *action*. I argue that these three practical activities must be approached in conjunction with Arendt's mental activities of *thinking, willing* and *judging*. The reason is that the six activities together portray Arendt's answer on how to bridge the gulf between theory and practice which she claims stems from Plato's days and has survived to our present days (Miðskarð, 2010). *Labour* concerns people's activity with recyclable earthly matters which needs to be carried out in order to survive as biological beings. *Work* concerns the activity in which people are creating a more durable world than the Earth provides them with; the matter of *work* is non-organic matter. *Action* concerns how people act and speak with one another. In *thinking* individual persons temporary halt their participation in active life with the purpose of in solitude to *think* about their experiences with earthly or worldly matters or about their experiences from *actions* with other persons. *Willing* is an activity which needs the presence of more than one person. Arendt defines *willing* as the initiatives people embark on with a common intention. Similarly *judging* is an activity that only can be performed in a presence of more than one person. When people *judge* they reveal to each other how they take a stance on a common issue under discussion. Note that I use italics when referring to these six activities, because I constantly want to remind my readers that these terms have a specific Arendtian meaning which often deviates from our common connotations of the terms.

The third issue which Arendt is most commonly known for is her atypical political philosophy. The foundation in this atypical political philosophy is the public realm which she distinguishes from the sphere of intimacy, the private realm and the social realm. There is much discussion among Arendt scholars on how to understand these different realms, which I will not describe here. For such a discussion see for example Hull (2002), Benhabib (1992, 2000, 2003) and Berkowitz (2010). Here I will merely state that in accordance with Berkowitz (2010) I understand Arendt's public realm as emerging wherever a person is discussing a common issue in the company of others. For her emphasis on the necessity of a public realm, Arendt is famous for bringing ancient insights, in particular Greek philosophy, back to life in order to generate an alternative basis for society, which Arendt argues has failed as totalitarian regimes rose in our modern age. Arendt's idea here is that there is a similarity between our problems in the political world in the ancient age and in the

modern age (Heller, 1988, p. 57). It is important to note that Arendt usually divides the history of man into three broad periods: the ancient age, the medieval age and the modern age. Arendt often refers to our present days as a part of the modern age (see e.g. Arendt (1958, p. 305) and Arendt (1978A, p.12)). However, sometimes Arendt argues that from the 1950s something new occurred and hence she labels these times as "the modern world" which is distinct from "the modern age" (see for example Arendt (1958, p. 321) and Arendt (1969, p. 29).

My above presentation of the three best known Arendtian issues demonstrates that Arendt deals with a variety of themes in her authorship: evilness, people's typical practical activities and the foundation for a better society. I also show that she discusses these themes over a wide time range in our human history. A further important point in Miðskarð (submitted) is that Arendt writes her works in many different genres: philosophical works, essays, phenomenological analyses etc. Because Arendt's interests are spread over a wide area and her works are written in many different genres, I have chosen to refer to "Arendt's theorisations" instead of "Arendt's theory" because in my view "theorisations" signals a looser structure whilst "theory" suggests a coherent system of thoughts.

Even though Arendt's theorisations focus on a great variety of issues over an extensive time span, I will follow Hull (2002) who claims that throughout her multi-faceted authorship Arendt has one main message which is to stress the importance of people's plurality and interaction. Arendt herself also seems to point out this theme of people's interaction and plurality. Firstly, because she starts her first main work *The Human Condition (1958, p. 8)* by citing two statements from Ancient Rome: *inter homines esse,* which means that being alive is the same as being amongst other people and *inter homines esse desinere,* which means that dying is the same as ceasing to be among other people. Secondly, because recurrently throughout *The Human Condition* and her second main work *The Life of the Mind (1978),* Arendt stresses that "plural people" are first and foremost supposed to live in community with one another on a common earth or expressed with a more Arendtian phrase 'Not Man but men inhabit this planet. Plurality is the law of the earth'[6] (Arendt, 1978A, p. 19).

Finally in this section, I will clarify how Arendt's main theme of plurality and interaction is present in the three Arendtian issues presented here. This can firstly be seen in that Arendt implies that evilness can be prevented by

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[6] Arendt's term "men" refers to both males and females.

urging people to interact with one another in a fruitful way. Secondly plurality and interaction can be seen in my argument that people's interaction is a revolving point in Arendt's three practical and three mental activities. Finally this main theme can be seen in that Arendt firmly argues that a better society must be characterised by conversations between people which are sensitive to the plurality of people's diverse lives.

3.2 My use of Arendt's theorisations

In this section I will explain why and how I have chosen to use Arendt's theorisations within an existential-phenomenological tradition to answer my research question: How do consulting sessions with social workers influence school professionals' further perspectives on how to deal with issues in vulnerable children's lifeworlds?

Arendt's theorisations are multi-faceted and hence there exists an abundance of different interpretations which embed Arendt's theorisations in different theoretical traditions. For example, Bowling (2011) embeds Arendt's theorisations in a critical theoretical tradition; Honing (1992, 1993) in a post-structuralist tradition; Borren (2009) in a hermeneutical phenomenological tradition and Pahuus (2006, 2010) and Hinchmann & Hinchmann (1984) in an existential phenomenological tradition.

With inspiration from Pahuus (2006, 2010) and Hinchmann & Hinchmann (1984) I have chosen to interpret Arendt's theorisations within an existential phenomenological tradition because I want to accentuate that the professionals' identities, and hence the perspectives they adopt on various issues, are constantly developing as a result of how they choose to orient themselves in response to their ongoing experiences within their lifeworlds.

In Chapter 4 I will elaborate on what it means for my methodology that I have embedded Arendt's theorisations in an existential-phenomenological tradition. But here I will briefly explain what the existential phenomenological line of thinking accentuates in Arendt's theorisations which makes them suitable for my research on how consulting sessions with social workers influence school professionals' further perspectives on how to deal with issues in vulnerable children's lifeworlds.

The existential phenomenological tradition focuses on human existence in the world we live in (Compton, 1997). Hence this tradition urges that a person always needs to be investigated as to how they temporarily choose to react to

their experiences within their earthly surroundings, for example the house/cave in which a person lives; the trees the person walks among; the sky which the person gazes at and the others to whom the person talks (Valle & King, 1989, p. 8). This however is not to be understood primarily in a cultural anthropological way in which for example all people living in one specific city share certain similarities which are not shared by those living in another city. Rather a person's local surroundings must be viewed as a manifestation of the general conditions of time and space of the earth - which however are always interpreted individually. In the following I will illustrate this assumption with an example from Arendt's theorisations.

In Miðskarð (submitted) I have argued that according to Arendt one of the important basic human conditions for us to keep in mind is that all people are born on the same Earth; Arendt labels this condition natality. I will further make use of how Brunkhorst (2000, p. 188) interprets the Arendtian existential condition of natality in the following way:

> We can never choose the time, the place or the circumstances of our birth and life; nevertheless, we must make our own decisions and lead our own lives. To do this, we must interpret the particular world in which we find ourselves (whether it be the world of the Greek polis, the early American republic, or an advanced industrial democracy).

This quote illustrates that the focus of natality is turned towards how people must interpret and relate to their particular lifeworld. I find it important to underline that the focus is on people's interpretation of their particular world; hence the goal is not to get an objective focus on the world itself. Furthermore, it is important to stress that Arendt's main theme of plurality and interaction implies that it is crucial that individuals interpret their particular world in ongoing conversations with one another instead of merely relying on their own subjective interpretation. Arendt states that this is the only way people can get an enlarged view of the world they live in. Even though Arendt argues for borrowing insights from one another there is no doubt that Arendt maintains that individuals must primarily keep to their own perspective on things; however she also states that one only becomes aware of one's own perspective in conversations with others (Miðskarð, submitted).

In Chapter 4 I will explain in detail that the existential-phenomenological tradition implies that in these Arendtian conversations people must start with concrete incidents in their common everyday life before they talk about more abstract things. Then with a strong emphasis on the interplay between people's different interpretations of the concrete incidents, Arendt maintains that

we as human beings together can improve our understanding and love for each other and for our common world (Young Bruehl, 2004).

Arendt maintains that it is possible to bring forward this love for our common world in our modern age even though she states that modern mass society has a serious predicament of "organised loneliness". Arendt maintains that the "organised loneliness" is a result of an excessive focus on efficiency and in the name of efficiency we tend to reduce interpersonal meetings because they are too difficult and time consuming to conduct.

Hence Arendt's authorship can be read as an extensive critique of civilisation. Arendt argues that it was this predicament of "organised loneliness" which was the foundation for the rise of the totalitarian regimes in our modern age (Berkowitz, 2010).

But Arendt does not only want to characterise the predicament of "organised loneliness" in our modern age; she also wants to contribute to an enhancement of people's sense of community in this lonely age that we live in. For this Arendt seeks inspiration from a wide range of thinkers and historical events. For example Arendt draws upon insights from thinkers like Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, Augustine, Machiavelli, Shakespeare, Kant, Kierkegaard, Kafka, Benjamin and Blixen and from historical circumstances like life in the Greek poleis, the French Revolution, the American Revolution and the space journeys in the 1950s.

For one of her most central concepts, namely *action*, Arendt in particular seeks inspiration from the underlying thoughts in the organisation of the Greek poleis (the small city states). Arendt argues that the ancient Greek poleis' strength in creating a society in which all approved citizens were able to influence the affairs of the polis could be a basis for creating a society which is sensitive towards people's plurality and their local surroundings.

But when Arendt so solidly seeks inspiration from ancient Greek culture there are many critics who claim that there is a strong elitist ideology built into Arendt's theorisations, because it was only wealthy men who were approved citizens in the Greek poleis (Brunkholst, 2000). However, in my interpretation, Arendt does not incorporate into her line of thinking all underlying aspects of the organisation of the ancient Greek poleis. Rather I follow Johnson (2001) who argues that Arendt makes use of certain commendable insights from the ancient Greek culture whilst at the same time she discards their inbuilt inequalities by drawing in additional components from other thinkers and historical events.

However with regard to my stance, critics like Bernasconi (2000) will rightly argue that an Arendtian fight against inequalities seems to be undermined in Arendt's central message in the essay *Reflections on Little Rock* from 1959 (Arendt, 1959). Here she opposes state plans to end racial segregation in American schools by coercing black students into "white" schools. I do agree that it is striking that Arendt opposes this plan so strongly, but I do not think it implies that Arendt agrees with the inequalities. Rather I support Benhabib's (2003, p. 146ff) interpretation of the essay. Benhabib (2003, p. 146ff) maintains that Arendt argues that it is unsustainable to attempt a quick remedy of such injustices with a purely technical solution of coercing black students into schools with white children. Arendt argues that it is more sustainable to focus on people's ways of thinking because race thinking always comes before racism.

Furthermore one can critically question how I can use Arendt's politically minded theorisations for research into interprofessional work conversations in a contemporary Danish welfare state setting as modern welfare states were not particularly well developed when Arendt's main works were published in 1958 and 1978. In order to reply to such a criticism, it is necessary to unfold my existential-phenomenological understanding of "politics" in Arendt's works, and to underline that this conception differs from the conventional understanding of politics.

Arendt states that the most important "political" feature is how people relate to one another: 'politics arises in what lies <u>between people</u> and is established as relationships' (The underlining is Arendt's accentuation) (Arendt, 1955, p. 95). Arendt maintains that the dynamics in how people relate to one another in an open public conversation are the same in whatever epoch we are investigating. Hence Arendt's reflections about political conversations from 1958 and 1978 are also applicable to conversations between school professionals and social workers in the contemporary Danish welfare state. On this basis I choose in my investigations to view the conversations in the consulting sessions as an Arendtian political arena.

In order to define "politics" more specifically I have chosen to make use of aspects of Kateb's (2000) interpretation of Arendt's "politics". Kateb maintains that Arendt's "politics" concerns how people interact with one another – in particular in conversations. But Kateb urges that in order to categorise a common conversation as an Arendtian political activity there must be room for the participants to give their different individual opinions on the subject of their common conversation. Arendt claims that the goal of these political

conversations is the same in the ancient age, the medieval age and the modern age and hence she can use for example insights from Socrates to advise us how to improve our political conversations in the modern age.

My definition presented above states that Arendt's broadly defined term "politics" primarily focuses on the dynamics in people's conversations. I thus follow Moran (2000, p. 290), who underlines that it is only secondary that Arendt's theorisations help us to provide a systematic account of the nature of a particular state's institutional settings of the conversations we are investigating.

Thus in my Arendtian political investigation of the consulting sessions I will primarily study the interplay between the professionals' different perspectives in their common conversations on vulnerable children, which I understand and conceptualise as politics driven by people in interaction with one another. My study will then secondly give a characterisation of how much room there is for the professionals' different perspectives in the consulting sessions in the setting of the contemporary Danish welfare state. For this I will use some additional contemporary Danish research literature, e.g. Bømler (2011), Larsen (2009A; 2009B) and Petersen (2008). Hence my study will provide a startling depiction of the circumstances of "political" conversations for professionals who work with children in the contemporary Danish welfare state, but there is no doubt that first and foremost my study is concerned with the more general interpersonal dynamics in the present-day consulting sessions between Danish social workers and school professionals (teachers and reception-class teachers).

Hence the strength of my Arendtian existential-phenomenological approach points towards a micro-analysis of the interactions between social workers and school professionals in order to shed light on the lives and problems of vulnerable children – and the understandings and actions the school professionals can develop in order to help the children better. This strength lies in the fact that my Arendtian approach urges me to bring solidly to the foreground the professionals' different perspectives on real life issues in vulnerable children's lifeworlds; Højholt (2001) and Nielsen (2001) claim this is often missed in contemporary Danish research and interventions in interprofessional work.

On the other hand this approach does not allow me a thorough investigation of the institutional and organisational structures which obviously also shape the conditions for the consulting sessions in the setting of the contemporary Danish welfare state. Hence my approach needs to be seen as a complement to existing approaches which mainly focus on the highly complex or-

ganisational and institutional structures in interprofessional work settings (e.g. Brandi (2007)).

3.3 Arendt's practical and mental activities

In the previous section I defined people's conversations with room for different perspectives as Arendt's "politics". It further follows from the existential phenomenological tradition presented that such conversations must revolve around how individual people choose to respond to common human experiences in their concrete everyday life. Hence within an existential-phenomenological stance I will turn my further investigation towards Arendt's six activities as they characterise the activities people do on this Earth where they are bound to live.

I will investigate what kinds of collaboration are possible within the respective six activities through a focus on how much each of the activities includes Arendt's main theme of interaction and plurality. At the end of this chapter I will apply my conclusions to my research of the consulting sessions between social workers and school professionals.

The application of Arendt's activities to my research of the consulting sessions is inspired by Pahuus (2007; 2009) who demonstrates that it is possible to apply insights from Arendt's theorisations to issues in contemporary working life. I am likewise inspired by Benhabib's (1992, 2003) interpretation of Arendt's activities. Benhabib's stance implies that the six Arendtian activities have their origin in particular experiences people have in specific physical places, but what the people learn from these experiences is transferable to other activities in other kinds of places.

3.3.1 The three practical activities

It was in *The Human Condition* (1958) that Arendt defined the three practical activities of *labour, work* and *action.*

Arendt's activity of *labour* refers to the fact that people need to do certain things in order to survive as biological beings in their given human bodies on the Earth. Arendt (1958, p. 107) argues that *labour* involves both toil and pleasure. In order to optimise the pleasure of *labour*, ancient people began to share their burden of *labour*. Because *labour* deals with cyclical matters, Arendt underlines that the collaboration is mostly based on a need to get things done

in an efficient way in order to maximise pleasure. Therefore efficiency is the keyword in people's collaboration in the *labour* activity, and efficiency is best achieved when people collaborate in a strictly organised manner. They need to 'behave toward each other as though they were one' (Arendt, 1958, p. 123). In such collaboration in the *labour* activity, Arendt assumes that the tasks are delegated in a strict manner and therefore there is no need for any real interactions after the tasks have been distributed (Hull, 2002, p. 25). Arendt labels this form of collaboration for "division of labour".

Arendt's activity of *work* refers to the need for people to create a more durable world than the Earth can provide as the Earth undergoes constant altering processes, for example harsh weather conditions and biological decomposition. The products of *work* are more durable than those of *labour*. Therefore the *work* activity is not so rushed by time as the *labour* activity. Hence people's collaboration in the *work* activity is not driven by a wish for efficiency, but by a wish for a high quality of the product[7]. Arendt labels the collaboration within *work* with the two terms "specialisation" and "co-operation"; I will only use the term "co-operation". Arendt (1958, p. 153ff) explains that when people co-operate, they are producing a common product, but the *work* itself is being carried out individually in each employee's sovereignty. Therefore co-operation can be defined as implying that individuals in their sovereignty use their different specialisations in order to produce a compound product with other people.

Arendt argues however that during the industrial revolution there was an enhanced focus on efficiency in *work* and therefore the quality of the products

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[7] Arendt is often criticised for distinguishing *work* from *labour*, but Arendt argues for this distinction for two reasons. The first is that the distinction between labour and work has been preserved in almost every language in all ages; hence following an existential phenomenological line of thinking Arendt argues that it must be a basic human experience that there is a distinction between the two activities of labour and work. She argues that the second reason for making the distinction is the nature of the products of the two activities. Arendt says: 'The distinction between a bread, whose "life expectancy" in the world is hardly more than a day, and a table, which may easily survive generations of men, is certainly much more obvious and decisive than the difference between a baker and a carpenter.' (Arendt, 1958, p. 94). Beside the fact that this quote states the difference between the products of *labour* and *work*, it also demonstrates Arendt's emphasis on the fact that even though there is a difference between *work* and *labour* both labourers and workers are indeed the same kind of people.

of *work* was downgraded. Arendt (1958, p. 123) argues that the decisive element in the industrial revolution was the introduction of the "division of labour" into the *work* activity. With a focus on techniques and methods each task in the production was simplified as much as possible to enable *work* activities on assembly lines. Arendt claims that not only was *work* simplified, but that the industrial revolution also implied a shift from an interest in the products of *work* to the instruments themselves (Arendt, 1958, 294ff). Hence Arendt operates with an old version of co-operation which focuses on the workers' creation of a common product and a new version of co-operation which focuses on the techniques and methods used by the workers.

It is crucial that Arendt stresses that *labour's* "division of labour" and *work's* "co-operation" are never used on their own. Both "division of labour" and "co-operation" use

> ... the general principle of organization, which itself has nothing to do with either work or labor but owes its origin to the strictly political sphere of life, to the fact of person's capacity to act and to <u>act together</u> and in concert. Only within the framework of political organization, where people not merely live, but act, together, can specialization of work and division of labor take place. (The underlining is my accentuation!). Arendt (1958, p. 123).

In this quote Arendt explains that in order to organise how people collaborate in *labour* and in *work* they need to make use of the third practical activity: *action.* I will now describe *action* in greater depth than *labour* and *work* as *action* is the central political activity.

Arendt explains that her Greek polis-inspired concept of *action* is not like *labour* and *work*, which are both directly conditioned by material matters from the Earth; Arendt claims that *action* is rather primarily tied to people's speech with one another (Miðskarð, submitted). Arendt's *action* must therefore be understood as only being executed when there is a presence of plural persons, whereas *labour* and *work* by nature can be carried out in solitude without any collaboration with other people.

In the last quote we saw that Arendt described *action* as acting "in concert". We know that in a band or orchestra every player plays his or her own instrument, but real music first arises when they play together so that the sounds from their instruments blend in with one another. Arendt's *action* deals precisely with how people act together and concerns similarly intangible things:

> Distinguished from both, [labor's] consumer goods and [work's] use objects, there are finally the "products" of action and speech, which together consti-

tute the fabric of human relationships and affairs. Left to themselves, they lack not only the tangibility of other things, but are even less durable and more futile than what we produce for consumption. Their reality depends entirely upon human plurality, upon the constant presence of others who can see and hear and therefore testify to their existence. (Arendt, 1958, p. 94).

Arendt (1958) explains that there are two crucial elements which condition *action*: natality and plurality. I will now describe these two concepts. As with other concepts, Arendt never fully defines her concept of natality and hence I will draw upon Wright (2000, p. 153ff), Hull (2002, p. 15ff) and (Mortensen, 2008). Arendt's Augustine-inspired concept of natality refers to the birth of every individual person which Arendt sees as the start of that person's uniqueness, implying that a person is never the same as any other person that has lived, lives or will live (Mortensen (2008); Arendt (1958, p. 175ff)). But natality is not only found in one's birth, it is also present when one existentially inserts oneself into any given situation on one's life journey. It is important that it is only in interaction with other persons that a person's natality becomes apparent and further emerges (Wright, 2000, p. 155). Arendt argues that people's natality implies that every person is capable of starting something new and unexpected during their *actions* with other people (Hull, 2002, p. 15ff).

Arendt defines her concept of plurality more extensively than her concept of natality. Therefore in the following I will make more use of Arendt's own writings for my explanation of plurality.

Arendt argues that plurality manifests itself in both equality and distinction, and she further explains that distinction has
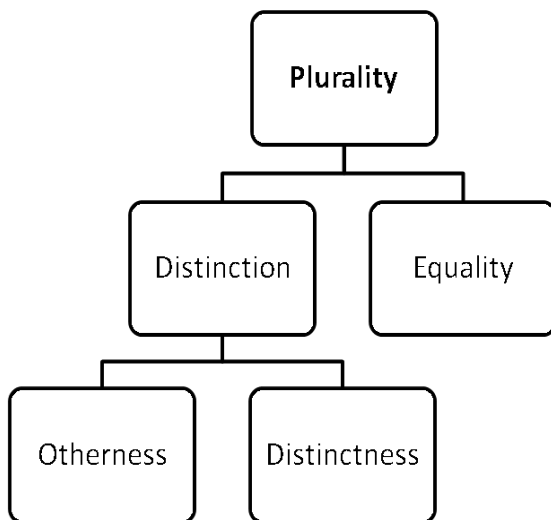
Figure 1. This figure illustrates the relation between the different components in Arendt's concept of plurality.

the twofold character of otherness and distinctness (Arendt, 1958, p. 175ff). See Figure 1 for an illustration of the relationship between the different components.

With regard to equality element on figure 1 on the previous page I have argued in Miðskarð (submitted) that I interpret this as referring to the common condition of all people of being humans on the same shared Earth. In Miðskarð (submitted) I demonstrated that, according to Arendt, this basic condition implies some further equal conditions for all people and these are: life itself, natality, mortality, worldliness and plurality.

Arendt says that although these equal conditions produce a common ground for *actions* then each commenced *action* will inevitably evoke a clear distinction between the participating persons. Arendt explains that the distinction which thus emerges will reveal and further enhance the uniqueness of each participant. Hence in referring to "uniqueness" we can see a clear link back to Arendt's concept of "natality".

Arendt maintains that there are two elements in an individual person's uniqueness: "otherness" and "distinctness".

"Otherness" refers to the physical appearance of a person which is unique for every individual, e.g. our faces, fingerprints and teeth formations. Arendt claims that otherness can equally be seen in all other earthly beings, for example animals. But Arendt claims that animals do not show the same degree of "distinctness" as people do. Thus Arendt claims that it is more crucial to examine a person's distinctness when we want to characterise the person's uniqueness which is being expressed during an *action*. Hull (2002, p. 54) very clearly explains distinctness in the following quote: 'Arendt argues that (...) distinctness is the individualized lifelong development of the human person (our "who-ness")'.

Arendt argues that due to all people's unique distinctnesses there is an unpredictability built into every *action* which implies that an *action* can be bent in unpredictable ways. Arendt does not only claim that an *action* is unpredictable, an *action* is also irreversible, which implies that the way the participating persons choose to bend the *action* can never be redone (Arendt 1958, p. 237).

Therefore we can conclude that people's distinctnesses give us enormous challenges in an *action* activity. Arendt argues that throughout the whole of human history these challenges have tempted us to degrade the *action* activity and rather use the *work* line of thinking. The *work* line of thinking is by definition easier to control because it originates from work with concrete matters and is defined by using instruments in order to reach a predefined goal. When

an obvious *action* activity takes the form of a *work* activity then people will tend to collaborate in the form of co-operation as defined above. In co-operation individual people will keep firmly to their own way of seeing and working with things although by definition they should truly collaborate with other people. Furthermore as mentioned earlier in this chapter Arendt thinks that in the modern age co-operation has a tendency to be drawn towards "division of labour". This implies that people will manage their common work in accordance with how efficiency best can be achieved and hence they will even give up their individual way of seeing things and instead all adopt a common simplified perspective on their common things.

Arendt argues that the way forward to tackle the aspects of unpredictability and irreversibility of *action* is not to use techniques and procedures inspired by the *labour* and *work* activities to try to steer the outcome in predefined ways. Rather, Arendt argues that we must use the two faculties of promising and forgiveness for, respectively, the unpredictability and irreversibility of *action.*

For the problem of unpredictability, Arendt (1958, p. 237) says: 'The remedy for unpredictability, for the chaotic uncertainty of the future, is contained in the faculty to make and keep promises.'

Regarding the problem of irreversibility, Arendt (1958, p. 237) says: 'The possible redemption from the predicament of irreversibility—of being unable to undo what one has done though one did not, and could not, have known what he was doing—is the faculty of forgiving'.

It is crucial for Arendt that these two faculties depend on plurality. She states that if a person alone decides the content in a promise for others to keep, then we have an inclination towards totalitarian rule. She also states that if persons try to forgive themselves, then it is only 'a role played before one's self' (1958, p. 237).

Regarding Arendt's *action,* I have demonstrated that it is an activity which only can be carried out between several persons. I have also shown that Arendt acknowledges that the basic condition of *action* is plurality. Plurality implies that all individual persons are equal and yet distinct. We have also seen that people's distinctnesses provide us with enormous challenges in every *action* activity in the form of unpredictability and irreversibility. These challenges tempt people to degrade people's *actions* to the collaboration forms of *work* and *labour,* "co-operation" and "division of labour" respectively. Rather Arendt urges us to use the faculty of promising for the problem of unpredictability and the faculty of forgiving for the problem of irreversibility. The argu-

mentation for using promising and forgiving is that these two faculties are interactive in their nature just like *action.*

From my investigation of collaboration in Arendt's three practical activities, I can first sum up by stating that *labour's* collaboration form "division of labour" is characterised by all people behaving as though they were one coherent body, which implies limited space for interaction and plurality. Secondly, I found out that *work's* collaboration form "co-operation" is characterised by people making use of their different individual specialisations to produce a compound product. Hence "co-operation" makes use of people's plurality but allows limited space for interactions. At the end of this section I concluded that *action* is characterised by people interacting with one another with the use of their different perspectives. Furthermore I underlined that *action*s are mainly carried out as conversations. Hence *actions* can be regarded as the most prominent political activity, which should be used every time people are interacting, and also when they are organising a collaboration in the form of "division of labour" or "co-operation".

3.3.2 The three mental activities

After having examined people's collaboration in Arendt's three practical activities I will move on to investigate what Arendt says about people's interaction in her three mental activities with a view to applying this to my research in interprofessional work.

Let me however first present a quote which illustrates the relation between the three practical and the three mental activities. Arendt (1978A, p. 70) says:

> Men, though they are totally conditioned existentially - limited by the time span between birth and death, subject to labor in order to live, motivated to work in order to make themselves at home in the world, and roused to action in order to find their place in the society of their fellow-men - can mentally transcend all these conditions, but only mentally, never in reality or in cognition and knowledge, by virtue of which they are able to explore the world's realness and their own.

I wish to draw attention to the fact that Arendt argues here that people can mentally transcend their earthly-bound conditions in order to explore the world's and their own realness. I find it however crucial that Arendt also implies that such mental transcendence can never be more prominent than the reality itself. Furthermore it is implied in the quote that Arendt does not associate such mental transcendence with cognition and knowledge.

In *The Life of the Mind* (1978) Arendt defines the three mental activities of *thinking*, *willing* and *judging*, which I will here explain in detail.

Arendt (1978A, p. 90) says that we normally assume that thinking deals with abstractions, but Arendt rather labels such a process as working with knowledge. Her *thinking* rather 'deals with <u>representations</u> of things that are absent' (The underlining is Arendt's accentuation) Arendt (1969, p. 446). More elaborately Arendt (1978A, p. 187ff) says that in *thinking* individuals temporarily halt their participation in active life with the purpose of in solitude to *think* about their experiences with earthly matters or about their participation in *actions* with other persons. Hence Arendt's *thinking* is therefore a reflection, whilst working with knowledge is rather a technical exercise. I would argue that Arendt has provided us with this distinction because of her general view of the whole of human history's thinking instead of just investigating people's thinking in the modern age which, according to Arendt, is more technically oriented than it was in the ancient age. Arendt (1978A, p. 151) says:

> In my attempt to isolate and examine one of the basic sources of non-cognitive thinking I have emphasized the elements of admiration, confirmation, and affirmation, which we encounter so powerfully in Greek philosophical and prephilosophic thought and can trace throughout the centuries, not as a matter of influence but of often-repeated first-hand experience. I am not at all sure that what I have been describing runs counter to present-day experiences of thinking but I am quite sure that it runs counter to present-day opinion on the subject.

I wrote previously that Arendt's *thinking* can either originate from people's experiences of earthly matters or from their participation in *actions* with other people. In terms of the scope of my research it is of special interest when a person's *thinking* is initiated by participation in *actions* with other persons. Arendt explains *thinking* in the following way: 'I first talk with others before I talk with myself, examining whatever the joint talk may have been about, and then discover that I can conduct a dialogue not only with others but with myself as well.' (Arendt, 1978A, p. 151). Arendt proposes here that when a person talks with other persons, this conversation urges the person to continue the talk with him or herself in solitude. Arendt (1978A, 189) says further that in *thinking* a person splits him or herself into a two-in-one. With this split a conversation can then be carried on between a person's 'me' and 'myself'.

A conclusion on the issue of interaction in the *thinking* activity must reveal clearly that it is not an interactive activity in itself. However, I can conclude

that *thinking* can arise from *action* encounters with other people, and we may thus argue that an *action* continues even after the participating persons have left each other because Arendt agrees with Cato who states that 'never is he less alone than when he is by himself' (Arendt, 1958, p. 525).

This idea of an interactive *action's* continuation in the individual's *thinking* is central to my investigation of the influence of the consulting sessions on the school professionals' further work with the issues of their vulnerable pupils. A further argument for the central place of this idea comes from Froggett (2002, p. 170) who maintains that the everyday working life of professionals in our current welfare state is packed with demands on providing evidence for their practice. Froggett (2008, p. 170) argues that therefore this Arendtian *thinking* is a necessary activity in today's welfare climate which we need to investigate and promote in order to enable the welfare state to deliver the best services possible.

Arendt says that the person's two-in-one state ('me' and 'myself') which is characteristic of *thinking* can also be found in the second mental activity *willing*. However, she states that the nature of the two-in-one state of the *will* is totally different from its nature in *thinking*: 'The split within the will is a conflict and not a dialogue [as in *thinking*]'. (Arendt, 1978B, p. 95). Arendt claims that this conflict in the will is rooted in a specific tradition driven by Christian medieval philosophers' interpretations of Saint Paul's writings. Arendt (1978B, p. 200ff) analyses how philosophers have in an unhelpful way implemented the *will* into individual people. Arendt's suggestion for rethinking the *will* is to bring it back from the contemplative lonely life in monasteries to communities of people. Similarly, Arendt argues for connecting the *will* more closely to our universal human condition that we are plural people who inhabit the Earth together.

Similarly to her view on the *will* as belonging to a setting of several persons, Arendt (1978C, p. 193) argues that *judging* is only possible in a setting with other people. Arendt (1978C, p. 193) explains that *judging* is always aimed at particular things. Arendt says that by *judging* one risks oneself among others and says for example: 'this is wrong' or 'this is beautiful'. The reason why *judging* belongs to a setting of plural persons is that we need other people's taste to test and sharpen our own taste. By making our *judgements* among others and hearing their *judgements*, Arendt says, we can further sharpen our own *thinking* (Arendt, 1978C, p. 270).

From my investigation of people's plurality and interaction in Arendt's three mental activities, I can conclude that *willing* and *judging* contain a high degree of plurality and interaction as they can only be executed in the presence of oth-

ers. *Thinking,* on the other hand, is an activity that is carried out in solitude. However, we must not lose sight of the fact that, as Arendt states, the substance of *thinking* originates from interaction between people or from people's experiences with the earthly matters which they share with other people.

3.4 Summary and application to my empirical research

When I now summarise people's collaboration in the six activities and apply this to my research on the consulting sessions, I must emphasise my existential-phenomenological view of the nature of the six activities. This implies that the six activities originate in six specific kinds of concrete experiences all people have had throughout the entire history of mankind. My existential-phenomenological view also implies that what people learn from these concrete experiences can be transferred to other kinds of activities. Hence I will now sum up the outcome of my investigation of the plurality and interaction in the six Arendtian activities by applying them to the Danish interprofessional work setting of a school professional who receives a consulting session from a social worker on a concern about the lifeworld of a particular pupil.

Firstly, I stated that *labour's* collaboration form, "division of labour", is characterised by people working together so intensively that they are behaving as if they were one coherent body. In such a highly organised collaboration there is no need for real communication between the different people because all the tasks are totally fixed so that they do not overlap with one another. In my research on the consulting sessions the "division of labour" line of thinking does not seem relevant to use for my analysis as the social workers and school professionals do not collaborate in this way.

Secondly, I stated that *work's* collaboration form, "co-operation", implies that different people with their individualised specialisations interact with one another in order to produce a compound product. Furthermore I stated that Arendt works with both an old and a new version of "co-operation".

The old version of co-operation focuses on how individual people's *work* can be compounded to a common product. In my analysis with an awareness of the old version of co-operation I will explore and identify whether the school professionals and social workers bring into the consulting session specialised narratives from their respective specific everyday work settings which

supplement one another.

The new version of co-operation in *work* focuses on the professionals' specialised techniques and methods instead of focusing on the professionals' personal contributions to a compounded product. In my analysis with an awareness of the new version of co-operation I will explore and identify whether the professionals in the consulting session start transferring methods and techniques from one setting to another without being aware that the specific techniques and methods are developed for a certain challenge in a certain setting.

Thirdly, I concluded that *action* can be regarded as the most prominent political collaboration form, which should be used every time people are to truly interact with one another, and also when they are organising a "division of labour" or "co-operation" collaboration. I concluded that *action* is characterised by people interacting with one another with the use of their different perspectives. Furthermore I underlined that *action*s are mainly carried out as conversations. Hence *action* seems to be the most relevant of Arendt's practical activities to my research of the consulting sessions between social workers and school professionals.

Fourthly, I stated that Arendt's mental activity of *thinking* is carried out in solitude, but it is crucial for Arendt that *thinking* always originates in something that has happened physically or something that was brought up in a conversation which took the character of an *action* activity. Arendt claims that after an *action* each person will subsequently have an inclination in their *thinking* to form a meaning of what their interlocutor said in order to draw out some learning for their further activities. Hence *thinking* seems crucial for my investigation of how the consulting sessions influence the school professionals' further work with issues in vulnerable children's lifeworlds.

Fifthly, I stated that Arendt's *willing* is an activity which needs the presence of more than one person. Arendt defines *willing* as referring to people embarking on common initiatives. Applied to the consulting sessions this implies that if the two professionals work out a common initiative to help the vulnerable child then in Arendtian terms they exercise a common *will*. However, this falls outside the scope of my research which focuses on how the school professionals' perspectives are influenced by encountering social workers' perspectives on issues in a vulnerable child's lifeworld.

Sixthly, I stated that *judging* is an activity that only can be performed in the presence of more than one person. When people *judge* they reveal to each other how they individually take a stance towards an issue. Hence every time the

professionals in my consulting sessions reveal a stance on an issue they are making a *judgement*. But my research does not focus particularly on what is happening in the session itself but rather on how the school professionals are influenced by the sessions in their further work with the vulnerable children. Thus I will not focus on *judgements* as they can only occur in the consulting session itself. However, it seems most likely that the professionals in their representations of the sessions will include *judgements* which took place there.

This section has demonstrated that it is in particular the activities of *action* and *thinking* which are relevant for my research. Firstly I will investigate the incidents in the consulting session which are *action* oriented, i.e. where the two professionals reveal and demonstrate their perspectives to each other in their common conversation. Secondly I will investigate which *thinking* the consulting session's *action* incidents evoke in the school professionals in order to shed light on the influence of the session on their further perspectives on understanding and helping the vulnerable children.

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Hamlet:
… The king is a thing

Guildenstern:
A thing, my lord!

Hamlet:
Of nothing: bring me to him

                    William Shakespeare, Hamlet
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Chapter 4: Development of methodology and method following Arendt's theorisations

In this section first I will describe how I basically view Arendt's theorisations as following an existential-phenomenological tradition, in order to generate some general principles for my research methodology. Secondly, I will develop an Arendtian conceptualisation of "a person's perspective on an issue" as it is a central concept in my research question; for this I will in particular make use of Arendt's activities of *action* and *thinking*. Thirdly, I will use the general principles and Arendt's conceptualisation of "a person's perspective on an issue" in the design of my concrete methodological approach to researching the influence of consulting sessions on school professionals' further perspectives on issues in vulnerable children's lifeworlds.

4.1 Methodological principles from an existential-phenomenological tradition for my Arendtian approach

I will now investigate what the existential-phenomenological tradition implies for the development of my Arendtian methodological framework for my research of the interprofessional work activity of the consulting sessions between social workers and school professionals. First I will investigate Arendt's relation to her two main sources of inspiration: the existential-phenomenological writers Karl Jaspers and Martin Heidegger. Furthermore, through Arendt's theoretical affinity with Heidegger, I will also explore Arendt's relation to Edmund Husserl's line of thinking. Edmund Husserl cannot be characterised as an existential-phenomenological writer, but I will investigate Arendt's similarities to him for two reasons. Firstly, it is in order to explore Arendt's relation to phenomenology as he often is referred to as the founder of the phenomenological tradition. Secondly, it is because the methodology literature is poor on an existential-phenomenological tradition but there is much methodology literature on a purer Husserlian phenomenological approach which I will adapt to my Arendtian existential-phenomenological stance.

Pahuus (2006) and Hinchmann & Hinchmann (1984) argue that Arendt's existential-phenomenological element can mainly be traced back to Arendt's two mentors: Karl Jaspers and Martin Heidegger. Furthermore, since there is a clear link between Heidegger and Edmund Husserl it can be argued that Husserl is similarly important for Arendt's writings.

With the help of secondary literature on Arendt, I will first briefly outline below the supposed connection between Arendt's and Jaspers' ways of working, after which I will explain in more detail the connection believed to exist between the ways of working of Arendt, Heidegger and Husserl.

Bernasconi (2002) argues that Jaspers' theoretical influence on Arendt's theorisations can be said to be limited, but that we should not overlook the fact that Jaspers' lifelong friendship with Arendt had considerable indirect influence on her thinking. Hull (2002) says that it was Jaspers who equipped Arendt with her philosophical consciousness, but that we cannot find many direct sources of inspiration from Jaspers in Arendt's two major works: *The Human Condition (1958)* and *The Life of the Mind (1978).*

Bernasconi (2002) and Hull (2002) both argue that it is more Heidegger who

has provided Arendt with her philosophical language and tools for her two main works. Although Heidegger is Arendt's most obvious existential-phenomenological inspiration, there is not a single reference to Heidegger in Arendt's first major work *The Human Condition*. This is probably because at the time Arendt had problems with Heidegger in relation to two circumstances. The first was a love affair between Heidegger and Arendt in the 1930s that remained unresolved. The second was that Heidegger for a short period during World War II had collaborated with the Nazis, which made it difficult for Arendt to continue to regard him as a good friend and mentor, as she herself as a Jew had been forced to flee Germany during the war.

Although Arendt does not refer to Heidegger in *The Human Condition*, Hinchmann & Hinchmann (1984), Schanz (2007) and Bernasconi (2002) are of the opinion that Heidegger is Arendt's main inspiration for the work.

In later works Arendt increasingly refers to Heidegger, starting mostly with criticism of his Nazi ideas and actions during WWII. Eventually it becomes clear that Arendt begins to refer to Heidegger's works in a more positive tone. Arendt reunites publicly with Heidegger with a speech in his honour on his 70th birthday. She opens her second major work *The Life of the Mind* with a quote from Heidegger and frequently refers to him throughout the work.

Although Arendt reunites publicly with Heidegger and admits that Heidegger's ideas have been a great inspiration for her, Hinchmann & Hinchmann (1984) claim that it would be misleading to describe Arendt as a loyal follower of Heidegger's thinking. Hinchmann & Hinchmann (1984) rather argue that Arendt uses Heidegger's insights as a basis for the development of her own distinctive universe.

Hinchmann & Hinchmann (1984) similarly argue that through Arendt's theoretical affinity with Heidegger one can detect thinking from the founder of phenomenology Edmund Husserl, who was Heidegger's mentor. Bernasconi (2002) also argues that one can find passages in Arendt's works based on insights which probably date back to her early youth, when she attended one of Edmund Husserl's courses in the winter of 1924-1925.

Bernasconi (2002) argues that Husserl, Heidegger and Arendt generally share the same main interest in their writings: to investigate how people in their everyday lives interact in relation to the phenomena that occur when they are together and in their surroundings on their common Earth. But I would emphasise that although similarities can be found between the writings of Arendt, Heidegger and Husserl, one must not forget that Heidegger had a powerful theoretical confrontation with Husserl and took an opposing point of

departure for his works. Further, it is important that Arendt, despite inspiration from Heidegger, developed her theorisations in her own unique way. I therefore conclude that although Husserl, Heidegger and Arendt can be said to share the same main interest, they have each chosen different starting points for their works. Following Hull (2002, p 86ff), I will briefly distinguish between the three starting points.

In general it can be said that Husserl first developed a phenomenological approach where he focused on how people perceive phenomena based on the intentionalities which they link to how the phenomena appear to them. It is important to bear in mind that Husserl with his focus on human perceptions of phenomena was in opposition to much scientific thinking of the time with its positivistic basis that things should be examined based on how they really are, divorced from people's subjective perceptions of them (Zahavi, 2003).

Heidegger later criticised Husserl for only focusing on people's perceptions of things in isolation from their context. Heidegger therefore argues that we must instead examine things in relation to two basic existentials: 'being-in-the-world' and 'going-out-of-the-world'. In brief, 'being-in-the-world' means that the individual has been 'thrown' into a specif-

Figure 2. The first picture is an illustration of Husserl's focus on a person's intentional perception of a phenomenon (in this case a letter).

The second picture shows how Heidegger wished to view the intentional perception of the letter in relation to the person's physical and temporal surroundings.

In the third picture we see how Arendt in addition introduces the person's fellow human beings, when she wishes to examine how the letter appears to the individual.

ic place in a physical world where he or she needs to feel at home, while 'going-out-of-the-world' refers to the fact that the individual only lives for a limited time, which thus challenges him or her to make some existential choices for their life (Heidegger, 2010, Sections 25-27 & 46-53). It is important to emphasise that Heidegger's existentialist views are in many ways more similar to a Kierkegaard line of thinking than a Sartre line of thinking (Quist, 2009).

Although Arendt follows Heidegger's presumptions about contextualising the individual and his or hers experience of a phenomenon in relation to place and time, she criticises Heidegger for not sufficiently contextualising the individual with regard to his or hers community with fellow human beings (Arendt 1946, p. 51). Therefore Arendt introduces more powerfully than Heidegger people's community-oriented context in her politically defined existential-phenomenological focus (Hull, 2002, p. 86ff; Benhabib, 2003, p. 104ff). See Figure 1 for my illustration of the similarities and differences between the starting points of Husserl, Heidegger and Arendt.

Having now presented a general picture of the relationship between the different starting points for Husserl, Heidegger and Arendt, I will now reveal in more specific terms Arendt's criticism and suggestions for improvement of the original Husserlian phenomenological method through one passage in *The Life of the Mind* (1978A, p. 155ff). This will form some principles for my Arendtian existential-phenomenological methodology.

From the passage on pages 155ff in *The Life of the Mind* I am able to extract Arendt's argument that we human beings have three dominant ways to conceptualise how we perceive things (according to Arendt a *thing* can be both material and non-material, as I will explain further later in this chapter). In order to conceptualise these three ways of perceiving things Arendt uses an example of a person looking at a tree. Arendt says that the first way to perceive the tree is that the person stands at the location of the tree and looks at it. The second way is that the person creates an image of the tree and therefore the person can *think* of the tree without being at its location; the person relates instead to a representation of the actual tree. The third way implies that from the representation of the tree the person works out some general principles about the tree and the relation between himself/herself and the tree. Hence the person now seeks a perception of the tree that is more general and abstract than what the person was able to do during the first two ways of perceiving the tree. Arendt (1978A, p. 156) says that Husserl is referring to this third way in his phenomenological method with his search for a person's intentionality towards a tree.

Arendt (1978A, p. 157) criticises this third way of perceiving in two respects. Firstly, she argues that this way of perceiving enhances "world alienation", because the person moves away from the actual tree at its location. Secondly, she maintains that it isolates the individual's perception of the tree in his or her own mind, whereas she wants the person to have an insight into how other people perceive the tree before he or she *thinks* about the tree in solitude.

Although these two points of criticism relate to this third way of perceiving which e.g. Husserl promoted in the 19th century, Arendt argues throughout her whole authorship that these two criticisms can also apply on a more general level to people's way of perceiving things in the whole modern age (e.g. Arendt (epilogue to the essay *Introduction into Politics*, p. 204)). It is important to remind ourselves that Arendt's modern age is the third age in the whole history of mankind, following the ancient age and the medieval age.

Arendt argues in *The Life of the Mind* that the world alienation and isolation tendencies can also be found in every modern scientist's and philosopher's approach to their research (Arendt 1978A, p. 54). However, Arendt claims that

> The primacy of appearance is a fact of everyday life which neither the scientist nor the philosopher can ever escape, to which they must always return from their laboratories and studies, and which shows its strength by never being in the least changed or deflected by whatever they may have discovered when they withdrew from it. Arendt (1978A, p. 24).

This quote underlines that research is often alienated from people's everyday life. Following this line of thinking I would stress that my Arendtian existential-phenomenological approach must be solidly embedded in people's everyday life circumstances. Hence with inspiration from this section I will set up two Arendtian existential-phenomenological methodological principles for my research. 1) My research must be based on concrete incidents 2) My analysis of the data from these concrete incidents must constantly be tried out with other people. Only after these steps can I allow myself general in-depth discussions of the incidents investigated.

4.2 People's perspectives on a "thing"

I will begin this section with an investigation of how Arendt conceptualises "perspective" in her theorisations, as "perspective" is placed centrally in my research question: How do consulting sessions with social workers influence

school professionals' further perspectives on how to deal with issues in vulnerable children's lifeworlds?

In Chapter 2 I concluded that Arendt's notions of *action* and *thinking* are central for my study. I described that in order to characterise an activity as an *action* in my observations, the people involved need to speak to each other with their individually marked perspectives on a "thing" of common interest. According Arendt such an *action* will continue in the participants individually when they in their further *thinking* about the "thing" will alongside their own perspective of the "thing" make use of the interlocutor's perspective presented at the *action*.

Arendt (1958, p. 57 & 1978A, p. 20) explains that all persons will possess a unique perspective on a "thing" because they will approach the "thing" from their unique positions. Hence I can conclude that people's "perspectives" are dependent on two entities: the "thing" itself and the person's position. In Figure 3 I illustrate the connection between the "thing", a participating person's position and the person's perspective.
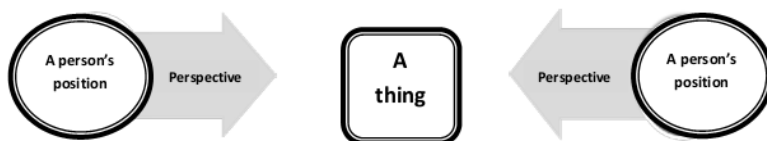
Figure 3. An illustration of how a person's position, perspective and thing are linked in an Arendtian framework.

I will now describe the two entities of the "thing" and the people's positions as they shape a person's perspectives on a "thing".

4.2.1 The thing

Before embarking on describing the concept of "thing" from Arendt's main works I will first explain something of how Arendt uses her terms. I find it important to stress that Arendt is very fluid with the use of some of her terms. We see for example that she often uses various terms for the same phenomenon which illuminate its various aspects, but without always defining the subtle differences between these terms. Compared to Arendt I am more rigid in my use of terms. A case in point is that whereas Arendt uses "thing", "object"

and "certain matter" for the same phenomenon, I choose to use mostly "thing" because it accentuates my existential-phenomenological framework for my investigation of how something concrete has played out in people's everyday lives.

When reading through *The Human Condition (1958)* and *The Life of the Mind (1978)* it may appear that Arendt uses the term "thing" about both material and non-material things.

In relation to material things Arendt (1978A, p. 19) makes a further distinction between dead and living things. Dead things are, for example, stones and bridges. Living things are, for example, animals and people. Even though Arendt (1978B, p. 21) in her introductory comments to her explanation of living things includes both animals and humans, Arendt quickly leaves the animals in her explanation and only concentrates on humans because according to Arendt it is only humans who can act politically (Wright, 2000, p. 154). Even though Arendt labels humans as "living things" I can mention that she also labels humans in other ways, e.g."living beings" and "organic beings". It is however important to emphasise that when Arendt investigates how humans as material things appear to each other she investigates <u>both the material and the non-material aspects</u> of their appearances (I will describe this in depth later on).

Arendt's use of the term things to refer to non-material things is somewhat harder to explain since Arendt is not so explicit about this; therefore I will offer an explanation by presenting two examples from her writings.

The first example is that in *The Human Condition*, Arendt (1958, p.19) maintains that people have the ability to produce three kinds of things: works, deeds and words. Works refers to material things but it is obvious that deeds and uttered words are not material things. However, in an Arendtian line of thinking it is important to emphasise that the non-material deeds and words have arisen because material people have acted together on a material earth.

Another example of a non-material thing is in *Eichmann in Jerusalem* (1963), where Arendt writes:

> Every act that has once made its appearance and has been recorded in the history of mankind stays with mankind as a potentiality long after its actuality has become a <u>thing</u> of the past.' (Underlining added). Arendt (1963, p. 272)

In this quote we see that Arendt uses the term thing to refer to an act once carried out and recorded in the history of mankind. It is obvious that such an act is a non-material thing. But again I find it important to emphasise that the

act and its recording in history as a non-material thing have their origin in something once carried out by material people on a material earth.

With these two examples of Arendt's non-material things I have argued that non-material things originate in something that has physically happened in the world we live in. This is due to my conclusion in Section 4.2 that Arendt in a Heideggerian way urges that our *thinking* over our *actions* with other people always must originate in what has actually happened on the Earth.[8]

However, we must not think that Arendt claims that we should only focus on the material aspects of things in order to grasp their being. Arendt rather takes a phenomenological stance when she states that we can never reach the being of things by only investigating their material qualities, because the being of things is intertwined with their appearance to us. In *The Life of the Mind* Arendt (1978A, p. 20) writes that things' 'being and appearing coincide' in this world we live in. In the following paragraphs I will unfold what Arendt means by the coincidence of the being and appearing of things.

Arendt (1978A, p. 20) remarks herself that it is unusual to focus on how the being and appearing of things coincide, because in history and philosophy "appearing" and "being" are most commonly perceived as two separate entities. Furthermore, "being" and "appearing" are normally considered as contradicting each other. Arendt explains that because appearing has been considered as less noble, scientists and philosophers have discarded appearing and have only dealt with a thing's being. But Arendt writes: 'The modern science, in its relentless search for <u>the</u> truth behind <u>mere</u> appearances will never be able to resolve this predicament…because [the scientist] himself belongs to the world of appearances' (The underlining is Arendt's accentuation) (Arendt 1978A, p. 26). Arendt thus emphasises in this quote that scientists in their research aimed at finding the truth of a thing can never succeed in totally eliminating how the thing appears to them, because the scientists themselves are bound to the condition of our world as a world of appearances.

Arendt takes the consequence of her phenomenological observation of our world as an appearing world and says therefore: 'Since we live in an <u>appearing</u> world, is it not much more plausible that the relevant and the meaningful in this world of ours should be located precisely on the surface?' (The underlin-

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[8] I must underline that Arendt does not deny that purely non-material things can exist on the Earth; indeed she writes about people's *thinking* on non-material things at some length. But Arendt (1978, p.110) underlines that when people use language to *think* about purely non-material things, it can be observed that language often uses metaphors which in fact always originate in something concrete.

ing is Arendt's accentuation) (1978A, p. 27). Arendt further continues from the assumption that the relevant and meaningful in this world of ours is on the surface, stressing that first and foremost we should not search for a thing's true being but rather examine the coincidence of the thing's appearance and being. It is also important to underline that there is not only one appearance of a thing. Arendt works from the assumption that 'every topic has as many sides and can appear in as many perspectives as there are people to discuss it' Arendt (2005, p. 167). I find it important to stress that in the quote Arendt implies that everyone can exceed their one-sided approach to a topic by sharing their perspectives on the thing with one another. Here we must keep in mind, as I previously have argued, that it is only when people share their perspectives with each other in a common activity that the activity can be labelled an *action*.

With regard to the entity of thing in Figure 3 I have explained that the concept can refer to both material and non-material things. I further stressed that it is important in my Arendtian existential-phenomenological framework that non-material things originate in something material. This does not however imply that the most interesting aspect of a thing is its material origin. Arendt rather stresses that the interesting aspect is what happens between the thing and the people to whom the thing appears.

In my research I am investigating what happens when a school professional receives a consulting session from a social worker on issues in a vulnerable child's lifeworld. In accordance with my strong desire for an existential-phenomenological perspective, these issues must originate in something that has happened, is happening or is about to happen physically in the children's lifeworlds. Following the terminology in this section I would argue that the issues must originate in "things". It also follows from this section that the school professionals and the social workers will each take a unique perspective to the things in relation to which "position" they adopt to the things.

4.2.2 Position

In this section I will demonstrate that in Arendt's writings I find three components in her concept of "position": a person's physical position on the Earth, the present conditions a person is subjected to and the person's earlier life experiences.

Firstly, Arendt (1958, p. 57) states that "position" refers to the individual's physical position from which they approach a *thing* in an *action* with other peo-

ple. Arendt (1958, p. 57) stresses that such a physical position is always unique because the same physical position can never be taken by more than one person at the same time! It is obvious that this component only applies when the thing is a material thing. However I would like to stress that when people approach a non-material thing together, each of them is also in a unique physical position as they talk together. One's physical position will inevitably mean that one hears people close by better than those farther away – particularly if there are many people involved. Hence indirectly a person's physical position can also play a part when several people together approach a non-material thing.

Secondly, in *The Life of the Mind* Arendt states that "position" also includes the present conditions a person is subjected to (1978C, p. 258). Arendt does not precisely define what she means by such conditions but from my overall reading of her works I conclude that "conditions" refer both to persons' bodily and non-bodily conditions. Bodily conditions would include e.g. a person's age and gender, while non-bodily conditions would include e.g. a person's current job.

Thirdly, in Miðskarð (submitted) I have described how Arendt explains that every individual has a collection of unique life experiences which will influence how the person adopts a position to a thing in an *action* with others.

Two of the components mentioned can change every time the person speaks and hence the person's perspective to the thing will alter as well. The first component (the person's physical position) changes every time the person moves to a new physical position and thus his or her perspective to the thing will also change. The third component (previous life experiences) implies that every new experience in a person's life adds a new aspect to his or her position and therefore the perspective constantly changes as long as the person has new experiences in his or her life.

It is important to emphasise that not only does a person's position change constantly, but also that in every situation a person can choose between various positions they want to adopt to a thing. However, it is crucial that in the choice a person cannot flee from his or her temporary physical position on the Earth, present life conditions and earlier life experiences. But even though a person is limited by these given features, Arendt (1978A, p. 37) argues that a person always has the possibility to make a choice on how to use these three components to adopt a position to a thing in an *action* with others. Arendt underlines however that a choice is not straightforward because of the web of relations we are born into:

choices are determined by various factors; many of them are predetermined by the culture into which we are born - they are made because we wish to please others. (Arendt, 1978A, p. 36).

Hence Arendt (1978A, p. 36) argues that individual persons must be critical towards their own culture when they are making a choice.

Furthermore, Arendt (1978A, p. 34ff) very boldly argues that in their choices people need to rely on their *thinking* instead of their feelings in a political conversation. With a quote from Plato's *Theaetus* Arendt (Arendt, 1978A., p. 35) maintains that feelings should not influence our choices: 'The emotions are glorious when they stay in the depths, but not when they come forth into the day and wish to become of the essence and to rule'. However, Arendt (1978A, p. 34ff) does not argue for people to suppress their feelings but rather urges that feelings are dealt with in the private realm before they are allowed to enter the public realm of an *action* with other people (Arendt, 1958, p. 50). Hence in *actions* people should let their *thinking* rule over their feelings. Arendt is aware that she opposes a common conviction in the modern age that people must include their feelings in their *actions* with each other, but Arendt (1958, p. 50) firmly states from an essential phenomenological stance that 'our common conviction that what is inside ourselves, our "inner life", is more relevant to what we "are", than what appears on the outside, is an illusion' (Arendt's inverted commas but my underlining).

Arendt (1978A, p. 36) demonstrates her urge to hold back emotions with an example of a person who feels afraid but chooses instead to appear courageous. Arendt says:

> The courageous person is not one whose soul lacks [fear] or who can overcome it once and for all, but one who has decided that fear is not what he wants to show. Courage can then become second nature or habit but not in the sense that fearlessness replaces fear, as though it, too, could become an emotion. Arendt (1978A, p. 36).

Arendt continues after this quote to show that she is aware that a person's suppression of fear can also be due to an unconscious choice, e.g. due to upbringing, but she emphasises that this is not the kind of holding back of emotions which she promotes.

When Arendt for *action* does not want people to act from feelings, which come from inside their bodies, but rather to use their thoughts, then one can argue that thoughts also come from within our bodies, because it is a fact that people think with their brains and utter words with their bodily speech organs. Arendt maintains that thoughts obviously are uttered in words by our individ-

ual bodily apparatus but she claims that our thoughts and words originate in our *actions* amongst other people and not primarily in our brains. But even though our *thinking* originates in our *actions* with others, Arendt still argues that an individual's *thinking* needs to be done in solitude because individuals also need to bring their natality[9] into play in their *thinking*. Then we could argue that in the *thinking* activity people are turning themselves inwards. But Arendt again opposes this and says that when a person is *thinking*, the person is using his or her own natality-marked perspective to argue with the others' perspectives. Arendt (1958, p. 525) says 'Cato was [right] when he said: *Numquam se plus agere quam nihil cum agent, numquam minus solum esse quam cum solus esset*—"Never is he more active than when he does nothing, never is he less alone than when he is by himself"'.

I can now conclude that according to Arendt people need to use their *thinking* in order to choose the position to adopt to a thing in *actions* with others. I have further argued in this section that the chosen position will always provide them with a unique perspective on the thing. This unique perspective is grounded in how one in one's unique natality chooses to position oneself in terms of one's unique physical position on the earth, present life conditions and unique collection of earlier life experiences. Hence I can state that my definition shares many similarities with that of Benhabib (1992, p. 10) who, influenced by Arendt, defines a person's "position" in terms of the person's disposition, endowment and life history as well as the person's needs and limitations.

4.3 Limitations in people's perspectives

Previously I have shown that Arendt maintains that every person has a unique perspective on every given thing he or she approaches with others in an *action* activity. Since perspectives on a thing approached are so unique, one may be led to believe that Arendt implies that all perspectives are totally subjective approaches to the thing and that this entails that the subjective approaches cannot be exceeded. Hence one can be led to regard Arendt as an extreme

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[9] In Chapter 2 I explained that people's "natality" was given to them through their birth on the Earth, and also that "natality" refers to each time people existentially insert themselves into the ongoing situations they find themselves in on their life journey.

post-modernist who rejects the ideal of impartiality. But Borren (2009, p. 38ff) proposes that Arendt does not reject the ideal of impartiality, but Arendt rather rethinks impartiality as situated, as I will explain below.

Within an Arendtian line of thinking, there is more to a person's perspective than simply its subjectivity. Rather Arendt (1978A, p. 49) argues that in every perspective there is an 'indication of realness'[10]. But Arendt's phrase 'indication of realness' shows that there are also limitations within every person's perspective on a certain *thing*. Arendt (1978A, p. 20ff) strongly urges that people need to exceed these limitations to get into contact with the realness in their perspectives.

Arendt explains that are two kinds of limitations in every individual person's perspective: the in-authentic and the authentic limitations. I will now describe each of these two limitations and also how Arendt explains that they can be exceeded in order to better reach the reality of the thing approached.

Arendt explains that a thing's inauthentic limitations refer to the fact that the thing most likely will appear to every individual person with illusions and errors. For Arendt it is crucial that people get these illusions and errors corrected.

Arendt's illusions refer e.g. to the way in which people's individual emotions and upbringing can cheat them in the perspective they take on the thing. Arendt (1958, p. 255) demonstrates that illusions can be corrected by striving to keep a hold on the earthly conditions in which the thing appears. Furthermore, this can be done by focusing on our lived experiences with the thing. Hence we should be able to minimise how illusions have an effect on how the thing appears to us.

Arendt's errors refer e.g. to how one's senses and previous wrong teaching can cheat one in one's perspective on a thing. Arendt says that such errors can be corrected by

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[10] In an Arendtian line of thinking it is important to differentiate between the <u>truth</u> about a *thing* and the <u>reality</u> of a *thing*. Arendt (1990) claims that 'absolute truth, which would be the same for all people and therefore unrelated, independent of each person's existence, cannot exist for mortals'. The quote illustrates that even though the truth cannot be found Arendt does not however give up a search for the nature of things but Arendt speaks about "the reality of things" instead of "the truth about a thing". For this Arendt says that she seeks inspiration from Socrates who wanted to arouse a sense of truth in every person. Arendt (1990) maintains that Socrates does this through his maieutics. Socrates assumes that the world opens uniquely to every person and in this opening of the world is a sense of the reality in every individual's perspective.

[1.] changing my location, [2.] drawing closer to what appears, or [3.] by improving my organs with the help of tools or implements, or [4.] by using my imagination to take other perspectives into account. Arendt, 1978B, p. 38 (numbers added).

If we look at Arendt's four ways to correct the errors in one's perspective, it appears that the first three ways can readily be carried out by the individual person him or herself. We also see that all the first three ways imply that people themselves optimise their sense experience. This may sound somewhat strange to us because we think that our senses are just senses and they cannot give us such illusions. But for Arendt it is crucial that people do not move too quickly away from their sense experiences towards sheer mental activity on a thing; she maintains that people need as long as necessary to investigate the impression their senses give them of a thing. I think that Arendt's stress on the importance of our senses must be seen in relation to my conclusion from Section 4.1, which was that our perception of a thing needs to relate as much as possible to our observations of the thing in its context in order to oppose a world-alienation tendency in our present modern age.

The fourth way to amend the errors in one's perspective is that one uses one's imagination to take other people's perspectives into account in one's *thinking* about the thing. This presupposes that the person has a sense of other people's perspectives and therefore must have participated in interactions with other people in order to do this.

Although in the quote above Arendt mentions this fourth way as using imagination as a way to reduce the inauthentic errors, Arendt really brings the dynamics in this fourth way into play when she explains in which way the authentic limitation in a person's perspective can be exceeded.

Arendt says that a thing's authentic limitation refers to the fact that although an individual person's perspective is cleansed of errors and illusions it is still limited because the person can only approach the thing fully from his or her own position. The individual therefore needs to gain access to other people's perspectives to the thing approached to arrive at a more holistic understanding of it.

According to my conclusion in Section 4.2.2 every person's position and hence his or her perspective on a thing is always totally unique. As I have argued previously, when Arendt states that individual persons' perspectives are so unique, one may wonder if it is possible for an individual person to understand other persons' perspectives on a thing. But Arendt (1978A, p. 45ff) says in *The Life of the Mind* that this is possible! She argues that it is possible because

of our "commonness" as humans. In Miðskarð (submitted) I described how Arendt thinks that our "commonness" is rooted in a basic condition for humans, which is the Earth we share with one another. I also explained how this basic condition of the Earth further provides all people with five other conditions: life, natality, mortality, worldliness and plurality.

Arendt says: 'though each single object appears in a different perspective to each individual, the context in which it appears is the same for the whole species.' (Arendt, 1978A, p. 50). Arendt says in this quote that although people have different perspectives on a thing there exists a common context for all the people who approach it. The context is obviously first of all the physical context in which the thing appears. But connecting the context to the broader picture in Arendt's way of thinking, it follows that that this context is the Earth itself with the five other conditions mentioned above.

Thus even though all perspectives are totally unique, they can be exchanged and understood because of our common condition of a shared Earth with its sub-conditions.

In this section I have described how according to Arendt people need to exceed both the inauthentic and authentic limitations in their perspective on a thing. Firstly, individuals need to limit the errors and illusions that are intertwined with how the thing appears to them. Secondly, individuals need to let their perspective on the thing meet other person's perspectives and from this meeting with other perspectives individuals can make use of other people's perspectives on the thing in their own *thinking* about the thing. Arendt claims that by exceeding these two limitations people can reach a better understanding of a common thing.

On an overall level, Borren (2009, p. 94-95) argues that this Arendtian process of exceeding the limitations in individual persons' perspectives can be explained as similar to the process in Gadamer's version of the hermeneutical circle. Borren's argument for this is that both Gadamer and Arendt agree and make use of Heidegger's startling thoughts on a hermeneutical phenomenology in *Zein und Zeit* (Borren, 2009). But I would like to add to Borren's argument that Arendt's process of exceeding the limitations in an individual person's perspectives mobilises the person's fellow actors much more than Heidegger and Gadamer do in their version of the hermeneutical circle. With this addition to Borren's claim I will explain Arendt's version of the hermeneutical circle in the following three steps. Firstly, individuals must optimise their perspectives as much as they can on their own. Hence the process of the hermeneutical circle is embarked upon, which continues when the individual,

secondly, lets his or her perspective interact with other persons' perspectives in an *action* around the thing. From the interaction of the different perspectives the individual thirdly needs in solitude to carry out some *thinking* about the thing and then further amends and widens the perception of the thing. In this way the hermeneutical circle gets a specific Arendtian interpersonal dimension but it still shares Gadamer's and Heidegger's wish for an ongoing improvement in a person's understanding of a phenomenon.

As the previous paragraph shows it is crucial for Arendt that people meet together to let their perspectives on a thing enrich one another. If people do not meet and share perspectives, then Arendt fears that our common world will dissolve and then she postulates that it is far too easy for technical solutions in a constrained manner to come to rule what goes on between us humans. Arendt (1958, p. 58) fears that this is about to happen in our modern world because of two tendencies in our modern times (the modern world/times is for Arendt the newest period of the modern age). The first tendency is that people are becoming so isolated from one another that when they are together they have difficulty in presenting their own perspectives to one another and similarly have problems in understanding other people's perspectives as they do not frequently meet other people. The second tendency is that when an event in our modern times forces us to reveal our perspectives to each other, we all tend to adopt the same perspective on a thing.

But even though Arendt believes that there are the two tendencies working against the sharing and understanding of people's different perspectives, she still believes there is hope. Arendt maintains that in every interaction there are incidents where the different perspectives surface which Arendt urges us to seize (Hull, 2002, p. vii). This is precisely the goal of my research, where I am investigating how incidents with clear interactional perspectives in a consulting session influence the school professional's individual perspectives. In order to conduct my research with my Arendtian approach I need therefore to have a detailed understanding of the incidents in people's encounters where their perspectives interact.

4.4 Interaction between perspectives

In this section I will seek a deeper understanding of how Arendt conceptualises how *actions* are played out where the participants' perspectives are interacting with one another. This will lead me to investigate how Arendt conceptual-

ises the effects of the interaction between the perspectives in the *actions* on the participants' subsequent *thinking*.

It is however difficult to find anything comprehensive in Arendt's authorship on this subject. There are indications that Arendt was about to broach this subject towards the end of her life, but that her sudden death cut short this work. Because there is no comprehensive account of this subject in her authorship I will use various passages from different parts of her late authorship, and similarly I will use her rough notes on *judgement* which were found after her death in 1975. The reason for using Arendt's notes on *judgement* is that Arendt argues that in order to present one's *judgement* on a thing to other people one needs to have insight into the others' perspectives.

In the coming presentation we will see that Socrates is central in Arendt's conceptualising of incidents where the participants' perspectives interact with one another and her conceptualisation of the effects these have on the participants' subsequent *thinking*. Even though Arendt sees Socrates' contribution as crucial I wish to stress that Arendt (1990, p. 440) criticises the fact that many of Socrates' conversation partners went away with no perspectives at all. Arendt's goal is rather for every person to leave an *action* with a greater awareness of his or her own perspective on a thing and an expanded insight into the others' perspectives.

After these introductory comments I will now embark upon my investigation of how Arendt conceptualises incidents where participants' perspectives interact with one another and how she conceptualises the ways in which this affects the participants. I will begin with an article which is called *Philosophy and Politics*, first published in 1954. Arendt amended this article constantly, and it was posthumously published in a revised edition in 1990 by Jerome Kohn who had full access to Arendt's abandoned notes and papers.

In this article (version 1990) Arendt criticises the way "truth" has become so crucial and rigid in people's political interaction with one another in our modern age. Arendt comes up with an alternative way for people to interact more politically. In this alternative way of interaction Arendt rather seeks "the reality of things" instead of "the truth of the things", because as Arendt (1968, p. 251) says 'the mere telling of facts, leads to no action whatever; it even tends, under normal circumstances, toward the acceptance of things as they are.'

Arendt (1990, p. 434) demonstrates that a true dialogue, in which people share their plural perspectives with each other, is characterised by not needing a conclusion in order to be meaningful. This does not imply that such a conversation cannot come to a conclusion, but that it is not necessary. According

to the guidelines for the municipality's collaboration between the social services departments and schools this is exactly what characterises the consulting sessions which take place between social workers and school professionals: it is an informal conversation, where there is no requirement for any particular conclusion or intervention. Therefore this Arendtian conversation is of high relevance to my Arendtian existential-phenomenological research methodology.

Arendt (1990, p. 434) draws upon inspiration from Socrates and Aristotle to describe such a true dialogue that needs no conclusion. Arendt describes this true dialogue by seeking inspiration from a conversation between friends. Arendt (1990, p. 435) phenomenologically characterises friends' conversations as primarily concentrated around a thing of common interest. Arendt writes that conversations with the starting point of a common thing imply that the friends will have even more in common after their conversation. She says that such a friend's conversation becomes 'a little world of its own' where the participants view each other as equal partners. But even though such conversations initiate a common world in which equal partners operate, Arendt (1990, p. 436) firmly stresses that the people involved must never take the same perspective. Arendt (1990, p. 436) says: 'the equalization in friendship does not of course mean that the friends become the same or equal to each other, but rather that they become equal partners in a common world—that they together constitute a community.'

Arendt continues by claiming that not only do friends interact in this common world with their distinctive perspectives, they similarly respect the fact that there is a reality in their friends' perspectives as well as in their own. Because of this mutual respect of the realness in each perspective, Arendt says that friends have an urge to try to understand how reality reveals itself in the others' perspectives. Therefore each participant must speak as the world opens itself up to him or her.

I interpret this description of a friend's conversation as a roadmap for incidents where people let their perspectives interact with one another. Therefore I will apply this to my research on the consulting session the social workers give school professionals on issues in vulnerable children's lifeworlds.

In the following paragraphs I will first point out that a crucial condition for cultivating such incidents is that there is no hierarchy being played out between the two professionals, but that the professionals regard each other as equal partners with distinctive perspectives. In Miðskarð (2008) I demonstrated that earlier Danish research has demonstrated that there sometimes exists a

hierarchy between the participating professionals in an interprofessional work setting, and more specifically that there often arises a discussion of different interpretations of confidentiality which frequently reveals a hidden hierarchy. Even though two professionals are equal partners it is important that they reject the inclination to take the same perspective; each participant must speak from his or her own perspective. But then the question is: how does a person know and present his or her own perspective?

Arendt (1990, p. 437) claims that inspiration on how to know and present one's own perspective can be sought from one of the insights which Socrates relied on for his majeutic conversation. This insight is a phrase from the Delphic Apollo "*gnothi sauthon*" which means "know thyself".

Arendt explains that 'know thyself' implies that it is only individual people themselves who see their perspective from the inside and therefore it follows that it is only an individual person who has an obligation to consider and exceed possible limitations in his or her own perspective (see Section 4.3). After optimising one's perspective, one must trust that one has a unique perspective on a thing from a position which no one else can take up. Therefore one has to cautiously <u>speak</u> out one's perspective to others in order for others and oneself to investigate it.

When all the participants are cautiously speaking out their perspectives to each other, they then have a possibility to understand each other's perspectives. But in order to truly understand another's perspective in the best way Arendt again seeks inspiration from Socrates. Arendt (1990, p. 434) stresses that Socrates was very cautious of <u>asking</u> questions to his fellowmen in order to try to understand their "*dokei moi*". "*Dokei moi*" means how a thing appears to an individual person. On page 437 Arendt once again makes a point of the importance of asking questions in order to understand the other person's perspectives. The goal of asking questions is to enable one person to really grasp another's perspective instead of assuming that he or she knows what the other is saying just as he or she may presume to know the other as a person. The Arendt scholar Knauer (1980, p. 303) further describes this figuring out of others' perspectives in terms of the following description 'I can only understand the other's viewpoint so long as I view him as an actor, as a subject rather than an object'.

Arendt (1982, p. 40) underlines that another central feature in trying to understand the other's perspective on a thing is to constantly be <u>listening</u> carefully to the other's words (Arendt, 1982, p. 40). In the context of Section 4.2 this means that when we listen carefully to other people in order to try to under-

stand their perspectives we need not regard the other as passively steered by emotions and earlier life experiences. Rather we need to listen carefully to the ways other people actively choose to approach the thing which gives them their unique perspective on the thing.

To sum up, incidents where perspectives interact have three central features. Firstly, every person needs to strive to be authentic towards his or her own perspective in <u>speaking</u> to others. Secondly, the participants need to be <u>asking</u> each other questions in order to get a feeling for their distinct perspectives. Thirdly, every person needs to be <u>listening</u> carefully to how the others are actively choosing to adopt a position on the thing.

In Chapter 2 I described that after *action* the participating persons need in solitude to be able to represent each others' perspectives in order to conduct *thinking* about the thing. Arendt says that after such *thinking* the persons will have the opportunity to speak about the thing with an enlarged mind. I will now in depth describe the dynamics of the *thinking* and how this *thinking* involving others' perspectives enlarges the person's perspective on the thing.

In order to describe the dynamics of *thinking* I will return to the article *Philosophy and Politics* where Arendt (1990, p. 440) uses another of Socrates' assumptions for his majeutics. This is a statement which Plato often cites and is frequently echoed in Aristotle's writings: 'It is better to be in disagreement with the whole world than, being one, to be in disagreement with myself'. Further Arendt (1990, p. 440) says that there is an opportunity of plurality in every individual. It is not very clear what Arendt means by this statement because plurality is normally used to refer to two or more people gathered together in an *action*. In my Arendtian existential-phenomenological framework I interpret this statement as implying that that for every specific thing each person brings representations of others' perspectives on the same thing. I further assume that this presence of other people's perspectives is not in itself a *thinking* activity, since *thinking* does not only imply a person having insight into other people's perspectives but rather a person making use of his or her own duality (the 'me-and-myself'); this refers to the fact that a person with this duality can conduct a conversation with him or herself. Therefore I assume that for this *thinking* formed by duality a person must make use of his or her representations of the other people's perspectives on the thing. Arendt says:

> The more people's positions I have present in my mind while I am pondering on a given issue, and the better <u>I can imagine how I would feel and think if I were in their place</u>, the stronger will be my capacity for representative thinking

and the more valid my conclusions, my opinion. (The underlining is my accentuation). Arendt (1968, p. 241).

This quote may lead us to believe that Arendt implies that one needs to strive to reach empathy with other people, so that one can better imagine oneself in the other's place. But Arendt (1978C, p. 257) strongly underlines that it is a misunderstanding to assume that a person needs to reach empathy with others in order to conduct a *thinking* with their perspectives. Arendt says:

> this process of representation does not blindly adopt the actual views of those who stand somewhere else, and hence look upon the world from a different perspective; this is a question neither of empathy, as though I tried to be or to feel like somebody else, nor of counting noses and joining a majority but of being and thinking in my own identity where actually I am not. Arendt (1968, p. 241).

Lebuau (2004) interprets this quote of 'being and thinking in my own identity where actually I am not' as how Arendt formulates the political aim of representation: not blind submission to the thoughts and feelings of others (in which one subjectivity is displaced by another, in which the self is lost in the image) but an opening of the mind, of the 'I', to what, and who, it is not (Arendt, 1993: 241). Similarly Disch (1994, p. 159) explains this as 'visiting other people's positions'. Disch (1994, p. 159) argues that during a visit to other people's positions you must leave your own position in order to get as near as possible to the other people's positions. Then after the visit you must strive to imagine that you are in their position and that you can see the *thing* with their perspectives. Disch (1994, p. 158) says: 'In order to tell yourself the story of an event from an unfamiliar position, you have to position yourself there <u>as yourself</u>' (The underlining is Disch's accentuation).

Arendt further describes this issue of "not leaving one's own identity" in *Men in Dark Times* from 1968: 'Greeks learned to understand - <u>not to understand one another as individual persons, but to look upon the same world from one another's position,</u> to see the same in very different and frequently opposing aspects.' (The underlining is my accentuation) Arendt (1968, p. 51). In this quote we see that Arendt stresses that she does not want us to assume that we can understand another person in that person's whole identity. But we can and must try to see the same thing from the other person's position in our own *thinking*.

This point about trying to see a thing from another person's position is likewise implied in Arendt's faculty of *judgement*. In her conceptualisation of *judgement* Arendt primarily draws upon Kant's *Critique of the Judgement*. Pahuus

(2003, p. 74) argues that Arendt interprets the most important thread in Kant's characterisation of the faculty of *judgement* to be the ability to put ourselves in the position of other persons. Kant called this doing an "enlargement of one's mind". It is worth noticing that Arendt (1978C) maintains that Kant did not live long enough to develop this subject extensively. Arendt (1978C) further argues that this thread in Kant's authorship has a totally different character than in some of his earlier works. Arendt stresses that when Kant urges us to put ourselves in the <u>positions of others</u> it must not be understood as the early Kant's <u>position of the other.</u> Instead Arendt rather wants us to put ourselves in <u>the multiple positions of others,</u> which attitude Arendt argues is present in Kant's late writings. Therefore Arendt in opposition to Jürgen Habermas and John Rawls argues for making a sharp distinction between Kant's early moral philosophy and his later thoughts about judgement. In their use of Kant both Habermas and Rawl aim at one common negotiated consensus between several persons whereas Arendt rather wants a community of people to make a platform that can host many different perspectives at the same time (Disch, 1994, p. 145).

Looking back at this section we now see a characterisation of the incidents where various perspectives interact in conversations. I have previously argued that this is a central part of an Arendtian *action*. Arendt claims that such incidents are present in every conversation even under the toughest conditions. Arendt urges us to seize these incidents.

I will now sum up this characterisation in my example of a social worker giving a consulting session to a school professional who is concerned about a pupil.

Incidents in consulting sessions where the perspectives truly interact are primarily moments in the conversation where the two participants are not striving to find a conclusion. The incidents are further characterised by the social worker and the school professional regarding each other as equal partners without however giving in to the temptation to take on the same perspective on the things being discussed. Rather each of the two professionals needs to strive to be authentic towards their own perspective on the thing. Being authentic means that they clean out the errors and illusions in their perspectives and speak as honestly as possible about how the thing looks from their adopted position on the thing. Furthermore, they need to try to understand their interlocutor's perspectives from their position. This is done by asking each other questions. Another feature in seeking an understanding of their partners' perspectives is to carefully listen to how the others actively choose to speak

about the thing.

After such activity the people involved need in solitude to try to use their representations of the other's perspective to conduct a *thinking* with themselves. In this *thinking* it is crucial that one does not try to behave as if one is the other person, but rather needs to be able to position oneself as oneself in the other's position. When a person makes use of the representation of the other's perspective in the dialogue with him or herself, that person will inevitably enlarge his or her own perspective on the thing being discussed.

4.5 Method

In this section with its sub-sections, I will describe my data collection and analytical method in the Danish fieldwork. The method is inspired by the previous methodological sections of this chapter. I will not describe here the method I used for the English focus group interview, as this will be found at the beginning of Chapter 10.

Marshall & Rossmann (2006, p. 98) state that qualitative researchers usually first enter the field sites with a broad scope of interest and loosely designed methods. During the entire period of data collection, the scope and the research design constantly sharpen more and more. This applies very well to my research method. After having carried out my first pilot studies I significantly adjusted my initial focus and research design. Even in the final period of data collection I made small adjustments to my observational and interview techniques.

4.5.1 The central idea in my Arendt-inspired existential-phenomenological method

Alvesson & Skøldberg (1994, p. 95ff) argue that phenomenologically inspired research needs to start from how a selected phenomenon plays out in people's everyday lives. Thereafter the goal is to try to understand the selected phenomenon at a deeper level.

My selected phenomenon is how school professionals' perspectives on vulnerable children are influenced by their participation in consulting sessions with social workers. In order to research this I need therefore according to Alvesson & Skøldberg to begin by observing actual everyday occurrences with a phenomenologically inspired method. Thereafter I need to conduct a phe-

nomenological investigation of the occurrences of the phenomenon in order to arrive at a deeper understanding of it.

I find it important to reiterate that in Sections 4.1 and 4.2 I demonstrated that the phenomenological understanding sought differs according to whether it is an approach primarily based upon the central ideas of Husserl, Heidegger or Arendt. The primary goal of a Husserl-inspired approach is to study people's abstract intentional understanding of a phenomenon, while the aim of a Heideggerian and Arendtian existential-phenomenological approach is to keep focused on people's meaning-making of an observed phenomenon combined with how the phenomenon and the persons actually appear in the existential conditions of the world we live in. Therefore compared to Husserl's approach, that of Heidegger and Arendt stresses that people's perceptions and the phenomenon researched need to be solidly embedded in the existential conditions the Earth provides us with. Because Heidegger's and Arendt's focus is strongly linked to actual lived experience, I have chosen to use Arendt's concept of a "thing" instead of the concept of "phenomenon". I also demonstrated that using Arendt's rather than Heidegger's theorisations as my primary source gives the existential-phenomenological approach a further emphasis on the importance of taking into account plural people's perceptions of the thing researched.

After having clarified the focus of my Arendt-inspired existential-phenomenological research method approach, in the coming section I will explain more specifically the implication of the Arendtian existential-phenomenological principles in my research method.

4.5.2 Two principles for my Arendt-inspired existential-phenomenological method

In Section 4.1, I methodologically investigated Arendt's criticism of Husserl's third mode of perceiving. From this investigation I clarified two overall principles for my Arendt-inspired existential-phenomenological research method based on how existential phenomenology generally conceptualises people's approach to things. Firstly, researchers must investigate people's experiences of concrete things present in the conditions the Earth provides us with. Secondly, researchers need constantly to qualify their perceptions of these concrete things in discussions with others. Only after these two steps is it possible to form general considerations about the incidents investigated.

The first principle in Section 4.1 implied for my research method that I

could not just start asking the school professionals on a general level about their experiences of how it had changed their perspectives to speak to a social worker. Following this principle I instead needed to ask questions about concrete incidents in the consulting sessions. In order to be able to conduct effective interviews in relation to concrete incidents, I decided to observe consulting sessions between social workers and school professionals.

My method therefore consisted of two steps: I) Observing a consulting session between a social worker and a school professional II) Semi-structured interviews with the professionals involved. With this method I am following Flick (2007, p. 89) who writes that the best qualitative research into people's everyday life experiences is a combination of observations and subsequent interviews based on the observations.

According to my second principle in Section 4.2 I constantly needed to qualify my research in discussions with others. This principle was fulfilled in that I presented and discussed my analysis of the interviews with my supervisors, colleagues and other PhD students at Roskilde University and Leeds Metropolitan University.

4.5.3 My observation technique

As explained above I decided to observe actual consulting sessions to enable a better focus on concrete experiences during my semi-structured qualitative interviews with the professionals involved. In this section I will first describe the role the observations played in my research method. Secondly, I will describe how I as an observer approached my field sites and how I conducted the observations of the consulting sessions. Thirdly, I will outline how my observations of consulting sessions helped me to set up a broad agenda for the subsequent interviews.

Aspers (2009) maintains that when observation is used in a phenomenological study it differs from the way observations are used in the conventional anthropological tradition. Aspers (2009) explains that conventional anthropological researchers strive to give the best account of the observed situation, while for the phenomenological researcher the goal is only to use the observation 'as a basis for posing questions to those she observes about what is going on'. According to this quote the focus in phenomenological observations is more on the different actors' accounts of what was happening than the observer's account of what was happening during an observed incident. Even though the observations are not the most central part of phenomenological research, As-

pers (2009) still claims that the researchers' observations are extremely important for the subsequent interviews because the researchers as newcomers to a field will ask questions about things the actors take for granted. A similar line of argumentation of the role of observation in a phenomenological study can be found in Creswell (2007, p. 51ff) and Polkinghorne (1989, p. 46). Hence I primarily used my observations of the consulting sessions as a basis to conduct the subsequent interviews with the school professional and the social worker respectively.

I explained in Chapter 1 that I have conducted my observations and interviews in relation to the recurring activity of school professionals receiving consulting sessions from social workers on concerns they have for certain pupils. Likewise I described that I have carried out my fieldwork in a Danish municipality which has embarked upon an enhanced collaboration between their social services departments and schools. The collaboration has implied that there is a social worker available at each school two days per week. The aim of the consulting sessions is to support the school professionals in their work with vulnerable children within a prevention and early intervention line of thinking.

In order to collect data for my study I carried out fieldwork at two schools in this municipality. I chose to carry out fieldwork at two schools because I could only carry out observations on two days per week when the social worker was present there and my fieldwork period was limited to three months which included a long Easter holiday break. The two schools were similar in size and were located in the same part of this municipality.

Before I began my observations of the consulting sessions at the two schools, I briefly presented myself and my research at staff meetings in both schools. I then had a meeting with each of the two social workers. At these meetings I briefly presented the purpose of my research, my research method, ethical considerations and my promise to protect the professionals' and children's anonymity. I then asked for their consent to observe consulting sessions where a school professional sought advice from them on a concern about a pupil. After they had both given me their consent, I arranged with the social workers that when a school professional asked for a consulting session, the social workers would ask the school professional if I could contact him or her to inquire whether I could observe the session. With the name and contact details of the social workers and school professionals, I contacted them and informed them about my research and asked for permission to observe the consulting session and afterwards to interview them about the session. After

their consent I turned up at the consulting session, shook hands with them with some small talk and then silently observed the consulting session.

Following Kristiansen and Krogstrup (1999) I conducted the simplest form of qualitative observation during the consulting session. Kristiansen and Krogstrup (1999) distinguish between four observational methods, with a progression according to how far the researcher participates in the observed activity. In the simplest form of observation the researcher does not intervene in any way, just sitting in total silence and taking notes of the activity.

Methodologically I followed Kristiansen and Krogstrup's (1999) overall way of observing, which is based upon a phenomenological line of thinking. Kristiansen and Krogstrup (1999) describe that this implies that the observer strives to understand how phenomena appear to the participating informants and not only from his or her own subjective point of view. However, as Kristiansen and Krogstrup (1999) describe this technique, they seem to be mainly arguing for taking a strong Husserl- inspired first person perspective on the participating informants, see for example p. 16, 100 and 122. I have argued in Section 4.1 that this does not fit in well with an Arendtian existential-phenomenological approach, which rather has a twofold focus on the informants and the thing they are approaching together. Therefore during my observation I did not imagine that I could totally understand their individual perspectives. Instead, in my imagination I placed myself in the centre of their conversation at the consulting session, where I metaphorically sat myself down within each of the specific things they talked about. It is here important to bear in mind that in Section 4.2 I demonstrated that things can both be material and non-material; but I stressed that non-material things must originate in something that has taken place in our physical world. Hence the issues I will zoom in on in the analyses always originated in some concrete things.

With each thing in mind, I tried to listen carefully to how the social worker or the school professional approached the thing in the interview. I tried to listen to each individual's statements in order to try to reach a characterisation of their different perspectives on the thing. Or I can re-phrase this using Moran's (1999, p. 290) words: I listened attentively to the discord of the two professionals' perspectives on the same thing. For example if the common thing during a consulting session was a specific child's "too quiet behaviour" in the classroom, then I imagined that I was concentrating on this subject and taking notes on how the two professionals individually phrased their statements about this child's quiet behaviour.

As I carried out more and more observations I developed a technique which

was a combination of drawing circles and writing down statements from the professionals. I will now describe how at the end of my fieldwork I conducted the observations with this technique.

First I drew a circle filling one third of a landscaped A4 page in my notebook. In the centre of the circle I wrote the thing which was being discussed. Thereafter I wrote statements from the school professional to the left of the circle and on the right I wrote statements from the social worker on the thing discussed. I tried to be as selective as possible in writing down statements so that I did not constantly take notes during the consulting session, as I assumed that this would make the professionals feel totally under surveillance. I chose statements which were repeated frequently and statements which clearly seemed to be rooted in their different everyday working contexts and which were spoken from their individual positions.

Figure 4 shows an anonymous representation of an example of one of these circles.
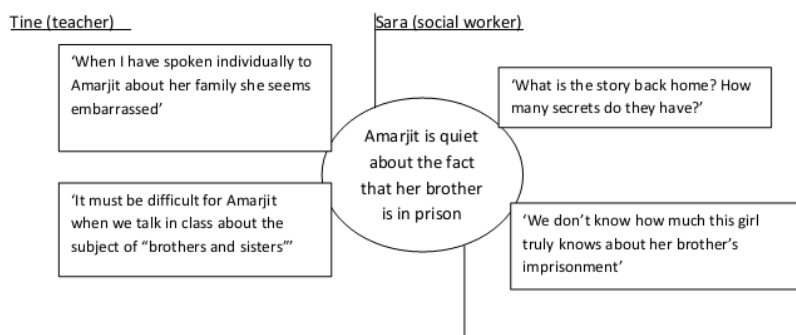
Figure 4. An example of how I took notes on the participants' different perspectives on an issue discussed in a consulting session where a school professional (Tine) brought up her concern for her two pupils Amarjit and Hans.

Around each circle I usually noted two to six statements from each professional. Every time their common issue seemed to change I stopped working on that circle and embarked on a new circle. During a consulting session I typically drew between five and eight circles. However many of these circles had barely started before I needed to start a new one.

This technique provided me with efficiency in collecting statements from the two professionals in relation to certain concrete things. But this efficiency also has a downside. My technique did not allow me to be very attentive to whether they changed the thing discussed because when I had decided on one

particular thing I was very focused on having statements in relation to that thing. This implied that I sometimes was blind to the fact that they had actually changed the thing they were talking about. However, when I sensed that there was too much discrepancy between the thing in the circle and the statements I was collecting around the circle, I discarded that circle and turned over to a blank page.

The reflections above demonstrate that my observation method most of all had the character of an Arendtian *work* activity. Arendt maintains that *work* activities are typically efficient but may be blind to the actual lived experience. My aim was precisely to capture lived experiences and therefore one could argue that my observation method is inappropriate. However, I would like to underline that I only used these circles as a tool for making a general summary of the consulting session and for selecting the themes to discuss in my interviews with the professionals.

When the consulting session ended I thanked the participants for the opportunity to observe their session and then I made an appointment to interview each professional about the consulting session. I never conducted the interviews on the same day as they needed some time to do some *thinking* about the consulting session. However in my experience conducting interviews more than one day after the session would mean that the participants had forgotten too much of what happened at the session. Hence I always tried to carry out the interviews on the day after the session I had observed.

When I came home after an observation I first wrote an observation text of the whole consulting session, so that I later on could get a feeling of what actually happened there. However, I must stress that this text was not intended to be a part of the data collection because the goal of my observation was merely to be able to ask specific questions about the consulting sessions in the interviews. The next thing I did at home was to study the circles and decide on one to three things from the session which I wanted to interview the professionals about. I chose these things on the basis of two criteria 1) How long they had dwelt upon each thing and/or 2) A high degree of demonstrated interaction between their two different perspectives which fits in with Arendt's criterion of an *action* activity.

4.5.4 My semi-structured interviews

As I have stated previously in this chapter, the main feature of my method is the semi-structured qualitative interviews. I have also mentioned that phe-

nomenological research must be concerned with some selected events in people's everyday lives. The events in my research are incidents in consulting sessions with social workers where the participating professionals have demonstrated different perspectives on the same thing.

It is important to emphasise that I always carried out a pair of interviews in relation to a consulting session I had observed; one with the school professional and one with the social worker.

Even though I observed the same social workers several times, I only interviewed the social workers about one specific consulting session each time. I explicitly asked the social workers not to make comparisons to the other consulting sessions. This would have been very interesting, but I made this choice in order to keep the most recently observed consulting session in focus as my Arendtian existential-phenomenological methodology urged me to be specific. In addition, each interview (which included the formality of getting signed consent) was often limited to one school lesson of 45 minutes, which meant I had to be very focused on the most important things in such a short interview. In the beginning however I did not always manage to live up to the principle of only having the social workers talk about one specific consulting session as I did not realise that I should gently interrupt them when they talked on a more overall level about the consulting sessions. However I did learn how to do this as I gained more experience.

Kvale and Brinkman (2009, p. 26) explain that the goal of phenomenologically inspired qualitative research is to investigate the informants' accounts of a selected phenomenological theme viewed from the perspective of the informants' everyday life. However, as I have written above, my existential-phenomenological method had a clear focus on only having the informants start to talk about the selected things in the consulting session I had observed. Even though compared to Kvale and Brinkman I had a purer focus on having my informants start talking about the concrete incidents, I followed their principle of trying to get the informants' account of the things concerned. In this connection, I was also aware of Arendt's emphasis, mentioned above in Section 4.3, that we must realise the limitations in each individuals' account of a thing. So even though I wanted their individual account of the incident I signalled that they should not feel that they had to give a detailed objective description of an incident, but simply their own perception of it. At the same time, I was also aware that even though Section 4.3 demonstrates that each account is limited, it also shows that each individual account is incredibly valuable, because each person's perspective is so unique that it cannot be adopt-

ed by anyone else. I therefore interviewed each professional with the goal of getting their unique, but limited, accounts of various incidents in the consulting session where the two of them had different perspectives on a common thing.

According to Kvale (1997, p. 62) the phenomenological interview must investigate both the visible and invisible aspects of each informant's account of the different perspectives. Therefore I spent considerable time in the interviews on exploring the informants' perspectives from various angles. In order to capture the invisible strands of the perspectives they presented during the session, I employed Kvale's (1997, p. 139) strategy of active listening. This meant that in my listening I tried to think from their individual positions and ask questions which were clearly aimed at elucidating an account of the perspectives from my informants' unique positions. In my questions I asked how the things appeared to them while signalling that their account was quite unique and valuable to my research.

The overall structure of every interview was divided into sections as follows: I) Reflections on the consulting session II) Retelling of the consulting session III) Exploration of incidents where there was a clear presence of different perspectives IV) Other issues.

In the first section I asked my informants if they had made any subsequent reflections on the consulting session. This section was very openly structured compared to the later part of the interviews where I strove to have my informants constantly return to incidents which occurred at the sessions.

In the second section I asked my informants to retell briefly what happened at the consulting session. This section had a twofold purpose. Firstly it would explore the informant's unique account of the consulting session about the specific vulnerable child. Secondly the section was intended to help the informants to keep their focus on what happened at the consulting session about the specific vulnerable child instead of only talking generally about issues in interprofessional work with vulnerable children.

The third section was divided into two further sub-sections: IIIa) Identification of incidents in which the professionals themselves thought there was a clear presence of different perspectives IIIb) Exploration of their different perspectives in one to three selected incidents.

The reason for including sub-section IIIa was to include possible incidents in my research with clearly distinctive interaction perspectives which I had not been aware of during my observation. For this I asked the professionals to draw up a list of the incidents during the consulting session they thought had

a presence of clearly different perspectives. Some of my informants had great difficulty in identifying incidents where they had diverse perspectives, while for others this was an easy task. In relation to those who had difficulty in identifying such incidents it could be claimed that I was violating reality by having them identify distinct perspectives where they did not in fact think that there were different perspectives. On the other hand, an explanation could be that these professionals are not used to thinking in terms of different individual perspectives. Let me emphasise that for my analysis I have only chosen incidents where both professionals willingly agreed on the identification of an incident on a specific thing where they had demonstrated distinct perspectives.

I explained above that I had my informants list incidents where they could identify an obvious presence of different perspectives. While they identified the incidents I checked overlaps with my own ready-made list after my observation of the consulting session. If I had not included some of their incidents, I added these to my list. Thereafter I chose one to three incidents which I went through one by one in the interview.

In the first interviews I had no structure for eliciting an account of the selected incidents where the professionals had demonstrated different perspectives. After having carried out two pilot analyses I realised that it was difficult to characterise the different perspectives from such unstructured interview sequences. Therefore I decided to have a stronger semi-structured approach to how my informants should give their account of the selected incidents by asking the questions below. The questions are based on my methodology in Section 4.2 which concerns how people have different perspectives on a common thing in an *action* and how people after an *action* in their *thinking* can make use of each others' perspectives, which can result in an enlarged perspective on the thing.

1. Can you describe the perspectives at the incident at the consulting session yesterday where the two of you discussed the issue on .... ?
   a. Which perspective did you present on the issue?
   b. Which perspective did your interlocutor present on the issue?
2. What is your current perspective on the issue?

It is a crucial point that in the interviews I sought out the professionals' meaning-making of the perspectives instead of solely focusing on what they said during the consulting sessions.

Under each of the questions in my interview guide I always asked further questions in relation to what they told me. In my interview transcripts I can see that I most frequently asked if the informants could think of any state-

ments made at the consulting session which they could relate to how they were characterising the perspectives. The interview transcripts also demonstrate that already in Question 1a some informants began to answer Questions 1b and 2 – sometimes in reverse order. In a semi-structured approach I then followed their line of talking; for example if the informant began to answer Question 2 at the end of her answer to Question 1a, I explored her current perspective before I went back to investigate how she could represent her interlocutor's perspective (1b).

I have to underline that Questions 1a and 2 only apply to the school professional according to my present research question: How do consulting sessions with social workers influence school professionals' further perspectives on how to deal with issues in vulnerable children's lifeworlds? However, at the time of my data collection, my original research question led me to research the consulting session's influence on the perspectives of both the school professional and the social worker. However, working through the first real analyses it soon became apparent to me that such a two-fold research question was too large for my limited three-year PhD timeframe. I further realised after my interviews that the influence on the social workers' perspectives seemed to be very different than that on the school professionals' perspectives. One notable distinction here was that in half of the cases the social worker would never come into contact with the children concerned.

4.5.5 The content of the interviews

From an overall point of view the content of my pair of interviews may be divided into two categories. The first category comprises information about one to three issues in a specific child's strained lifeworld which were at the centre of *action* incidents in a consulting session between a social worker and a school professional. The second category comprises information about how the social worker and the school professional approached these issues. Once again it is important to underline that these issues were always related to some specific things that had happened or were happening in the child's everyday life.

My analysis and presentation of the data from the first category will inevitably include descriptions of harsh circumstances in the children's lifeworlds. Because when school professionals are so concerned about a child's development that they seek advice from a social worker it may be due to neglect by the parents, physical abuse or other very difficult life circumstances in the young children's lifeworlds.

Arendt has a sensitive eye for harsh circumstances in individual persons' lifeworlds. With her existentially sensitive focus Arendt argues that we must not close our eyes to the harsh realities in this world. For this Arendt frequently quotes Jette Blixen's statement, which says (a la Isak Dinesen): 'All sorrows can be borne if you can put them into a story or tell a story about them' (e.g. Arendt, 1958, p. 175). With her use of this Blixen quote Arendt urges us to put people's harsh experiences into narratives so that we are able to relate to them in a respectful way (Flyvbjerg, 2006, p. 240; Jackson, 2002, p. 11). But then the question arises: in which form can such a narrative on a child's harsh circumstances be told in my research?! Arendt (1958, p. 169) points towards poetry as a form which remains as close as possible to such saturated harsh lived experiences. Arendt (1958, p. 169) further argues that when people speak of saturated experiences 'it is as though language spoken in utmost density and concentration were poetic in itself'. Therefore for presenting narratives of the relevant issues in the children's lifeworlds I decided to use poetic representations to present the end result of my analysis. Such poetic representations have stepped firmly into qualitative research in recent years (Richardson, 2000; Bochner, 2000; Faulkner, 2005; Miðskarð, 2007).

The second category in my interviews comprises information about how the professionals differently approached the harsh issues of the children. The aim of my analysis of the content of this second category is to investigate how the interplay between the social worker's and the school professional's perspectives at the consulting session has influenced the school professional's further perspective on the issues in the vulnerable children's lifeworlds. In order to analyse this material I use the methodology developed previously in this chapter, which urges me to use the technique of meaning condensation and the principles from the hermeneutical circle in order to conduct a characterisation of the perspectives.

4.5.6 The transcriptions and analysis

In each analytical chapter I will initially present the selected issue in poetic representations and thereafter analyse the implications of the fact that the professionals demonstrated different perspectives on the issue. As argued previously it is important that these issues originate in "things"; this implies that the issues need to arise from something that has happened, is happening or is about to happen in the children's lifeworlds.

Because I wanted to use poetic representations I had to carry out my tran-

scription of the interviews in an unusual way (Miðskarð, 2007). But in spite of this I still transcribed them in such a manner that I could also use them for my analysis of the implications of the differences in the professionals' perspectives on the issues.

In Miðskarð (2007) I have argued that it is necessary to transcribe every word uttered in audio recordings to enable parts of the interviews to be presented in poetic representations. Furthermore, I argued that it is not necessary to try to find the meaning of the sentences during the transcription, but just to transcribe every word spoken without the use of full stops and commas. Instead, a new line must be begun every time the speaker makes a pause.

I followed the above presented guidelines for transcriptions when I transcribed the interviews. I will call these transcriptions the "raw material". In the first sub-section below I will explain how I have used the raw material to produce the poetic representations. In the second sub-section I will explain my use of the raw material in my analysis of how the school professionals were influenced by the consulting sessions they received on vulnerable children.

4.5.6.1 Producing the poetic representations

In order to present the issues in poetic representations I first had to read though the raw material and identify where my informants spoke most purely about the specific things in the children's strained lifeworlds. I copied and pasted all these statements into separate documents, each concerning one particular thing. Thereafter I worked with the documents separately. In each document I identified how many different aspects of the thing were revealed in the selected statements. Then I grouped the statements according to the identified aspects. If there were several statements portraying the same aspect of the thing, I only included one statement which most richly and most poetically described that aspect. Then I connected the different aspects about one thing together by adding some extra words to make a smooth transition between the different lines. Similarly, I changed the order of some words in order to enhance the coherence between the different lines. Then I inserted commas and full stops (Miðskarð, 2007).

The next stage was to read repeatedly through the poetic representations and identify emerging existential themes. In my identification of the themes I looked for passages which for me aroused a sense of the Arendtian basic existential conditions of natality, life, worldliness, plurality and mortality. For example in connection with the consulting session on six-year-old Jette I identified a theme of painfulness when the participants talked about the deadly sad-

ness she regularly displayed. It seemed painful to them because they compared Jette's behaviour to that of other six-year-old girls, who are mostly happy and far away from death. Hence the professionals touched upon both the conditions of natality and mortality in their description of Jette's issues.

After I had identified the themes I reinforced them by inserting empty spaces, using different types and by breaking the lines in odd places.

The above has demonstrated that the poetic representations are the end result of my process of working with the informants' statements. It is also clear that even though I use the informants' statements, I am the one who has generated the narrative in each poetic representation. Hence my poetic representations can be criticised for being produced too much from my own point of view. It is however important to stress that I have followed Hølge-Hazelton and Krøjer (2008) who argue that when a researcher intervenes in order to produce poetic representations it is not based on his or her arbitrary mood on that particular day. Instead they argue that the production of the poetic representations is based on the fact that the researcher was fully present with all senses open when the statements were articulated in the interviews and also that the researcher has listened to and read through the transcriptions several times to enhance the authenticity of the representations.

4.5.6.2 The analysis of the professionals' perspectives

After illustrating an issue through poetic representations I moved on to the scope of my research. The scope of my research is to investigate the impact of consulting sessions on school professionals' further perspectives on vulnerable children's issues. My Arendtian framework interprets this influence as being first shaped by the *action* activity of the session and then by the school professionals' *thinking* after the session.

For this investigation I have produced summaries of four different perspectives on the thing from the interviews with the school professional and social worker respectively. The first is a summary of how the school professional represents the perspective he or she demonstrated at the session. The second is a summary of the perspective he or she demonstrated on the same thing on the day of the interview. The third summary concerns the representation by the school professional of the social worker's perspective at the session, and the fourth the social worker's own account of his or her perspective.

In order to produce these four summaries of the four perspectives from the informants' statements in the interviews I have made use of a phenomenological analysis approach. There are many such approaches, which may be ar-

ranged in a continuum ranging from an approach aimed at conducting a "pure" phenomenological analysis (e.g. Giorgi (2009)) to an approach which is more hermeneutically oriented (e.g. Van Manen (2007)). In my analysis I choose to seek inspiration from Van Manen's (2007) hermeneutical phenomenological approach. Van Manen's (2007) point of departure is in Husserl's phenomenological line of thinking but in addition includes Heidegger's and Gadamer's claim that all description is interpretation. Hence Van Manen rejects Husserl's ideal of performing an epoché. In Section 4.5.1 I argued that Arendt similarly rejects Husserl's pure phenomenology and in Section 4.5.7 I stated that according to Arendt a researcher can never escape his or her own subjective perspective; this agrees with Heidegger's and Gadamer's stance.

Van Manen (1997) claims that that the aim of hermeneutical phenomenological analysis is for the researcher to elucidate a more condensed understanding of the research phenomenon in the informants' statements. It is worth noting that Van Manen's approach has been criticised for relying too much on the researcher (e.g. Hall 1999, p. 152). I will not disagree with this criticism but will still argue that according to Van Manen and Arendt the involvement of the researcher is unavoidable because the researcher can never escape out of his or her own position. However I will stress that it is important for researchers during analysis to reflect upon how their analysis is marked by their own position. Researchers must also be transparent in how the particular process of their data analysis is carried out (Van Manen, 2007). In my production of the four summaries I first read the interview transcripts several times in order to identify where the informants spoke about the differ-

1) Can you describe the perspectives at the incident at the consulting session yesterday where the two of you discussed the issue on …. ?
a. Which perspective did you present on the issue?
b. Which perspective did your interloctorer present on the issue?
2)   What is your current perspective on the issue?

Figure 5. A part of my interview guide.

ent perspectives. Even though in the interviews I had followed my interview guide, which prompted me to investigate one perspective at the time, it often occurred that the informants spoke about several perspectives at the same time. After sorting out which of their statements concerned each perspective I copied and pasted the respective statements about the different perspectives into separate documents.

Thereafter I analysed the central meaning in each individual statement separately (Van Manen, 2007). For this process I used the technique of "meaning condensation" to draw out the main point in each statement (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). It is important to stress that I did not make meaning condensations of every single sentence in their statements. Instead I made meaning condensations which highlighted the meanings of certain coherent sentences following Van Manen's (2007) guidelines. For these meaning condensations I applied Van Manen's thoughts about using my own hermeneutical interpretations of the passages without however exceeding what was said in the statements. After I had produced these meaning condensations I reread the interview transcript once more to see how my meaning condensations of the individual statements fitted in with the content of the passages before and after the statements. This rereading forced me to amend several of my meaning condensations. Hence the process I have described followed the principle of the hermeneutical circle, which as I demonstrated in Section 4.4 fits in with an Arendtian existential-phenomenological line of thinking.

The following step was to order the statements and their meaning condensations in a sequence according to how they seemed to build upon each other. If they did not seem to build upon each other then I started with the most general statements and ended with the most specific statements. When I had several statements and meaning condensations which referred to the same theme I selected the statement which most clearly illustrated the meaning. If there was a slight difference then I included all the differently phrased statements.

Lastly for each perspective I formed all the meaning condensations into one coherent summary. Finally once again I read through the interview to see if the summary agreed with my overall impression of the perspective expressed in the interview. On the next pages I present an example of how some selected statements and the meaning condensations have led to a summary of how Rie, a reception class teacher, presents her current perspective on how to conduct a meeting with Jette's parents.

Rie's perspective at the interview – the day after the consulting session

In this section I will investigate how Rie in the interview demonstrates her further perspective on how to conduct the coming parental meeting.

In relation to the parental meeting Rie says several times:

Ud fra det Sara sagde så vil jeg være mere - lidt mere – opmærksom, end jeg tidligere havde tænkt, på det der med at være anerkendende (…)I forbindelse med forældre mødet.

Based on what Sara said I will be more - a little bit more - attentive than I had previously thought, about the idea of being appreciative (…) In connection with the parental meeting.

In this quote Rie implies that after the consulting session she has become more aware of being appreciative in her approach to Jette's parents. Later on she gives the following example of her appreciative approach:

Vi skal komme væk fra "at Jette har det der opgivende en engang i mellem" (…) til "at hun vil komme til at fungere mere sådan alment bedre".

We must get away from "Jette sometimes is despairing" (...) to "her functioning will get better on an overall level".

Rie here demonstrates that, using a more appreciative approach, she wants to focus on a positive change for Jette at the coming parental meeting. Further on Rie says:

Så vi ikke bare kommer til at sidde og sige at "du gør" og "hug" "hug" "hug". Så trækker de jo følehornene til sig med det samme. Men dog jeg synes at man dog skal sige de svære ting.

So we're not just going to sit there and say "do this, do that" and "snap" "snap" "snap". Because then they'll just creep back into their shells straightaway. But still I think we have to say the difficult things.

This quote illustrates that although Rie wants to be appreciative towards Jette's parents, she still wants to talk about the difficult issues at the coming parental meeting.

Rie further explains how she now after the consulting session thinks about how to conduct the meeting with Jette's parents:

Det er vigtigt på mødet at være konkret også for at skabe en god atmosfære.

It's important to be specific at the meeting, also in order to create a positive atmosphere.

Rie emphasises that now she thinks it is crucial to be specific. Later on she mentions some examples of specific goals:

> *At [Jette] bliver mere glad generelt; at hun kontakter os; og vil være mere med i det som sker; mere lyst til at lære.*

> That [Jette] becomes happier in general; that she makes contact with us, and joins in more what's going on; a greater desire to learn.

The goals Rie mentions are that Jette becomes happier in general; that she makes contact with them, is more involved in what happens in the classroom and has a greater desire to learn.

Later in the interview Rie says:

> *Så skal vi sige til forældrene at vi gerne vil hjælpe til med en sådan positiv udvikling, men også at I to forældre også hjælper til. Skal I have nogle fælles ting f.eks. med sengetider for at vi kan nå en bedre udvikling? Men ja spørge dem om de har ideer. Og så kan vi også komme med vores forslag til hvad de kan gøre hvis de har lyst til det.*

> Then we'll tell the parents that we want to help in this kind of positive development, but also that both of you parents also need to help. Should you agree upon some things about e.g. bedtimes so that we can get a better development? But yes - ask them if they have ideas. And then we can also make our suggestions about what they can do if they want to.

In this quote Rie emphasises that they want to involve Jette's parents in achieving a positive change for Jette. The focus in the collaboration will be on concrete common initiatives for Jette's divorced mother and father.

Finally I will demonstrate one last aspect in how Rie talks about how she and her colleague will conduct the second parental meeting with a greater awareness on what Sara explained to her about drinking issues.

> *Jóhannes:*
> *Som jeg observerede jer så syntes jeg at…..Sara snakkede sådan generelt om børn som har det svært med forældres drikkeri og du snakkede meget ud fra det med Karen. Synes du at der var disse forskellige indgangsvinkler til jeres snak? Og hvis ja hvad fik du ud af at høre hende?*
> *Rie:*
> *(…)Hvordan forældre der drikker kan reagere. Ikke sådan at det var helt nyt for mig, men det var godt at høre hendes præcise ord på det.*

> Jóhannes:
> The way I observed you I thought… Sara talked in a general way about children with problems with their parents' drinking and you talked a lot about it in relation to Karen. Do you think there were these different approaches to your talk? And if so, what did you get out of listening to her?
> Rie:
> (…)How parents who drink can react. Not that it was completely new to me but it was good to hear her exact words about it.

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Rie here reveals that they will be aware of the possible effects of Jette's mother's drinking. She underlines that at the consulting Sara described this very clearly.

I will now make a summary of Rie's perspective on how to conduct the meeting on the day of my interview with her.

> **I want us to strive to be highly appreciative in our approach to Jette's parents. However, I still want us to say the difficult things, but with a focus on a positive change for Jette. I want us to be concrete about how Jette can improve her overall well-being by our setting some specific goals. This will be done in collaboration with the parents. I want us to be more aware of the possible effects of Jette's mother's drinking problem.**

The various texts presented here show that the Danish quotes have been translated to English and displayed next to each other. The translation was carried out by a professional linguist. I urged the linguist to translate the Danish idioms in the statements to English idioms, but that the rest of the selected statements should as far as possible be translated word by word following the advice of Esposito (2001).

Even though I have inserted both the Danish and English versions of the selected statements in my analysis section it is important to stress that I only used the Danish text for the meaning condensations I performed. The reason for this was that I wanted to get as close as possible to my informants' statements when making the meaning condensations.

In the coming analysis chapters I will not present all the statements and the meaning condensations that have led to summaries; however, all statements and meaning condensations which formed the basis for each summary can be found in the appendices.

In the analysis I prefer to move directly to a comparison of the summaries of the different perspectives. Thereafter I will reveal through analysis similarities and differences between these summaries. In these analyses I will include some of the statements and meaning condensations which make claims which are crucial for my analysis.

4.5.7 Reflections on subjectivity

The issue of subjectivity in data collection and data analysis is an issue which has led to constant discussion and disagreements among both quantitative and qualitative researchers since the rise of modern research methods.

In the field of quantitative research there is almost a uniform consensus about keeping the subjectivity close to zero level while the disagreement is only about how the researcher's subjectivity can be reduced.

In the field of qualitative research the discussion has been more fundamentally about whether or not researchers should make use of their subjectivity when collecting and analysing their data. Earlier many qualitative researchers claimed that researchers should strive to keep their subjectivity at a near zero level by sticking purely to the things observed and the data analysed (e.g. Mucchieli, 1979). However, today many qualitative researchers argue that researchers cannot escape their subjectivity and it is therefore preferable that they make use of their subjectivity in order to better understand the thing they are studying (e.g. Ellis and Flaherty, 1992; Scheurich; 1997; Fristrup, 2003).

There is no doubt that my Arendtian existential-phenomenological approach is in line with the opinions of the second group of researchers. Arendt has a comment aimed directly at those who believe it is possible to put subjectivity to one side while conducting research. Arendt (1978A, p.26) says that such research 'in its relentless search for <u>the</u> truth behind <u>mere</u> appearances will never be able to resolve this predicament…because [the researcher] belongs to the world of appearances' (The underlining is Arendt's accentuation). I interpret this quote as implying that researchers can never escape how their own subjectivity is influencing their research because their subjectivity is always in play in how the researched thing appears to them. Arendt takes the consequence of her phenomenological observation of our world as a subjectively appearing world and says therefore: 'Since we live in an <u>appearing</u> world, is it not much more plausible that the relevant and the meaningful in this world of ours should be located precisely on the surface?' (The underlining is Arendt's accentuation) (1978A, p. 27). In this quote Arendt indicates that the characteristics of things researched can only be found in how the things appear to the researchers. Hence subjectivity becomes a way to open up the object of research.

But following my Arendtian line of thinking it is crucial that some subjective aspects need to be included and other aspects need to be held back whilst conducting research. For describing which personal things must be held back

in publicly disseminated research I will make use of Arendt's four-fold division into the sphere of intimacy, the private realm, the social realm and the public realm. Previously I have pointed out that Arendt insists that in a successful political activity people must not process things in the public realm that are supposed to be processed in the sphere of intimacy and the private realm. One example is that personal feelings are not supposed be at the forefront when something is being publicly disseminated. However this does not imply that researchers should deny their feelings while doing research, but rather that they must not let their feelings be the focal point of their presentation. The researchers should instead demonstrate how they <u>uniquely choose to react</u> in their public presentation of an observation which aroused certain feelings but not to exhibit the feelings themselves.

A crucial point in my Arendtian line of thinking is that every person acts uniquely because each of us has a unique collection of past experiences. This uniqueness gives each person an "authentic" position which the person must act from. However there can be "in-authentic" components which blend into the person's authentic position. These in-authentic components imply that errors and illusions occur in how the approached thing appears to them and if these errors and illusions are not cleansed out they will influence the researchers' presentation of their research. Hence researchers must clean out the errors and illusions before they present their results. The way to remove such errors and illusions is to discuss the findings with other people.

However we must keep in mind that even though errors and illusions are removed the researcher cannot present the research from any other aspect than his or her personal perspective on a thing (an authentic account).

In relation to my data collection, analysis and the presentation in this Denmark-based PhD thesis on interprofessional work between school professionals and social workers, my perspective is most likely coloured by two of my characteristics.

Firstly, my perspective is coloured by the fact that I grew up in the Faroe Islands. Hence I have been able to see aspects of the Danish circumstances which might be implicit for a native Danish researcher. However there may be things which I have not understood as a foreigner in a Danish field site.

Furthermore my perspective is most likely coloured by the fact that I am a qualified teacher and have worked in a school for two years. In addition I gained solid insight into research and theory in the field of education during my master degree in educational psychology at the Danish Pedagogical University and my PhD period at the Department of Psychology and Educational

Studies at Roskilde University. Hence I probably have more of an insider view on how various school professionals act and think compared to my understanding of how various social workers act and think. In order to compensate for this I spent much time observing the social workers at the schools and asking them about their daily tasks and organisational structures before I began to collect data on the five consulting sessions between school professionals and social workers. Furthermore I was based at the social worker unit at Leeds Metropolitan University which gave me an insight into research in social work.

However in order to counter these personal aspects I have constantly discussed my findings and papers for this thesis with colleagues at Roskilde University and Leeds Metropolitan University. These discussions have made me realise that I have made some wrong interpretations which I have corrected, but I have nonetheless tried not to let go of my authenticity.

4.5.8 Reflections on the validity of the research

Andersen (2002) maintains that for a discussion on the quality of a research project, researchers most frequently investigate the research project's "validity". In this section I will compare Bryman's (2004) traditional social science definition of validity with the line of thinking in Arendt's theorisations. Furthermore I will explain where in my research I am following Bryman's traditional definition and where I use another line of thinking which corresponds better to my Arendtian existential-phenomenological approach.

Bryman (2004, p. 28) defines "validity" as 'being concerned with the integrity of the conclusions that are generated from a piece of research'. This validity criterion corresponds to my claim in Section 4.1 that it is crucial for an Arendtian line of thinking that there is a strong linkage between the incidents investigated and the more general conclusions reached at the end of a study. The Arendtian line of thinking also prompted me to maintain that a necessary step in making general conclusions is to discuss my analyses with other people. Hence in my analysis of the incidents I must dwell in depth on the concrete incidents and discuss them with others before taking my findings to a higher abstract level.

Bryman (ibid.) also states that validity is concerned with 'whether the result of a study can be generalized beyond the specific research context'. Arendt (1958, p. 43) postulates that a positivistic minded definition of "validity" implies that we provide arguments for our findings so that they can be re-

searched again in another investigation and likewise with another method. Therefore we can conclude that Arendt's "validity" concept in this passage is similar to Bryman's focus on generalising the findings beyond the specific research context. Arendt (1958, p. 43) says that such a definition of "validity" urges us in social sciences to investigate how people most commonly behave which she thinks is of no use to anybody because people always appear and behave uniquely. Arendt (ibid.) even claims that such a 'statistical uniformity is by no means a harmless scientific ideal' and therefore instead Arendt urges us to rather start our research with the uniqueness in each situation.

Arendt argues that not only do we in our modern times use statistical methods in our research, we even tend to organise our common social activities in statistically friendly ways. In an Arendtian line of thinking such an organisation of our common activities downplays our humanness, which first and foremost is made up of our plurality – our distinctnesses. Arendt urges that our humanness must be taken care of by accepting and promoting people's embeddedness in situated earthly surroundings and by accepting how unique people act together in unpredictable ways every time they act.

It follows from the last paragraphs that it would contradict the whole Arendtian existential-phenomenological approach if I used a positivistic-minded inspired "validity" definition for quality assurance of my research. Instead of wanting to increase the validity in a positivistic manner, I prefer to assure the quality of my Arendtian existential-phenomenological research by performing extensive investigations and in-depth analysis with a high degree of transparency as a validity criterion.

Kvale and Brinkmann (2009, p. 248ff) similarly argue for an approach to validate or secure the quality of in-depth qualitative research with a main focus on "transparency". Hence they have developed a three-fold alternative validation process: 1) Validity as quality of craftsmanship 2) Communicative validity 3) Pragmatic validity. During my research I have followed their three-fold validity requirements.

The first requirement is that the research is carried out with a high quality of craftsmanship. This requirement covers all the different stages in the research project: design, data collection, analysis and reporting. Kvale and Brinkmann (2009, p. 248ff) describe three characteristics of good craftsmanship: checking, questioning and theorising.

"Checking" serves the purpose of eliminating errors when the researcher is reading and applying previous research, collecting data, analysing data as well as when presenting findings. Checking implies that after having carried out an

interpretation, researchers have to go back to their primary sources and check if they during their ongoing work have deviated from their starting points.

"Questioning" serves the purpose of ensuring that the research is actually researching when it says it is investigating something. Questioning implies that the researchers are constantly reflecting on the nature of the questions they are using to approach their research issue, because Kvale and Brinkmann (2009, p. 248) claim that the way questions are phrased decides the direction of the answers. This is of particular importance when the researcher is working with the research question of a project and in qualitative interviews.

The purpose of "theorising" is to ensure that the research is not unconsciously reproducing the unhealthy logics which exist in the research field. Theorising implies that researchers constantly think beyond the concepts used and the phenomena observed. This is of particular relevance during the final phase of writing up a research report.

Following these three characteristics of Kvale and Brinkmann's first requirement I chose to carry out two pilot studies in order to improve my skills as a researcher before I embarked on my final data collection. In these pilot studies I went through all the different stages of design, data collection, analysis and reporting. During these stages I conferred with my supervisor to ensure that I had been properly checking, questioning and theorising during the different stages. This process improved my research craftsmanship and also resulted in my making several adjustments to my method of collecting data.

The second requirement of Kvale and Brinkmann (2009) is a communicative validation process. This implies that researchers, informants and commentators on the research are constantly correcting one another and enlarging one another's perspectives on the observed activities. Another crucial communicative validation issue is that Arendt urges people in a conversation to constantly check with each other if they are talking about the same thing. Arendt maintains that because all people are so unique they have a tendency to highly personalise the topic of a conversation. Therefore I constantly checked whether I and my informants were really talking about the same subject during my interviews.

Kvale and Brinkmann's third requirement is called pragmatic validity. This focuses on the importance of connecting the informants' words to what actually appears in the informants' lifeworlds. Similarly the final research product needs to be aimed at giving feedback to the practice field which is researched. However, Kvale and Brinkmann (2009, p. 260) urge that researchers also reflect on who has the ability and opportunity to act in different situations and

hence do not just let everything flow out to everyone. This pragmatic validity mirrors Arendt's conceptualisation that *action* needs to be closely connected to speech and hence it makes researchers aware that they will always intervene in one way or another in the field they are researching. On the basis of this third requirement I decided that the main feature of my concluding chapter must be directed towards the practice field of consulting sessions between social workers and school professionals in Denmark.

4.5.9 Ethical considerations

In this section I will present the ethical considerations relevant to the various stages of my research.

My ethical considerations started before I entered the field sites with the use of the ethical and technical code of *Datatilsynet* (The Danish Data Protection Agency). These codes are intended to protect the identities of people who participate in research. In my research the main participants are the professionals involved in the consulting sessions I observed. My research also involves information about the specific children and families discussed by the professionals at these sessions. In order to protect the identities of all those concerned, I decided to change the names of the professionals, children and family members in my transcriptions and analysis in this thesis. Further in order to provide the children and their families with extended anonymity I also decided to change other insignificant characteristics than their names, e.g. in one case I made a slight change to a child's age and in another case to the number of a child's siblings. Finally, before I entered the field sites, I planned carefully how to store all the data files from my research in RUC's protected data system.

Further, I performed some ethical procedures based on my Arendtian existential-phenomenological line of thinking and the empirical findings of Rosenthal & Jacobsen. The Arendtian existential-phenomenological framework explains that all the experiences professionals gain concerning children add another layer to how the professionals view children. On an empirical level Rosenthal & Jacobsen (1968) have demonstrated that new knowledge about children's situations can influence the teachers to act differently towards them. In my research I do not provide the professionals with new knowledge or reflections about the children. However, I constantly reiterate what was said at the consulting sessions and this may increase the influence of the sessions on the school professionals' intentions on how to continue their work with the vulnerable children. For example in my research I may observe a consulting

session on a school professional's concern for a child who is extremely active and hence the social worker may ask the school professional whether he or she thinks the overactivity could be due to the ADHD developmental disorder[11]. In my capacity as a researcher I could through my questions in the interview influence the school professional to consider more deeply the question of ADHD. The school professional might then begin to approach the pupil as a child with ADHD who needs a great deal of structures and quietness in his or her everyday life away from other children. But in fact the child's problems could instead be due to a lack of social skills and hence an over-structured day will just further enhance the isolation of the child, who will thus lose out on many possibilities to train social skills.

Because of the possibility of affecting the children negatively, I set up certain principles for conducting my research. However I was very aware that my principles should not be too strict, since Andersen (2000, p. 17) argues that too strict principles can easily become procedures which overlook new ethical challenges which arise because an interactive situation is not always as predictable as a researcher may think at the planning stage.

My first principle was to explain my research as clearly as possible to the informants before I started collecting data. I therefore first informed the school professionals at a staff meeting. Secondly, I provided extensive information at a meeting with the social workers involved. Thirdly, I repeated and expanded on the information to each individual school professional I wanted to observe via email or a telephone call. At the beginning of each consulting session I handed out the informed consent sheet to the social worker and school professional, answered any questions about it and obtained their signatures (see Appendix 2).

For the interviews I set up a second principle of being careful not to exaggerate the participants' statements at the consulting session and similarly I tried to hold back my own interpretation of the statements. For example I said in one interview with a teacher: 'When you and the social worker were talking about Amarjit's quiet behaviour, I could sense that there were two different perspectives on the possible reason for this behaviour. Do you recognise this way of thinking?' If they answered positively I let them know that I was very interested in finding out how they conceived the two different per-

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[11] I took this consideration because it is well-known that there is a cultural power imbalance between a researcher and informants (Cutcliffe & Ramcharan, 2002, p. 1001).

spectives. When they replied to this question I had a principle of being assertive while doing active listening.

A third principle was that the informants should not be afraid of talking about each other's perspectives, but should be aware about talking about the other's approach from their own point of view. I clearly explained that I wanted to investigate how they individually conceived how the other professional approached the issues discussed in the consulting session.

At the end of the interviews I applied the principle of giving my informants the opportunity to evaluate me as an interviewer. I explicitly asked them if I had been intrusive with regard to their own perspectives and their thoughts about the other's perspectives. I used any comments I received to further adjust my technique of interviewing. There were no major objections to my way of asking questions.

The last thing to consider is whether there are any ethical dangers in how I will disseminate the data and my analysis to a wider audience, considering that Kvale and Brinkman (2005, p. 167) state that it is 'important to consider how the knowledge produced will circulate in the wider culture and affect humans and society'. Because I have set up a strict procedure to protect the anonymity of the participating professionals and the vulnerable children, there should be no danger of any negative effects for the people discussed in this thesis. Regarding possible societal effects on the group of vulnerable children it is important in future discussions to keep in mind that the thesis is not meant to initiate a discussion on vulnerable children in Denmark, but basically to inform researchers and others involved in teaching and social work about aspects of interprofessional work conversations relevant to educating professionals about interprofessional work.

> Friendship is constant in all other things.
>
> William Shakespeare,
> *Much Ado About Nothing*.

Chapter 5: Overall presentation of the field site and my fieldwork

In this chapter I will give an introduction to the field site and my fieldwork. This introduction will serve as a framework for understanding the context of the data from the consulting sessions which I will analyse in the following chapters.

5.1 The field site

In Chapter 1 I explained that for my research I carried out my fieldwork in schools in a Danish municipality that sends out social workers to each of its schools two days per week. I also mentioned that this municipality's collaboration between their social services departments and their schools is extensive compared to other Danish municipalities which have this kind of collaboration, where a social workers often only visits schools fortnightly.

  This municipality first planned to send social workers to half of its schools for two days a week for a trial period of two years; this was especially to schools in deprived areas but also to a few schools in more prosperous areas. After the two years they wanted to evaluate the arrangement before making it permanent. An intermediate evaluation produced such a positive result that the municipality immediately employed some additional social workers to cover some more schools. The final evaluation was also very positive. Thus it was decided that it would be a permanent arrangement for all this municipality's schools to have a social worker available two days per week. In this municipality the schools have an average of about 550 pupils.

  The social workers are employed by local social service departments and are

sent out to two schools in the local district two days a week each, while on the fifth weekday they work in the local social service department.

In this municipality, the first aim of having the social workers visit the schools is to promote a prevention and early intervention line of thinking regarding vulnerable children whilst the second aim is to give information about when and how to notify a child's situation to the social services department in order to increase the number and the quality of referrals received. In most other municipalities however the order of these two aims is reversed.

The municipality maintains that the reason for emphasising the prevention and early intervention line of thinking is that they want to intervene before the problems become so serious that the children's cases need to be notified to the social services department. Hence it can be concluded that this municipality is one of the frontrunners in a reorganisation of the Danish Child Protection System which has taken place in the last decade. The aim of this reorganisation in child protection procedures is to take steps at an early stage instead of having to intervene in children's lifeworlds when the problems have become very difficult to deal with.

The prevention and early intervention line of thinking was strongly promoted when the Danish Parliament agreed on a reform for child care called "*Barnets Reform*" in 2010. In the handbook, "prevention and early intervention" is defined as:

dels opsporing og forebyggelse af problemer, dels den indsats, der skal afhjælpe problemerne så tidligt som muligt.

Tidlig opsporing indebærer en skærpet opmærksomhed på bekymrende adfærd hos eller bekymrende forhold omkring et barn fra fagpersoner i dagtilbud, skole og sundhedsplejen.

Tidlig forebyggelse indebærer, at fagpersoner er opmærksomme på at hindre et problem i at opstå.

Tidlig indsats indebærer, at fagpersoner så vidt muligt afhjælper problemer via en rettidig, koordineret og kvalificeret indsats.
(Holm-Petersen and Rytter, 2011, p. 69).

partly detection and *prevention* of problems and partly the *intervention* to remedy the problems as early as possible.

Early detection involves closer attention to worrying behaviour or circumstances concerning a child by professionals in day care, schools and health care.

Early prevention implies that professionals are attentive in preventing a problem from arising.

Early intervention implies that professionals as far as possible deal with the problems through a timely, coordinated and informed response.
(Holm-Petersen and Rytter, 2011, p. 69).

There is no doubt that the social workers' visiting schools fits in well with the above focus on concerns about children's behaviour at school. The social workers' visits also correspond to the idea of promoting coordinated interventions for vulnerable children.

In the *"Barnets reform"* handbook the choice of the prevention and early intervention line of thinking is based upon the fact that research has demonstrated that this approach seems to be more effective for vulnerable children than services at a later stage, e.g. the removal of a child from its home (Grant, Ernst, Streissguth & Stark, 2005; DuMont, Mitchell-Herzfeld, Greene, Lee, Lowenfels, Rodriquez & Dorabawila, 2008; McDonald, Comrad, Fairlough, Fletcher, Green, Moore & Lepps, 2009; Van Doesum, Riksen-Walraven, Hosman & Hoefnagels, 2008). Furthermore it is argued in these American based studies that the prevention and early intervention line of thinking is not only the best intervention method but it is also good for the economy in the long run. However Frost and Dolan (in progress) underline that presently there exist few non-American studies which provide this evidence.

5.2 My fieldwork

My fieldwork consisted of two periods. The first period was an introductory period. The second period was a final data collection period in which I concentrated solely on consulting sessions between social workers and school professionals (teachers and reception class teachers[12]).

My introductory period started just after I started my PhD. In order to narrow my research focus I visited five schools which were visited by a social worker two days per week. During these one-day visits I interviewed the five head teachers and the five social workers who were based in the five schools. I found out from these visits that the various social workers carried out mark-

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[12] Reception class teachers are traditionally trained as pedagogues in Denmark. Pedagogues qualify by obtaining a 3½ year professional bachelor degree from a university college. The education is divided between learning in placements and in the university college itself. Major subjects are psychology and pedagogy. Likewise there is a fair amount of education in sports, nature and arts and crafts. The students usually specialise in either social pedagogy, special pedagogy or early childhood pedagogy. Pedagogues are qualified to undertake professional employment in Danish public and private state-authorised institutions, e.g. kindergartens, schools, afterschool, sport and play activities. They are also qualified for professional employment in special therapeutic institutions and in social community work.

edly different tasks in the five schools; these tasks being aimed at the children, the parents and the professionals. As I have described in Chapter 1, due to my knowledge interest I chose to focus my fieldwork on the social workers' task of providing consulting sessions to the school professionals; these sessions being carried out in a similar way in all five schools. In these consulting sessions the social workers give school professionals advice on how to understand and deal with issues in vulnerable children's lifeworlds following a prevention and early intervention line of thinking.

After I had chosen to concentrate on the consulting sessions, I chose to carry out my fieldwork at only two of the five schools because it would have been too time-consuming for me to travel between five schools[13]. I wanted to carry out my research at two different schools to enable me to observe and interview two different social workers. I had no preferences among the five schools as they all held the consulting sessions in a similar way; hence I chose the two schools most convenient in relation to my transport.

First I spent four days at each of the two schools doing informal observations of the social workers' everyday work in order to get to know their basic concepts and routines to enable me to have a wider perspective than that of a teacher during my data collection and analysis. Even though I have worked as a teacher for two years I also did a two day observation of the teachers' everyday work at each school, because I wanted to get an impression of their specific everyday work routines and an impression of the Danish pupils.

Then I did a pilot study of one consulting session at each of the two schools. The pilot studies included both the data collection phase and also a rough analysis of the data. After the pilot studies I made several adjustments to my method.

After this introductory period I entered into my final data collection period. During the data collection period I carried out studies of three consulting sessions: two at school A and one at School B. In each study I first observed a consulting session between a school professional and a social worker. Secondly, I carried out interviews with the two professionals involved about the consulting session I had observed. In the interviews I focused on incidents in the consulting sessions in which the school professional and the social worker had demonstrated different perspectives on the same issues.

Table 2 gives an overview of the incidents in the three consulting sessions

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[13] My fieldwork time in Denmark was limitied to two months because I needed to carry out a large part of my PhD training in England.

which I will analyse in the next three chapters. Afterwards I will compare the findings from the three analytical chapters in order to draw conclusions on how the school professionals' perspectives on working with issues in vulnerable children's lifeworlds were influenced by the consulting session with a social worker.

	School A		School B
Consulting session No.:	**1**	**2**	**3**
Professionals involved:	A social worker and a reception class teacher	A social worker and a teacher	A social worker and a teacher
Headings for the incidents at the consulting sessions in which the professionals had demonstrated different perspectives	1."How to conduct a parental meeting with Jette's parents"	1."Amarjit's quietness" 2."The meaning of the letter the teacher had received about Amarjit from the Social Service Department"	1."Zhou's Chinese ethnicity" 2. "Zhou's waiting"

Table 2. An overview of the consulting sessions in my final data collection period. In the table we can see the incidents I will analyse in the three following analysis chapters. The table also shows whether the participating school professional in a consulting session was a teacher or a reception class teacher (trained pedagogue).

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Armado:
Boy, what sign is it when a
man of great spirit grows
melancholy?

Moth:
A great sign, sir, that he
will look sad.

Armado:
Why, sadness is one and the
self-same thing, dear imp.

Moth:
No, no; O Lord, sir, no.


        William Shakespeare,
          Love's Labor's Lost
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Chapter 6: The consulting session on Jette's strained lifeworld

In this chapter I will analyse data from the interviews I carried out after my observation of a consulting session between **S**ara, a **s**ocial worker and **Rie**, a **r**eception class teacher. During this session Rie raised her concern for six-year-old Jette, a pupil in her reception class. Jette's parents are divorced and hence Jette shifts between living at her mother's and father's place.

6.1 The aim of the analysis

In the three following analysis chapters I will investigate how *action* incidents in the consulting session influence school professionals' further intentions on how to deal with issues in a vulnerable child's strained lifeworld.

Arendtian *action* incidents are in my research defined as situations where the participants in a conversation are demonstrating different perspectives on the

issues discussed. According to my Arendtian politically grounded approach the issues in my investigations need to originate in "things" [14]. A "thing" refers to a physical thing or incident which has happened, is presently happening or is about to happen.

In the analysis in this chapter I will investigate the influence of the *action* incident in Sara and Rie's consulting session about how Rie and her colleague should conduct an upcoming meeting with Jette's parents. Hence the thing is the handling of the forthcoming parental meeting.

It is crucial for my methodological framework that the being of the thing always coincides with how it appears to the persons who are approaching it. Hence a pure description of the thing is not possible. But my Arendtian framework claims that by displaying the thing from different individual perspectives, a crystallised contour of the thing will be revealed. But even though an Arendtian analysis can provide a crystallised contour of the handling of the difficult parental meeting, the focus of my analysis is first and foremost on how the *action* incident has influenced Rie's further perspective on how she intends to conduct the meeting with the parents.

In the coming analysis it is crucial to deal with three different perspectives on how to handle the meeting with the parents: Rie's perspective and Sara's perspective in the consulting session and the perspective Rie demonstrated when I interviewed her the day after the session, which I will call "Rie's further perspective".

According to my Arendtian framework, a person's perspective is always marked by the position the person chooses to adopt to the thing. There are three elements which mark the ground from which a person adopts a position to a thing, namely the person's physical position, present life conditions and past experiences. In Section 4.3 I argued that for my analysis of non-material things it is not particularly relevant to investigate their physical position and present life conditions; however it is important to be aware of e.g. age, gender, job and living standard if these are brought to the surface as solidly constructed categories. In Section 4.3 I argued further that it is of special relevance to

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[14] In the preceding chapter I explained that I use the term "thing" instead of the usual term "phenomenon" in a Husserlian phenomenological line of thinking. I have made this choice because existential phenomenology aims to focus more on the persons and the materiality of the Earth than the Husserlian phenomenological tradition is known for. However, I also explained that "things" can be non-material, but it is crucial that non-material things have their origin in a concrete physical event which has happened or is about to happen.

investigate how professionals consciously or unconsciously choose to situate themselves in relation to their past experiences, both professional and personal. According to Arendt, individuals have to choose whether they want to build upon or critically discard their past experiences in a situated way in every conversation they have with other people.

The above definition of "position" implies that my analysis of the three perspectives will reveal a depiction of how Rie and Sara choose on a personal level to adopt a position to the thing. Following my argument in Miðskarð (submitted), the analysis will give a very illuminating illustration of Rie's and Sara's unique identities; but I will not elaborate upon any aspect of their identities since the main goal of my analysis is rather to investigate the influence of the *action* incident on Rie's further perspective on how to conduct the meeting with Jette's parents.

6.2 The consulting session

In this section I will briefly present Rie's and Sara's professional backgrounds and their current jobs. I will then provide a description of the consulting session based upon my notes during my observation of the session.

Rie is in her late 50s. Rie qualified as a pedagogue[15] 25 years ago. She has worked in a kindergarten for 8 years and as a reception class teacher for 17 years in two different schools. Sara is in her late 30s. Sara qualified as a social worker[16] 11 years ago and worked in various settings before being employed as a social worker based in schools.

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[15] Danish pedagogues qualify by obtaining a 3½ year professional bachelor degree from a university college. The course is divided between learning in placements and in the university college. Major subjects are psychology and pedagogy. Likewise there is a fair amount of education in sports, nature and arts and crafts. The students usually specialise in either social pedagogy, special pedagogy or early childhood pedagogy. Pedagogues are qualified to undertake professional employment in Danish public and private state-authorised institutions, e.g. kindergartens, schools, afterschool, sport and play activities. They are also qualified for professional employment in special therapeutic institutions and in social community work.

[16] Social workers qualify by obtaining a 3½ year professional bachelor degree from a university college. The education is divided between learning in placements and in the university colleges. Major subject areas are social work (including social counselling), psychology, psychiatry, law and social science. Social workers are qualified to undertake professional employment in Danish public and private state-authorised social institutions, e.g. in municipal social service departments, job centres, street work with

The consulting session was set up because Rie had phoned Sara and asked for it as she wanted to get help in writing a referral regarding her concern about six-year-old Jette.

In accordance with my request, Sara then contacted me and suggested that I could observe this consulting session and interview them the following day. I phoned Rie and got her approval.

When Rie arrived for the consulting session she said that she wanted to cancel the session because she and her colleague had decided not to send in a referral on Jette at the present moment. Rie explained that instead they wanted to embark first on a collaboration effort with Jette's parents. Even though she started the session by saying that she wanted to cancel it, their talk evolved into a 30-minute conversation which in my opinion had the character of a consulting session. Hence early in the session I asked if I could take notes on their conversation and both of them agreed. Based on the content of my notes I have divided the consulting session into three sections in the following brief outline of what happened there.

First Rie explained that one month ago she started to be concerned about Jette. At that time Jette occasionally started to display an unusual sadness. Rie said that her concern increased when Jette's father one day told her that he had a suspicion that his former wife, Jette's mother, had a drinking problem which affected Jette. Then Rie and her colleague had had a meeting with Jette's mother which focused on Jette's strained lifeworld. At this meeting Jette's mother told them that she used to have a drink problem, but it was over now. Also, at the end of the meeting Jette's mother had demonstrated a wish to seek help from the social worker, Sara, in response to a suggestion by Rie and her colleague.

The second section of the session began with Rie saying that one week later the school doctor revealed to her and her colleague that during a regular health check she had noticed Jette's unusual sadness and that it concerned her. The school doctor urged them to notify the social services department assessment unit about Jette's strained lifeworld, and they agreed to do so. However, recently Rie and her colleague had agreed that the school doctor's solution of referring their concern to the assessment unit was too big a step in the present situation. Instead she and her colleague first wanted to begin collaborating with both of Jette's parents in order to try to improve Jette's well-being. This is an example of Rie taking a critical stance towards the experience she

homeless people and work in drug rehabilitation programmes.

had with the school doctor; here she demonstrates courage in the position she adopts to the doctor's advice. This is particularly important to note because research in England on inter-professional work has demonstrated that doctors often have the highest position in the professional hierarchy in an inter-professional work setting for vulnerable children (Frost, 2005).

Thirdly, Rie stated that they had set up a meeting with Jette's mother and father. This parental meeting then dominated the conversation during the rest of the consulting session.

When I came home from my observation of the consulting session I was able to state from my observational notes that the two of them had demonstrated different perspectives on how to conduct the upcoming parental meeting. Further it seemed to me that the two perspectives had interacted in such way that it had brought forward a dimension which Rie could not have arrived at solely with her own line of thinking. Hence I classified this incident as an *action* incident which I investigated in the interviews with the professionals the following day. I decided to interview them the day after the session to allow them time to form an opinion of what had happened.

6.3 Conducting the parental meeting

First in my analysis of the interview transcripts I will bring the thing to the forefront. However it is important to underline that a thing can never be viewed as an independent entity. It is always intertwined with how the participating persons conceive it. Therefore I will now present two poetic representations on how to conduct the meeting from the two interview transcripts with Rie and Sara respectively.

It is important to emphasise that in the methodology chapter I explained that I have woven the poetic representations from selected rich statements from the interviews with Rie and Sara. I have formed these poetic texts in line with my interpretation of the main message of how Rie and Sara consider that the parental meeting should be conducted. In order to highlight certain important aspects of their perspectives which they stress in the interviews, I have emphasised certain words and sentences by using bold type and inserting empty spaces. The poetic representations are first presented in Danish then in English.

RIE:

Jette har i perioder været trist,
og man har tænkt
er der   noget?

Men Jette kan sagtens fungere,
det er ikke sådan
at hun sidder og er ked af det
hele tiden.

Men dog har Jette det der opgivende
en gang   i mellem
        "jeg orker ikke noget"
      "jeg har ikke lyst til noget" .

Så fik vi et vink af faren.
Han kom og fortalte os,
at moren havde problemer med alkohol.
Jeg ved godt,
at når faren kommer og opsøger os
med problemet,
kan der være flere grunde til det.
For de havde en voldsom skilsmisse,
hvor de sådan har bekriget hinanden.

           Men vi vil sætte barnet i centrum,
           og gøre det bedst muligt for Jette.

Derfor har vi planlagt et møde med begge forældre,
hvor vi vil diskutere Jette's problemer.
Men det er jo
ikke rart
som forældre
at få at vide
at der er nogen ting
der er galt med Jette!!!!!!!!!
De ved det måske godt, men måske de har svært ved at gøre noget ved det.

Men jeg synes altså
at man skal sige de svære ting!!!
Men det kan være vanskeligt!
Hvad hvis de bliver rigtigt kede af det,
skal man så trøste dem!?!

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Men jeg synes at vi har pligt til at italesætte de svære ting
-dog med henblik på at forbedre dem.

SARA:
Det bliver et svært møde!
Der kommer til at være mange ting i det rum.

Først er det morens evt. drikkeri.
Jeg hørte
    at de ikke vidste
        om de skulle tro
            om moren var holdt op med at drikke.
Men måske der er også i det
    at moren ser
        at de tvivler
            om de tror på hende.

Der kan også være
noget
skudder
mudder
i forældrenes skilsmisse.
Det er sket før i historien!

Det er utroligt vigtigt,
at det bliver et godt møde.

Hvis de holder et godt møde
så vil de have to forældre
som rigtigt rigtigt gerne vil samarbejde.
-Ja hvis de er sådan rimelige almindelige forældre, men det man kan jo aldrig vide!

Derfor må de tænke sig om
hvad de vil nå med samtalen.
Er det realistisk at fra at se "en ked af det pige"
om fire uger så ser vi en sprudlende pige.

Eller er det godt nok at hun deltager
så og så meget.
For hun er lidt for ofte sådan
trist, ikke særlig glad og ikke særlig initiativrig.
Man kan godt have en personlighedskarakter
som er genert eller tilbageholdende
men man skal ikke være sådan meget trist   i seks års alderen.

<u>RIE:</u>
Jette has at times been sad,
and we've thought
is there   something?

But Jette is functioning,
it's not like
she just sits there unhappy
all the time.

But still Jette seems resigned
now   and then
        "I can't be bothered"
   I don't want to do anything".

Then we got a hint from her Dad.
He came and told us
her mother has an alcohol problem.
I know very well
that when the father comes to us
with the problem,
there may be several reasons.
They had a terrible divorce battle,
where they've been at each other's throats.

                    But we'll focus on the child
                    and do all we can for Jette.

So we've planned a meeting with both
parents to discuss Jette's problems.
But it's not
much fun
as a parent
to be told
that there's something
the matter with Jette!!!!!!!!!
Maybe they know it very well, but maybe they can't easily do something about
it.

But still I think
you have to say the tough things!!!
But it can be hard!
What if they get really upset,

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shall we comfort them!?!
But I feel it's our duty to put words
to the difficult things
-to try to make them better.

<u>**SARA:**</u>
This will be a tough meeting!
There will be lots of stuff involved.

First it's the possible drinking problem.
I heard
    they weren't sure
        whether they should believe
            the mother had stopped drinking.
But another thing may be
    that the mother can see
        they're not sure
            if they believe her.

And there may be
something
really
messy
in the parents' divorce.
It wouldn't be the first time!

It's just so important
that the meeting goes well.

If they make it a good meeting
they'll have two parents
who really really want to cooperate.
-Well yes, if they're normal reasonable parents, but you can never tell!

So they must think about
what they want from the talk.
Is it realistic that the "fed up girl"
will change in four weeks to a joyful girl.

Or is it enough that she joins in
to this or that extent.
Because she's a bit too often
sad, not really happy and not really
enterprising.
It's okay to have a personality
that's shy or withdrawn
but you shouldn't be very sad like that
when you're only six.

When reading through the two poetic representations we see that although they demonstrate Rie's and Sara's different perspectives they also illuminate some similar themes on how to handle the meeting with Jette's parents about Jette's sadness. I will draw out two themes which emerge clearly.

Firstly, both poetic representations on an overall level reveal that for these professionals there is something painful about conducting a parental meeting which revolves around six-year-old Jette's sadness, because this is unusual in six-year-olds.

Secondly, both poems reveal that there is a common theme of uncertainty which seems to arise at such a meeting. This theme has a central position, marked in bold in my poetic representations. Rie's poem underlines that she does not know how to react if Jette's parents become emotional when confronted with the fact of Jette's sadness in the reception class. Sara's poem underlines that it is not possible to figure out if Jette's parents will show normal cooperation in their task of being parents for a vulnerable child or if they will react differently from most parents.

These two themes of painfulness and uncertainty in both poems are according to an Arendtian understanding connected to our existential conditions of being the same kind of humans sharing the same common conditions on the same earth.

Following an Arendtian line of thinking, the early part of a person's life is supposed to be highly characterised by active involvement. Hence Jette's sadness arouses painful feelings in the two professionals who are aware that this is not what Jette's life is supposed to display at her early age.

The uncertainty about the difficult meeting with the parents is likewise a feeling common to both professionals because every human being knows that in a meeting about such problematic issues many difficult things may surface.

Since I argue that these themes are connected to people's basic existential conditions, all of us should be able to relate to the painfulness and uncertainty in relation to the parental meeting on Jette's strained lifeworld. There should then be two obvious themes to investigate in my analysis. However I prefer to follow my Arendtian political line of thinking. From this it follows that the most 'politically' interesting issue to investigate is the perspectives Rie and Sara choose to adopt on how the parental meeting should be conducted in the presence of the two themes of painfulness and uncertainty.

Hence in my analysis I will focus on the different approaches of Rie and Sara as to how the difficult parental meeting should be conducted. The goal of my analysis is to investigate how the consulting session has influenced Rie's

further perspective on this.

The analysis will be carried out on two levels. The first level is investigatory and the second level is explanatory. Firstly I will investigate the influence of the consulting session on Rie's further perspective on how to conduct the meeting. Secondly I will seek an answer to how this influence is linked to the perspective Sara demonstrated at the consulting session. In this second level of analysis I will make use of both Rie's and Sara's interpretations of the perspective Sara demonstrated at the consulting session. Hence in the second analysis level I will be able to trace how Rie embeds what Sara said at the consulting session in her own line of thinking.

6.4 The consulting session's influence on Rie's perspective

In order to be able to analyse the influence of the consulting session I chose to interview Rie the following day. She would therefore have had time to conduct some *thinking* about what came up at the consulting session.

In the interview I had a twofold focus: 1.) How Rie characterised the perspective she presented at the consulting session and 2.) Her current perspective on the day after the consulting session.

In the previous chapter I have described and illustrated with one example how I have used the technique of meaning condensation and principles from the hermeneutical circle in my work with the transcripts of the interviews. To briefly reiterate here, in order to summarise each perspective I started by grouping Rie's statements according to common themes. Then I made a meaning condensation of all the statements in each group. After this I formulated an overall meaning condensation for the group, labelling it a "component" of the perspective. Finally I wrote all the components into one coherent summary of each perspective. For a more detailed look at the production of the two summaries on the next page see Appendix 4.

Now I proceed directly to a comparison and analysis of the similarities and differences between the two summaries.

Rie's representation of her perspective at the consulting session	Rie's perspective at the interview – the day after the consulting session
Yesterday: I had planned that the goal of the upcoming parental meeting was to talk about Jette's well-being in school and at home with the two parents, which should lead to **the making of a plan for how to help Jette in the best way**. In a sincere way we wanted to try to understand their two points of view in relation to the issues in Jette's lifeworld. *Likewise we wanted to confront the parents with our concern on the difficult stuff in Jette's lifeworld (just like we did at our earlier meeting with Jette's mother). However at the same time we wanted to listen to their reactions to our statements about our concerns.*	Today: *I want us to strive to be highly appreciative in our approach to Jette's parents. However, I still want us to say the difficult things, but with a focus on a positive change for Jette.* **I want us to be concrete about how Jette can improve her overall well-being by our setting some specific goals. This will be done in collaboration with the parents.** I want us to be more aware of the possible effects of Jette's mother's drinking problem.

Table 3. In this table we can follow how Rie changed her perspective on how to conduct the parental meeting. I have indicated my meaning condensations of Rie's quotes which led up to these summaries in Appendix 4.

In Table 3 it can be seen that in each perspective there are several components. Most of the components appear both in Rie's perspective at the session and in Rie's changed perspective the day after the session. My comparison which follows makes use of these components.

When comparing Rie's old and new perspectives it can be stated that on an overall level the contents of the two are similar. Even though there is not any decisive change in Rie's new perspective I want to highlight that the consulting session has influenced her to make adjustments to how she wants to talk about the difficult issues (the component in italics) and what she sets as the aim of the meeting (the component in bold). Furthermore Rie has a new focus on being aware of possible effects of Jette's mother's drinking problem (the underlined component). Next I will illustrate and analyse the changes in these three components with the help of some of Rie's statements.

6.4.1 How to talk about difficult issues (the component in italics)

When we look at the sentences I have marked in italics, we see that Rie in her new perspective has enhanced her focus on being appreciative when confronting Jette's parents with the difficult issues in relation to Jette's strained life-world.

In the interview Rie says the following about her new approach:

[jeg vil være] mere - lidt mere – opmærksom, end jeg tidligere havde tænkt, på det der med at være anerkendende (…)I forbindelse med forældre mødet (…) [så skal vi] komme væk fra "at Jette har det der opgivende en engang i mellem" (…) til "hvordan kan hun komme til at fungere mere sådan alment bedre".

[I will be] more - a little bit more - attentive than I had previously thought, about the idea of being appreciative (…) In connection with the parental meeting (...) [we must] get away from "Jette sometimes is despairing" (...) to "how can she function better on an overall level".

Rie here demonstrates that she has made a change in the way she wants to raise the difficult issue of Jette's sadness. After the consulting session she has a more appreciative approach and now wants them to focus on a positive change for Jette rather than only on the negative aspect of Jette's sadness. This change seems to follow the appreciative pedagogical line of thinking. It is important to underline that appreciative pedagogy is found in many versions and is used in conjunction with a number of different theories e.g. Axel Honneth, Daniel Stern and John Bowlby (Lynge, 2007). But Koch Hansen (2010) illustrates that the various forms of appreciative pedagogy share an emphasis on a desire to focus on people's resources instead of on their deficits.

The above quote may give the impression that Rie uses the appreciative pedagogical line of thinking in order to deny the existence of some difficult issues. However in a later quote Rie says:

[Efter rådgivningssamtalen] vil jeg mere lidt mere opmærksom på, end jeg tidligere havde tænkt, på det der med anderkendelse. Men jeg fik også det ud af samtalen at det er vigtigt på mødet at være konkret også, for at skabe en god atmosfære, så vi ikke bare kommer til at sidde og sige at "du gør" og "hug hug hug" så trækker de jo følehornene til sig med det samme. Men dog jeg synes at man dog skal sige de svære ting.

[After the consulting session] I'll be a bit more aware than I thought before about the matter of appreciation. But I also learnt from our talk that it's important to be specific at the meeting too, to create a positive atmosphere, so we don't just sit there saying "do this, do that" and "snap snap snap", then they'll just creep back into their shells straightaway. But still I think we have to say the difficult things.

The last sentence illustrates that although Rie wants to be appreciative towards Jette's parents, she still wants to talk about the difficult issues at the meeting. Hence I conclude that in spite of her desire to show appreciation she does not want to deny the difficult issues in Jette's strained lifeworld.

The conclusion of this section is that the consulting session has helped Rie to be aware of being appreciative during the discussion of difficult issues at the forthcoming meeting.

6.4.2 The aim of the meeting (the component in bold)

The texts I have marked in bold in the two summaries in Table 3 concern what Rie wants to achieve with the parental meeting. At the consulting session her objective was that they should make a '**plan for how to help Jette in the best way**'. But at the interview Rie says that now she wants them instead to be more '**concrete about how Jette can improve her overall well-being by our setting some specific goals. This will be done in collaboration with the parents**'.

In the interview Rie says about the change in this component:

Jeg har fundet ud af at det er vigtigt på mødet med at være konkret, også for at skabe en god atmosfære.

I've figured out that it's important to be specific at the meeting, also in order to create a positive atmosphere.

Later on Rie mentions some examples of which specific goals could be relevant:

At [Jette] bliver mere glad generelt; at hun kontakter os; og vil være mere med i det som sker; mere lyst til at lære.

That [Jette] becomes happier in general; that she makes contact with us, and joins in more what's going on; a greater desire to learn.

These two quotes primarily illustrate Rie's enhanced focus on being specific which corresponds with the idea about setting specific goals, but they also once more underline her appreciative approach to mentioning the difficult issues. I state this because Rie mentions that she wants to "create a positive atmosphere" and because her examples of goals focus on a positive change for Jette (that 'Jette becomes happier in general' and that Jette gets 'a greater desire to learn').

6.4.3 Increased awareness of the drinking issue (the underlined text)

I have underlined the following text in Rie's further perspective: I want us to be more aware of the possible effects of Jette's mother's drinking problem.

In the interview Rie says that at the coming parental meeting they will have to be aware of

... hvordan forældre der drikker kan reagere... Ikke sådan at det var helt nyt for mig, men det var godt for mig at høre [Saras] præcise ord på det.

... how parents who drink can react...Not that it was completely new to me but it was good for me to hear [Sara's] exact words about it.

In this quote Rie reveals that Sara's words express a desire for them to be aware of the possible effects of Jette's mother's drinking issue. If we refer to the summary of her perspective from the consulting session, we find this component was not included there and is thus a new element in Rie's further perspective on how to conduct the meeting compared to her old perspective.

6.4.4 Accumulation of the three sub-sections

I will now draw together the analysis of Table 3 by focusing on how Rie has changed her perspective as a result of the consulting session. I will do this by investigating from which position Rie forms her perspective on how to conduct the meeting with Jette's parents at the consulting session compared to her perspective at the interview the next day.

I can conclude that in accordance with her responsibility as a reception class teacher Rie wanted to use the parental meeting to discuss the difficult things in Jette's strained lifeworld. She also wanted to make a plan to help Jette in the best way in collaboration with the parents. Hence I will argue that her perspective was marked by her adopted position of "a responsible and cooperation-minded reception class teacher".

After the consulting session Rie wanted to use an appreciative approach to discuss the difficult things in Jette's strained lifeworld. In her new perspective

she wants to set up some specific goals in order to help Jette in the best way. Also at this stage, she has a sharper focus on an honest investigation of whether Jette's mother's drinking problem has affected Jette. Hence I would argue that an extra layer has now been added to her adopted position with regard to the meeting. I will call her new position that of a "responsible, cooperation-minded, appreciative, specific goal-setting and alcoholism-aware reception class teacher".

6. 5 Rie's perception of what Sara said at the consulting session

In this section I will investigate the connection between the change in Rie's perspective and what Sara, the school social worker, said at the consulting session about how to conduct the parental meeting.

However it is crucial according to my Arendtian existential-phenomenological framework that Rie will interpret what Sara said according to her own standpoint. Hence in my interview with Rie I investigated how Rie perceived what Sara said in the session about how to conduct the meeting. I also interviewed Sara and investigated how she described the perspective she revealed at the consulting session. Hence I have an opportunity to follow how Rie subjectively has interpreted the perspective Sara demonstrated at the session about conducting the parental meeting.

The table on the next page presents two versions of Sara's perspective at the consulting session: firstly, Rie's representation and secondly, Sara's own account.

Rie's representation of Sara's perspective	Sara's account of her own perspective
At the consulting session Sara drew upon experiences with **difficult meetings** from her career as a social worker. Sara had a precise explanation of how things are for children who have parents with a drinking problem. *Sara talked about how to approach Jette's parents in an appreciative way* and <u>underlined that it was important to talk in a concrete way about how to improve Jette's well-being.</u>	**I signalled that it was important to be aware of how difficult the meeting would be to conduct, because there will be two difficult issues present: Jette's mother's drinking issue and their divorce. Because of the difficult agenda I signalled that it's important to prepare the meeting properly**. <u>It's important to prepare yourself so that you are able to set up some realistic and measureable goals as the outcome of the meeting</u>. Similarly, I implied that it's important that *the meeting needs to be carried out in a positive atmosphere* where Jette's mother and father are viewed as collaborative partners.

Table 4. Two different versions of Sara's perspective at the consulting session. I have indicated my meaning condensations of Rie's and Sara's quotes which led up to these summaries in Appendix 4.

Table 4 shows that Rie represents all the components which Sara represents in her own account of her perspective at the consulting session, but it also shows that Rie phrases slightly differently than Sara how Sara implied that the parents should be approached (text in italics) and what should be achieved at the meeting (underlined text). We also see that Rie under-represents how Sara talked about the difficulty of the meeting (text in bold).

6.5.1 How to approach Jette's parents (the text in italics)

The first summary in Table 4 shows how I have chosen to place centrally Rie's characterisation of Sara's perspective as promoting an appreciative pedagogical line of thinking. The reason for doing so is revealed in the following quote from my interview with Rie:

Jóhannes:
Kunne du mærke at du og Sara havde for-skellig indgangsvinker til nogen ting?
Rie:
Det er svært at sige.
Jeg vil sige at sådan noget som anerkendelse i forhold til det kommende møde. Det var noget hun lagde vægt på at være anerken-dende over for forældrene. At alene det at de møder op og lægger nogle ting frem som ikke er så rare at snakke om. Det er ikke alle forældre der gør det.
Men de kan til enhver tid afvise og sige "jamen det passer ikke" og være negative.
_(…)_
Ud fra dette Sara sagde så vil jeg være lidt mere opmærksom på det der med anerken-delse for at skabe en god atmosfære.

Jóhannes:
Did you notice that you and Sara had different approaches to anything?
Rie:
It's difficult to say.
I'd say something like appreciation in connection with the upcoming meet-ing. That was something she stressed about being appreciative towards the parents. That they just come along and start to talk about unpleasant things. It's not every parent who'd do that.
But they can always refuse and say "that's not right" and be negative.
(...)
Based on what Sara said, I'll be a bit more aware of the idea of apprecia-tion to create a positive atmosphere.

The quote illustrates that Rie conceived that Sara emphasised that it was im-portant to be appreciative towards the parents. She also states that Sara in-spired her to use the appreciative approach in order to create a positive at-mosphere.

Next I will investigate how Sara herself gives an account of this component of her perspective at the consulting session. Sara says that she implied to Rie:

at det er vigtigt (…) at det bliver et godt møde hvor forældrene føler "at her vil vi ger-ne hjælpe" altså "her har vi ikke en løftet pegefinger".

that it's important (...) that it's a good meeting where the parents feel it's about: "here we'd like to help you" in other words "here we're not going to tell you off".

We see that Sara emphasises here that it was important for Rie and her col-league to create a good collaborative parental meeting. However she does not mention anything about being appreciative in this statement. My further search through the whole interview transcript and my observational notes show that Sara never uses the term "appreciative" as if she is following an ap-preciative pedagogical line of thinking, but with another connotation. She says for example:

Når jeg har anerkendt dem i at "puuha - ja det er svært når barnet har det dårligt" så videre vil jeg gerne have fokus over på sagen "Hvordan har barnet det?" og "Hvad kan grundene være?"

When I've been appreciative by saying "That's awful – it's difficult when your kid feels bad", then I want to move the focus to the matter of "How does your child feel?" and "What could be the reasons?"

This quote reveals that Sara uses the word "appreciative" in a more neutral and factual way than Rie does.

On the basis of my analysis in this section I conclude that Sara did not use an appreciative pedagogical approach when she urged Rie to aim at a good collaborative meeting. However I have stated that Rie represents Sara's perspective on how to conduct the meeting as following an appreciative pedagogical line of thinking. Thus I would argue that Rie gives her representation of Sara's perspective a twist towards how she herself frequently thinks in line with appreciative pedagogy (as demonstrated in Section 7.4.1).

But even though Rie gives Sara's perspective a twist according to her own thinking, we see that essentially both of them talked about being collaborative-minded towards Jette's parents. I would therefore argue that both of them demonstrate the will to reduce the uncertainty in relation to the parents' reactions by being collaborative-minded.

6.5.2 Setting specific goals (the underlined text)

I will now focus on a component underlined in Table 4. We see that in the summary of Sara's representation the component is phrased as follows: 'it is important to prepare yourself so that you are able to set up some realistic and measureable goals as the outcome of the meeting'. In Rie's summary of Sara's perspective it is phrased differently: 'Sara underlined that it was important to talk in a concrete way about how to improve Jette's well-being'. In the following I will illustrate these two different summaries of this component with quotes from the interviews with Sara and Rie respectively.

In the interview Sara describes how she used her approach of "setting specific goals" in the following way:

Hvad man vil nå med forældremødet? Altså hvad er realistisk! Er det realtiskt at fra at se "en ked af det pige" om fire uger så ser vi en "sprudlende pige"? (...) Er det realistisk at forandre det helt på kort tid eller kan

What do we want to achieve with this meeting with the parents? I mean what is realistic! Is it realistic that from seeing a "fed up little girl" we'll see in four weeks "a joyful little girl"?

delmålet være at det er godt nok at om fire uger at de vil se en pige som deltager så og så meget. Altså at gøre det mere målbart.

(...) Is it realistic to change it completely in a short time or might a partial goal be that it's good enough that they see in four weeks a girl who joins in to this or that extent. I mean making it more measurable.

In this quote we see that Sara first explains that at the consulting session she implied that Rie and her colleague needed to set realistic goals within a defined timeframe (four weeks). Then at the end of the statement Sara underlines that the goals must be measurable. It is not only Sara that I observed mentioning such an approach of "setting specific goals", I also observed another social worker, whom I have called Sigbritt, who introduced a similar approach to a school professional in another consulting session. Sigbritt says in an interview:

Men jeg var rigtigt tilfreds med den aftale, vi lavede, at Tanja og moren har det her forældremøde i næste uge, hvor de foruroligende ting bliver undersøgt nærmere, at der bliver lavet nogle klare målbare mål og så samler man op på dem inden sommerferien.

But I was really pleased with that agreement we made that Tanja and the mother have this parental meeting next week, where the worrying things are looked at more closely, and some clear measurable goals are set and we put this all together before the summer holiday.

We see in this quote that just like Sara Sigbritt implies that the goals need to be measurable and set within a defined timeframe.

Sara and Sigbritt's goal setting approach may sound like a common-sense approach but it is important to point out that it shares a lot of similarities with a specific well developed management tool, especially as propounded by psychologist Edwin Locke in his "Goal Setting Theory" (Locke & Bryan, 1966; Locke & Latham, 1990). This theory is often referred to as the SMART approach. SMART stands for Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Time-targeted (Cantore & Passmore, 2012). Looking at Sara's quote we see that she seems to follow the SMART approach, in particular in her emphasis on Realistic goals and on the quantitative elements of Measurable and Time-targeted goals.

Let us now investigate how Rie represents Sara's SMART-oriented component of setting specific goals the day after the consulting session.

Jóhannes:

Så var der et punkt på mødet i går hvor Sara snakkede om at sætte sig konkrete

Jóhannes:

Then there was a point at the meeting yesterday where Sara talked about set-

mål (…) Hvad var det i forbindelse med og hvad tænker du at hun mente med det?

Rie:

Jo - i forbindelse med forældre mødet (…) At Jette vil komme til at fungere mere sådan alment bedre. At hun bliver mere glad generelt. At hun kontakter os og vil være mere med i det som sker. Mere lyst til at lære.

ting specific goals (...) In what connection was that and what do you think she meant by it?

Rie:

In connection with the meeting with the parents (...) The idea was that Jette will function better overall. That she'll be happier in general. She'll make contact with us and join in what's going on more. More desire to learn.

In this quote, we first see that Sara's component of setting specific goals has made an impact on Rie. Then we see that Rie applies the component to how she wants to deal with the issue of Jette's sadness. Hence my conclusion is that Sara's component of "setting specific goals" helps Rie to be able to act on Jette's sadness instead of being paralysed by the painfulness which Jette's sadness arouses in her as demonstrated in my poetic representation.

The quote also shows that the examples of goals Rie mentions are not particularly measurable; neither does she set a time-target for the goals to be reached. She thus gives Sara's SMART quantitative oriented component a qualitative twist. Hence according to my Arendtian framework Rie's representation is successful as this framework maintains that one must always represent components in another's perspective through one's own interpretation of them according to one's past experiences.

It is evident that Rie's qualitative version of "setting specific goals" fits well with my previous demonstration of how she draws upon a pedagogical appreciative line of thinking. It is also clear that such a qualitative oriented approach is in keeping with the nature of Rie's everyday work where she has to relate to her reception class pupils most of the day.

The question is then why Sara and Sigbritt give their version of "setting specific goals" such a quantitative twist which seems entirely in accordance with the SMART approach. We can imagine that Sara and Sigbritt also have regular daily contact with children and parents comparable to Rie's contact with her pupils. So we would expect them also to present a more qualitative-relational than quantitative version of "setting specific goals". But according to Bømler (2011) such a quantitative line of thinking about goal setting can be seen in the context of an increasing methodological trend in the work of social workers in the Danish social services. She claims that this trend is steered by a wish to standardise qualitative oriented work to make it better and more efficient in a

quantitative managerial line of thinking. Petersen (2008) claims that this trend in not only found in social services but throughout all modern welfare state services.

Bømler's criticism is a call to professionals to reflect on the rationale behind their use of the tool of "setting specific goals". However as I have also demonstrated this goal setting approach is useful for Rie as it helps her to cope with the difficult existential theme of painfulness connected to the parental meeting on six-year-old Jette's disturbing sadness. It is likely that the same is at stake when Sara and Sigbritt choose to make use of the "setting specific goals" approach.

However we also see that Sara and Sigbritt give this "setting specific goals" approach a SMART-oriented coating which, according to Bømler's criticism, is too quantitative in nature for relational tasks. One can ponder why it is the social workers and not the pedagogue who make this quantitative twist to the goal setting approach. It is a fairly obvious fact that besides relational client contact, social workers also have to do paper work which is material by nature. Arendt explains that when an activity is carried out with material things, the nature of this activity is distinguished from the nature of relational work. Arendt labels an activity with material things a *work* activity and claims that such activities call for an approach which does not focus on relational aspects but on the matter one is working with. For such a *work* activity methods and techniques are an obvious choice. But Arendt argues that a *work* activity is not sensitive towards people's real life issues and hence if it is used in relational work it will tend to close our eyes to these aspects (Arendt 1958, p. 300). Hence the point is that people need to consider very carefully the suitability of a *work* activity method such as a SMART approach to each particular task. The analysis in this section has demonstrated that for the interaction on Jette's strained lifeworld between the social worker and the pedagogue one should carefully weigh the pros and cons of using a "setting specific goals" approach.

6.5.3 The difficulty of the meeting (the text in bold)

In the summary of Sara's account in Table 4 the difficulty is expressed thus: **I signalled that it was important to be aware of how difficult the meeting would be to conduct, because there will be two difficult issues present: Jette's mother's drinking issue and their divorce.** Because of the difficult agenda I signalled that it's important to prepare the meeting. In the summary of Rie's representation I scarcely touched upon this component since in the

interview she mentions only once in passing that Sara considered the meeting would be difficult.

I will now investigate how Sara herself phrased this component in order to ascertain whether there was a crucial element which Rie could have profited from in her *thinking* after the consulting session in order to enrich her further perspective on how to conduct the meeting.

Sara says in the interview:

Jeg signallerede at der er rigtigt mange svære ting omkring det der forældremøde. Det er et svært møde. Der kommer til at være mange ting i det rum. Et er morens drikkeri. Der er også en mor og far der er skilt.

I signalled that there really are a lot of difficult things in relation to that parental meeting. It's a difficult meeting. There will be many issues involved. One is the mother's drinking. There is also a mother and father who are divorced.

In this quote Sara stresses that at the consulting session she signalled that there are two difficult issues which will be present simultaneously: Jette's mother's drinking problem and a possible issue with the parents' divorce.

Likewise Sara says:

Ligeledes viste jeg hende at det er vigtigt at forberede samtalen med forældrene lidt, og at tænke sig om hvad man vil nå med samtalen.

Similarly, I showed her that it's important to prepare the conversation with the parents a bit and think about what you want to achieve with the talk.

Sara states here that at the consulting session she demonstrated that the difficulties with the meeting imply that it is important for Rie and her colleague to prepare the meeting properly.

I find it notable that Sara's representation emphasises strongly that she indicated that the meeting would be difficult to conduct and must therefore be carefully prepared whilst Rie does not emphasise this component at all in her representation of Sara's perspective.

Let us now consider why Rie does not represent this component in my interview with her. Let me first point out that already in the previous section I showed that in both Rie's old and new perspectives she mentioned difficult matters to be raised at the meeting (see Section 7.4). I therefore conclude that Rie must have been aware that the meeting would be difficult to conduct and Sara's first part of this component was thus irrelevant to her. It is then likely that Rie did not realise that Sara had a two-tier explanation: a) the meeting is difficult b) hence it has to be prepared properly. The question is then why did

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Sara not leave out the first part of this component when Rie already agreed to this?! A hint at an answer can be found in one of Sara's statements in my interview with her:

Jeg prøvede at vise at Rie kunne snakke med mig om svære emner. Fordi jeg har så tit oplevet, at det er svært for skolens personale at tage de her svære samtaler, hvor der skal siges noget der er lidt svært.

I tried to show Rie that she could talk to me about difficult subjects. I've so often experienced that it's difficult for school staff to have these difficult talks where something a bit tough has to be said.

This quote reveals that Sara groups Rie with other school professionals, stating that Rie and the others find it hard to talk to parents about difficult matters. It is worth noting that on an overall level Sara's claim agrees with the findings of Hjort (1999) and Ribers (2012) that it is hard for Danish pedagogical staff to have talks with parents when there are difficult issues present. It is possible to argue, as Westerling (2008) does, that this similarity amongst school professionals most likely stems from their similar experiences that parental meetings do not often involve such difficult issues. By contrast, clearly social workers frequently discuss very difficult issues with parents. But, as I have demonstrated in the previous section, the interview with Rie shows that she does not find it hard to raise difficult matters.

My conclusion is that Sara's statement above indicates that at the consulting session she did not realise that Rie did not find it hard to raise difficult issues, because Sara grouped Rie with the majority of pedagogical staff who find it hard to talk to parents about difficult matters. According to Ejrnæs's (2006) research it is not uncommon that professionals in interprofessional work tend to define their interlocutor as similar to the other members of the respective profession, even though in fact their particular interlocutor may not be a typical representative of others. Hence when one professional meets a person from another profession the first professional's discourse[17] about the behaviour of the members of the other profession may be so ingrained that he or she does not see that this particular professional is exhibiting different behaviour.

The example of this analysis thus illustrates a need for training for professionals to enable them to distinguish whether their interprofessional interlocu-

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[17] The term "discourse" is used following a Foucaultian post-structucalistic line of thinking in which the focus is on how discourses on actual matters are shaping the matters themselves (Wetherwell, 2001).

tor is representative of most of his or her fellow professionals or like Rie deviates from the norm. A first point in such training could be Arendt's *work* activity which stresses that members of a profession tend to have some similar behaviour patterns. The training could then move on to Arendt's *action* activity which categorically states that individuals can act differently than the rest of their fellow professionals. The *action* activity further stresses that even though an interlocutor seems to share some features with fellow professionals, the specific interlocutor will always personalised these features in a unique way according to his or her unique collection of past life experiences both within and outside his or her professional work.

6.5.4 Accumulation of the three sub-sections

We can summarise by stating firstly that Rie represents quite well the overall intention in Sara's perspective.

However with a closer look at the details my analysis demonstrates that Rie represents the three components according to her own interpretation. 1) When Sara represents that she talked about creating a positive atmosphere, Rie represents this component according to a pedagogical appreciative line of thinking. 2) When Sara represents that she talked about setting up goals in a quantitative SMART-oriented manner, Rie represents this component in a more qualitative manner. 3) When Sara represents that she stressed that the difficult meeting called for proper preparation, Rie has not noticed this in her representation.

Although Rie gives the three components a personal twist I do not conclude that Rie has carried out an unfortunate presentation of Sara's components. This is because according my Arendtian framework a person's representation of an interlocutor's perspective will always be marked by their own interpretation, but the core of a component must however be represented in a valid authentic way without errors and illusions. My analysis has demonstrated that for the first two components the core is represented intact but I must conclude that this is not the case for the third component. Rie did not represent the fact that Sara had a twofold focus: a) the meeting was difficult to conduct and b) it needed proper preparation. In the analysis I hinted that the reason for this non-transference most likely was that Sara approached Rie through her understanding that school professionals generally tend not to deal with difficult issues, although in fact Rie demonstrated the will to do so. Hence I must conclude that Rie's representation of the third component could have been more profitable. But likewise I must underline that my analysis shows that the influ-

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ence of such an *action* incident on a school professional's perspective is extremely complicated. The complexity is marked by the fact that professionals do not objectively hear what their interlocutor is saying but always hear their interlocutor's statements through their own earlier experiences.

Throughout my analysis I have also observed another issue which demonstrates the complexity of the consulting session as an interprofessional work activity. In the interview Rie mentions a large number of actors whom she includes in her thinking about Jette's strained lifeworld: Jette's mother, father, brother, classmates and the classmates' parents. She also mentions that she has been in contact with eight professionals about her concern for Jette: the school doctor, the teachers (whom she refers to as one group)*,* the school social worker*,* the school nurse*,* the educational psychologist, the school secretary, Rie's colleague (a pedagogue) and myself as a researcher. Following an Arendtian line of thinking, every interaction Rie has with other people about Jette adds a new layer to her perspective on how to deal with Jette's strained lifeworld. In Arendtian terms Rie's accumulation of the outcome of these interactions is called Rie's "web of relations" on Jette's strained lifeworld (Arendt, 1958, p. 181). Every time Rie speaks about Jette she activates this huge web of relations which covers Jette's strained lifeworld. Hence it is important that every utterance in an interprofessional work conversation is spoken clearly and listened to carefully.

6.6 Summary

In this chapter I have investigated how the interaction of Sara's and Rie's perspectives at the consulting session influenced Rie's further perspective on how to conduct the meeting with Jette's parents.

In Section 7.4 I concluded that Rie's former perspective on conducting the meeting was applied from a position where she wanted to act as "a responsible and cooperation-minded reception class teacher". My analysis demonstrated that Rie's later perspective is applied from a position where she wants to act as "a responsible, cooperation-minded, appreciative, specific goal-setting and alcoholism-aware reception class teacher". I therefore conclude that the consulting session has brought about a notable change in Rie's perspective on how to conduct the parental meeting.

In Section 7.5 I investigated how Rie was able to represent the perspective Sara demonstrated on how to conduct the meeting. By comparing Rie's repre-

sentation with Sara's own account I concluded that Rie represented the most important components which Sara emphasised, but that she also underrepresented one of the components which Sara considered crucial. This component was that the parental meeting had to be prepared properly as it included several difficult issues. I underlined that the unsuccessful representation was due to the considerable complexity of the *action* incident. This complexity was accentuated by my additional finding that the interview with Rie showed that there were no fewer than 13 different actors who had influenced Rie's current approach to Jette and hence her view of how to conduct the meeting! However it is important to stress that the whole chapter has demonstrated that it is precisely Sara's and Rie's differences that seem to create new interpretations and new opportunities which contribute to Rie's broadened approach to the parental meeting.

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Lear:
"Nothing can come of
nothing: speak
again."
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  William Shakespeare,
             King Lear
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Chapter 7: The consulting session on Amarjit's strained lifeworld

In this chapter I will analyse data from the interviews I carried out after my observation of a consulting session between the social worker **S**ara and the teacher **T**ine. During this session Tine raised her concern for Amarjit and Hans, respectively seven and eight years old, who attend her year one class. However, in this chapter I will only analyse material about their talk about Amarjit. Amarjit is seven years old and lives with her divorced mother in a flat close to the school. Amarjit only rarely sees her father.

7.1 The consulting session

In this section I will briefly present Tine's and Sara's professional backgrounds and their current jobs. I will then provide a description of the consulting session based upon the notes I conducted during my observation of the session.

Tine is in her late 20s. Tine qualified as a teacher with a profession bachelor degree[18] ten months prior to my observation and is hence in her first year as a

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[18] Teachers qualify by obtaining a 4 year professional bachelor degree from a university college. There is also a possibility to upgrade from another degree to become a teacher through a two year course, but this is much less common in Denmark than in England. Danish teachers have traditionally taught all classes from year 1 till year 9,

teacher. Sara is in her late 30s. Sara qualified as a social worker[19] 11 years ago and worked in various settings before being employed as a social worker who visits schools.

One Monday Tine sent an email to Sara asking for a consulting session because she had concerns about Amarjit and Hans in her year one. Sara and Tine agreed to meet each other on the following Wednesday at 2 pm. With the consent of Sara and Tine I also attended their consulting session. I greeted Tine and gave her a short explanation of how I would conduct my observation; I had already observed Sara several times so she knew my procedures. Thereafter I sat down and observed the rest of the consulting session in total silence, while I made notes and did my observation circles (see Section 4.5.3). The observation circles would serve the purpose of helping me to focus on the *action* incidents in my subsequent interviews with Tine and Sara respectively. *Action* incidents are in my research defined as incidents where people interact with different perspectives.

Based on the content of my observation notes I have divided the following description of the consulting session into two sections.

Sara first gave a brief presentation of her professional duties, particularly explaining what tasks she normally carries out at this school, and also presented briefly the local Social Service Department which she represented at the school.

After this Tine, the teacher, explained the issues she was concerned about in the two children's lifeworlds - one at a time. During these explanations at first Sara mainly listened but then after a while they had a conversation about the issues in the two children's strained lifeworlds.

The consulting session ended at 3.00 pm and was therefore approximately 20 minutes longer than the other sessions I have observed. But we must keep in mind that Tine raised her concerns for two children whereas in other ses-

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although a recent educational reform aims to see the new student teachers specialising in two of the following three year ranges: years 1-3, years 4-6 and years 7-9. Teachers specialise in two to four main subjects and also receive education in psychology, pedagogy and methodology.

[19] Social workers qualify by obtaining a 3½ year professional bachelor degree from a university college. The education is divided between learning in placements and in the university college. Major subject areas are social work (including social counselling), psychology, psychiatry, law and social science. Social workers are qualified to undertake professional employment in Danish public and private state-authorised social institutions, e.g. in municipal social service departments, job centres, street work with homeless people and work in drug rehabilitation programmes.

sions the school professionals only raised a concern for one child.

After the consulting session was finished I arranged appointments with Tine and Sara for conducting interviews with them individually towards the end of the following day. In the interviews, I asked questions about *action* incidents which came up in relation to their talk on both Amarjit and Hans at the consulting session. In this chapter I will however only analyse data concerning Amarjit. I have chosen to analyse data on Amarjit instead of Hans because the two professionals described the issues in her lifeworld in more detail.

The aim of my analysis is to investigate how Tine's perspective on two specific issues in relation to Amarjit's lifeworld has been influenced by her *action* incidents with Sara at the consulting. The two issues are "Amarjit's quietness" and "The meaning of the letter".

According to my Arendtian line of thinking the issues in my analysis need to originate in "things"; a "thing" may be either a physical thing or an incident that has physically taken place. The first issue originates in several past incidents in Tine's classroom in which Amarjit has remained silent while her classmates have been quite talkative. The second issue originates in an incident at the consulting session in which Tine brought up the issue of a letter. In the letter Tine was asked by the Social Service Department to fill in a form on Amarjit.

7.2 Amarjit's quietness

In my observation notes of the consulting session I could see that Sara and Tine had demonstrated different approaches to the fact that Amarjit several times had remained silent while her classmates were eager to recount something. Thus I classified this incident as an *action* incident. In my subsequent interviews with Sara and Tine respectively I investigated which perspectives they had demonstrated on this issue at the session and whether Tine had subsequently changed her perspective so that she intended to deal differently with Amarjit's quietness. The aim of the forthcoming analysis of the interview transcripts is to investigate in detail how the *action* incident at the consulting session has influenced how Tine intends to deal with Amarjit's quietness.

However I will first represent "Amarjit's quietness". I will present Amarjit's quietness with poetic representations which I have made with material from my interviews with Tine and Sara. As I have argued previously it is important to underline that an issue can never be viewed as an independent entity be-

cause it is always intertwined with how different persons perceive the issue. Hence we need to present an issue from their different perspectives and then, having access to several perspectives, we can try to form a contour of the issue.

I will present Tine's and Sara's perspectives on Amarjit's quietness in two sets of poetic representations. Then I will draw out some general characteristics about Amarjit's quietness.

The two sets of poetic representations are created from statements I have chosen from the interviews with Tine and Sara. I have chosen statements which boldly display Amarjit's quietness. I have formed these poetic interpretations in line with my interpretation of the main message of how Tine and Sara consider Amarjit's quietness in the interviews. In order to highlight certain important aspects of their perspectives which they stress in the interviews, I have emphasised certain words and sentences by using bold type and inserting empty spaces. The poetric representations are first presented in Danish then in English. For further information on the production of the poetic representations see Section 4.5.6.

TINE:

Hvis de nu aldrig kommer nogle steder?!

Alle andre elever kommer og fortæller
v i d t   o g   b r e d t
hvad de har lavet i weekenden.

Men hvis nu Amarjit bare sidder derhjemme
alene
- og faren og broren er der ikke -
så er der måske ikke sket noget særligt,
som hun gider at fortælle om.

Det ties i hjel

Jeg er ret sikker på, at de hver især har spørgsmål til **det**,
Og at de godt kunne tænke sig måske at få snakket om **det**.
Men der er ikke sådan rigtig nogen, der tør tage hul på **det**.

Der bliver ikke talt om
hvor broren er henne,
eller hvornår han kommer,
eller hvorfor han er der.
Så det ligger nok sådan og ulmer hele tiden;
der bliver ikke rigtigt gjort noget ved **det**.

Men jeg er ret sikker på, at hele hendes familie er godt klar over **det**.
Og jeg tror også godt, at Amarjit ved,
hvor broren er henne.

Men det er ikke godt
at have en bror der sidder i fængsel.
Men alligevel kan han godt være
en god bror og en sød fyr,
men hun fortæller aldrig om ham.

<u>Voksende bekymring</u>
Før tænkte jeg sådan:
Jeg skal bare have hende til at fungere oppe i klasseværelset,
have hende til at åbne mere og være mere på.
Men det handler ikke bare om
oppe i min klasse.
Det handler også om det vi ser der nede i frikvarteret.
Og specielt det der hjemme!

Jeg er blevet lidt mere bekymret.
Jeg var rimelig bekymret,
men nu lige   skridtet videre.

SARA:
 <u>Bekymring</u>
I starten tænkte jeg: "Det var da
dejligt med sådan en rolig pige'.
Men så hørte jeg at
Tine var
bekymret
for denne her pige.

Der var en storebror der sidder i fængsel.
Læreren vidste dog ikke,
hvor meget søsteren vidste omkring at hendes bror sad i fængsel.
Søsteren vidste dog godt, at hun havde en bror i fængslet.
Men hvad er historien der hjemme?
Hvor mange hemmeligheder er der?
Det kom jeg meget hurtigt til at tænke på,
når læreren sagde: Der er en bror der sidder i fængsel!

Men vi ved ikke om **det** er en 'hemmelighed'.
Vi ved ikke, hvor meget pigen ved.
Det kan godt være, at de har siddet og talt om **det**.

Læreren beskrev, at det er så vigtigt for moren, at søsteren ikke bliver som broren.
Søsteren er på hårdt arbejde hele tiden,
for at skulle bevise over for sin mor,
at hun kan det hele.
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Derved vidste søsteren godt,
at hun skule ikke blive lige som storebror.

Men det er jo meget voldsomt!
Det er skadeligt for barnet
decideret skadeligt!

TINE:

<u>What if they never get to go anywhere?!</u>
All the other children come and tell
      at g r e a t   l e n g t h
what they've done at the weekend.

But what if Amarjit just sits at home
                alone
– and her Dad and brother aren't there –
then maybe nothing much happened
she thinks it's worth talking about.

    IT is silenced to death
I'm pretty sure that each one of them
has questions about **it**,
And that maybe they'd like to
talk about **it**.
But no one really dares to open
the subject of **it**.

There's no talk about
where the brother is,
or when he's coming,
or why he's there.
So it's just there smouldering the whole time;
nothing's really being done about IT.

But I'm pretty sure that her entire
family knows about **it**.
And I also think that Amarjit knows
where her brother is.

But it's not good
having a brother in prison.
But he may still be
a good brother and a nice boy,
but she never talks about him.

    <u>Growing concern</u>
I used to think:
All I have to do is make her
function up there in my classroom,

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open up more and be more self-assertive.
But it's not just about
up there in my class.
It's also about what we see down there
in the break. And especially at home!

I've become a bit more concerned
I was pretty concerned,
but now   even more so.

SARA:
<div style="text-align:center"><u>Concern</u></div>

To start with I thought: "So nice to have
such a quiet girl'".
But then I heard
Tine was
concerned
about this girl.

There's an older brother who's in prison.
But the teacher didn't know
how much the sister knew
about the brother being in prison.
But the sister knew very well that she had a brother in prison.
But what's the story back home?!
How many secrets do they have?!
This crossed my mind
very quickly
when the teacher said:
There's a brother who's in prison!

But we don't know whether **it** is a "secret".
We don't know how much this girl knows.
They may well have sat and talked about
it.

The teacher was saying
that it's so important to the mother
that the sister doesn't end up
like her brother.
The sister is working hard all the time

to prove to her Mum
that she's on top of everything.
That's how the sister knew
that she wouldn't end up like her big brother.

But that's really awful!
It's bad for the child
downright bad!

When reading through Tine's and Sara's poetic representations it can be seen that they are clearly different in nature. Tine's poetic representation directly depicts how Amarjit's quietness has played out during several incidents in the classroom. By contrast, Sara's poetic representation focuses on Amarjit's quietness through how Tine had talked about it at the consulting session. Hence one could argue that it is only in Tine's statements that we have access to the thing behind the issue of Amarjit's quietness and therefore I cannot use Sara's statements to discover any overall characteristics of Amarjit's quietness. However the point is not that Sara needs to have experienced Amarjit's quietness in order to talk about it, but when Sara talks about it she needs to refer to it as it plays out in her lifeworld instead of talking about the quietness in an overall way. It can be seen in Sara's poetic representation that she talks about Amarjit's quietness in her everyday life and hence I conclude that I am able to make use of her statements.

In the two sets of poetic representations I can see that Amarjit's quietness raises two common existential themes for both professionals: "the unspoken" and "being concerned". I therefore conclude that these two themes give a characterisation of Amarjit's quietness which reaches beyond Tine's and Sara's subjective characterisations.

In the poetic representations the theme of "the unspoken" is made clear in my emphasis of the word IT and the two sentences in bold type. In both sets of poetic representations we see that the unspokenness about Amarjit's brother's imprisonment seems to leave Amarjit confused and Sara and Tine even show some uncertainty about how much Amarjit actually knows about her brother's imprisonment. Hence I can conclude that "the unspokenness" seems to create tensions in Amarjit's lifeworld and in the professionals' thinking about Amarjit's lifeworld. In Arendt's theorisations it is greatly stressed that people need to speak with one another about what is happening to them in order to understand it. Arendt makes this point so strongly because she argues that otherwise people will start to create individual worlds of meaning which will collide with one another and with the reality of the things. Hence it is vital for Amarjit and her family members to talk about her brother's imprisonment. However in this particular case it is also crucial as I interpret Arendt's theorisations that the issue of the brother's imprisonment must not be extensively talked about in the public sphere of the classroom but rather discussed in her family and with her teacher, as the teacher is a mediator between Amarjit's home and the school (Arendt, 1959).

The second main existential theme of "being concerned" is present in both

Tine's and Sara's poetic representations. It is very obvious in Tine's last poetic representation called "Growing concern" which shows that Tine has experienced increased concern about Amarjit's quietness. Tine's second poetic representation can also be interpreted as displaying that Tine is concerned that the quietness about the brother's imprisonment implies that something unhealthy is brewing and becoming larger and larger. The first lines of Sara's poetic representation reveal that Tine's concern made an impact on Sara. I would further argue that the rest of Sara's poetic representation can be seen as a response to the fact that Sara is also concerned about Amarjit's well-being.

The common theme of "being concerned" about Amarjit's well-being displayed in Tine's and Sara's poetic representations is according to my Arendtian understanding connected to the existential condition of natality. Following my Arendtian line of thinking, the early part of a person's life is supposed to be highly characterised by children engaging with their eyes wide open and talking a great deal about their experiences in the world. Hence 7-year-old Amarjit's quietness arouses in Tine and Sara a concern about her well-being.

Since I argue that there are two common themes of "the unspoken" and "being concerned" which Amarjit's quietness raises for the two professionals, it might seem obvious to investigate these two themes in my analysis. However I prefer to follow my Arendtian political line of thinking. From this follows that the most 'politically' interesting issue to investigate is the different perspectives Tine and Sara choose to adopt to Amarjit's quietness.

Hence in my analysis I will focus on how they presented their different perspectives on Amarjit's quietness at the consulting session in order to investigate how this influenced Tine's further perspective on meeting Sara's distinct perspective on this issue.

The analysis will be carried out on two levels. The first level is investigatory and the second level is explanatory. First I will investigate the influence of the consulting session on Tine's further perspective on how to deal with Amarjit's quietness. Secondly I will seek an answer to how this influence is linked to the perspective Sara demonstrated at the consulting session. In this second level of analysis I will make use of both Tine's and Sara's interpretations of the perspective Sara demonstrated at the session. Hence in the second analysis level I will be able to trace how Tine interprets what Sara said at the consulting session within Tine's own line of thinking.

7.3 The consulting session's influence on Tine's perspective

In my interview with Tine I first asked her to represent the perspective she had demonstrated on Amarjit's quietness when she raised her concern for Amarjit during the consulting session. Secondly I asked Tine about her present perspective on Amarjit's quietness – the day after she had been exposed to Sara's perspective on the girl's quietness at the consulting session.

It was crucial for me to obtain in the interview Tine's meaning-making of her perspectives instead of solely focusing on what Tine objectively had said/was saying about Amarjit's quietness.

With the use of the technique of meaning condensation I have generated summaries of respectively Tine's perspective at the consulting session and Tine's perspective the day after the consulting session. The summaries are displayed in Table 5.

In this section with the use of the two summaries I will investigate how Amarjit's quietness appeared differently to Tine after the consulting session compared to how she presented this issue at the beginning of the session.

Tine's representation of her perspective at the consulting session	Tine's perspective at the interview – the day after the consulting session
Yesterday: **I characterised Amarjit as different from the other children in my class who always want to tell about what they have been up to during the weekends with their family members.** <u>My goal was to get Amarjit to open up more and talk more and hence to a greater extent be a part of the social activities in the class.</u>	Today: **I see that Amarjit's quietness in relation to her family is not only an issue in my classroom, it's also a more overall issue in Amarjit's general lifeworld.** *I think that the explanation for Amarjit's quietness is based on the fact that Amarjit has learnt in her family that it is best to keep your cards close to your chest – specifically things about her brother's imprisonment. Such an approach implies that something unfortunate is constantly brewing and getting larger, without anyone doing anything about it.* <u>Because this is a sensitive issue for Amarjit I'd prefer to ask her about other issues than what she has been up to with her family members during the weekends.</u>

Table 5. In this table it is possible to follow how Tine changed her perspective on Amarjit's quietness. I have indicated my meaning condensations of Tine's quotes which led up to these summaries in Appendix 5.

When comparing Tine's old and new perspectives to each other there is no doubt that the consulting session with Sara has made a significant impact on how Tine views and intends to work on Amarjit's quietness. After the session Tine has enlarged her perspective on the extent of Amarjit's issue (the text in bold) and how she intends to work on Amarjit's quietness (the underlined text). Furthermore Tine has included a new component of an explanation for Amarjit's quietness (the text in italics).

In the following I will illustrate and analyse the changes in these differently marked components with the help of some of Tine's interview statements. The goal of my analysis is to reveal what change Tine has made in her position as to how she approaches the issue of Amarjit's quietness.

7.3.1 The extent of Amarjit's issue (the component in bold)

If we look at the sentences I have marked in bold in the two summaries we can see that Tine no longer thinks of Amarjit's quietness as only an issue inside the classroom but also as an issue in Amarjit's general lifeworld.

Tine says the following about how she presented Amarjit's quietness at the consulting session:

Jeg fremlagde ligesom [Amarjit's stilhed] og det gjorde jeg jo fra mit synspunkt: ud fra hvordan jeg forholder mig til Amarjit som en del af fællesskabet i klassen.

I kind of presented [Amarjit's quietness] and I did so from my point of view: from how I relate to Amarjit as part of the community spirit in the class.

In this quote Tine states that at the consulting session her starting point was how she experienced Amarjit in the classroom. Hence I would argue that Tine's perspective was highly marked by her position as Amarjit's teacher in the classroom setting.

Later in the interview Tine talks about the influence the consulting session has made on her further perspective on Amarjit's quietness:

Jeg har indset at det handler ikke bare om oppe i min klasse det handler også om det vi ser nede i skolegården og specielt det der hjemme.

I've realised that it's not just about what goes on up in my class, but what we see down in the playground and especially at home.

Tine states in this quote that when she now thinks about Amarjit's quietness she has extended her frame from the classroom to other areas in Amarjit's lifeworld. I therefore conclude that Tine's new perspective is spoken from Tine's newly adopted position of a teacher who focuses on Amarjit's overall well-being (and not only her behaviour in the classroom).

7.3.2 The explanation for Amarjit's quietness (the component in italics)

In the context of Table 5 I stated that the consulting session has influenced Tine to include a new component into her further perspective on Amarjit's quietness. I phrased the new component in the following way: *I think that the explanation for Amarjit's quietness is based on the fact that Amarjit has learnt in her family that it is best to keep your cards close to your chest – specifically things about her brother's imprisonment. Such an approach implies that something unfortunate is constantly brewing and getting larger, without anyone doing anything about it.*

In the following I will portray this new component with two statements from my interview with Tine. First, Tine says:

Jeg er ret sikker på at de [i familien] hver især har spørgsmål til [brorens fængsling] og godt kunne tænke sig måske at få snakket om det. Men der er ikke sådan rigtig nogen der tør tage hul på det. Så det ligger sådan og ulmer hele tiden. Men der bliver ikke rigtigt gjort noget ved det.

I'm quite sure that [in the family] each one of them has questions about [her brother's imprisonment] and would probably have liked to talk about it. But there's not really anyone who dares to bring up the subject. So it's smouldering there all the time. But nothing's really being done about it.

The quote reveals that Tine assumes that Amarjit's family members would like to talk about her brother's imprisonment but it remains unspoken and hence is constantly smouldering under the surface.

Secondly, Tine says:

Nu kan jeg bedre forstå hvorfor hun er som hun er. Altså hvorfor hun ikke er den som kommer farende mandag morgen og fortæller hvad hun har lavet i weekenden og altså er så åben. For hun er vant til hjemmefra at holde kortene tæt ind til kroppen – ik`?

Now I can better understand why she is the way she is. I mean why she's not the one who comes rushing to me Monday morning and tells me what she did at the weekend and is open like that. Because from home she's used to keeping her cards close to her chest, isn't she?

In this quote Tine reveals that she now better understands the reason for Amarjit's quietness. The reason is that Amarjit has learnt at home that it is best to "keep your cards close to your chest".

In this section we have seen that the consulting session has led to Tine making a connection between Amarjit's quietness and how her family is handling her brother's imprisonment. Hence I conclude that the session has resulted in Tine adopting an explanation-seeking position with regard to Amarjit's quietness.

7.3.3 Tine's intentions for her work on Amarjit's quietness (the underlined component)

In Table 5 I described that at the consulting session itself Tine's goal was to get Amarjit to open up more and talk more and hence to a greater extent be a part of the social activities in the class. After the consulting session Tine has made a plan for how she intends to get Amarjit to open up more; this plan is sensitive to her quietness about her brother's imprisonment. Hence Tine wanted rather to ask Amarjit about other issues than what she has been doing

with her family during the weekends.

In this section I will illustrate this change in Tine's perspective with statements from the interview with Tine in order to present a change in the position she adopts on how she intends to work with Amarjit's quietness.

Tine says the following about how she earlier thought about how she intended to work with Amarjit's issue of quietness:

Før tænkte jeg sådan 'Jeg ville bare have hende til at fungere oppe i klasseværelset have hende til at åbne mere og være mere på'.

I used to think like this: 'I just want her to function up there in the classroom, be more open and more self-assertive'

Tine says the following about her new approach:

Alle de andre kommer og fortæller vidt og bredt. Hvad de har lavet og alt muligt (…) Men hvis hun bare sidder derhjemme og faren og broren ikke er der, så er der ikke noget at fortælle. Så der er måske nogle lidt andre historier, man skal be hende om at fortælle. End bare hvad for nogle spændende ting hun har lavet i weekenden. Fordi det er ikke så tit at der har været nogle spændende. Og det har hun ikke lyst til at sidde og fortæller foran hele klassen - hvis de nu aldrig kommer nogle steder. Så jeg er da blevet lidt klogere på at arbejde med de elever der. Det er da helt sikkert.

All the others come and tell me things at great length. What they did and all kinds of things (...) But if she just sits there at home and her father and brother aren't there, then there's nothing to tell. So maybe there are some slightly different stories we can ask her to tell us. Rather than the exciting things she did at the weekend. Because there hasn't often been anything exciting. And she doesn't want to sit and say that in front of the whole class – if they never get to go anywhere. So I've learnt quite a bit about working with those kinds of pupils. No doubt about it.

In this quote Tine demonstrates that as a result of the consulting session she has been thinking that Amarjit does not have much to tell because she has not experienced much at the weekend since her father and brother are not there. Hence there are not many people around who can give Amarjit any weekend experiences, because her mother also has her little sister at home. Thus Tine intends to ask Amarjit about other things rather than ask what she and her family did at the weekend.

This section has revealed that both at and after the consulting session Tine wants to help Amarjit open up more and be more sociable. Hence I would say state that Tine adopts a position of care and involvement. This section has also demonstrated that Tine uses the reflections which the consulting session

gave her on Amarjit's family situation to avoid asking questions about Amarjit's family as this would most likely make the girl even quieter. Rather Tine wants to ask Amarjit questions about other issues. Further I would like to briefly remark that such a focus on alternative topics to weekend experiences seems also to be more sensitive towards vulnerable children's deprived families that lack the available time and financial resources available to more wealthy families.

7.3.4 Accumulation of the three sub-sections

I will now draw together the analysis of the consulting session's influence on Tine's further perspective on Amarjit's quietness.

At the consulting session Tine mainly thought about Amarjit's quietness as an issue in her classroom. Further Tine was focused on getting Amarjit to participate in the talk about what they had been doing at the weekend. The analysis demonstrated that this perspective was grounded in the fact that Tine had adopted a position of being an "involved and caring classroom-based teacher".

After the consulting session Tine assumes that Amarjit's quietness is an overall issue in her lifeworld. Tine thinks that Amarjit's quietness very likely stems from the fact that she has learnt in her family that it is best to keep your cards close to your chest, which specifically refers to her brother's imprisonment. This insight implies that Tine now wants to ask questions other than about family in order to get Amarjit to open up more and be more sociable in class. My analysis has demonstrated that Tine now speaks from a position as an "explanation-seeking, involved, caring and holistic teacher"; holistic refers to Tine's focus on Amarjit's overall well-being and not as previously just on her behaviour in the classroom.

Hence Tine has changed her position on Amarjit's quietness from an "involved and caring classroom-based teacher" to an "explanation-seeking, involved, caring and holistic teacher". Thus I conclude that the consulting session has had a decisive influence on the perspective Tine adopts on Amarjit's quietness.

7.4 Tine's perception of what Sara said at the consulting session

  Now I will seek an explanation of how this influence on Tine's perspective is linked to how Tine subjectively perceived the perspective Sara demonstrated on Amarjit's quietness at the consulting session. In order to state how Tine perceived Sara's perspective I will compare in Table 6 Tine's representation of Sara's perspective with Sara's account of her own perspective at the consulting session.

Tine's representation of Sara's perspective	Sara's account of her own perspective
Sara used the phrase "the big family secret" to explain the reason for Amarjit's quietness. The concept "the big family secret" implies that it is best to pretend that Amarjit's brother's imprisonment does not exist and *therefore the issue must not be talked about.* Therefore Amarjit's brother's imprisonment has become a taboo in her family. Having such a family secret has led to Amarjit remaining quiet about family matters during the "free" talks in the class.	I signalled that because Amarjit's quietness was particularly marked in relation to her family **it can be linked** to the way they behave in Amarjit's family. Further **I reflected** on whether Amarjit's quietness can be caused by the family's way of behaving in relation to Amarjit's brother's imprisonment which might be dealt with as "a big family secret". It implies that even though it is apparent to all in the family that Amarjit's brother is in prison, they do not *share their thoughts and feelings about it* which implies that Amarjit is being taught to restrict herself and not talk freely.

Table 6. Two different versions of Sara's perspective at the consulting session. I have indicated my meaning condensations of Tine's and Sara's quotes which led up to these summaries in Appendix 5.

In the previous section I demonstrated that Tine changed her perspective on Amarjit's quietness after she had been exposed to Sara's reflections at the consulting. Earlier Tine was purely descriptive in her approach to Amarjit's quiet behaviour, not thinking about the reason for it. After the consulting Tine assumes that the reason for Amarjit's quietness is that she has learnt at home that it is best to keep your cards close to your chest. I would suggest that Ta-

ble 6 illustrates that there is a clear connection between this change and how Tine interpreted what Sara said at the consulting session.

When considering the two representations of Sara's perspective in Table 6 it can be stated that the overall content is similar in both versions. Both versions reveal that there is only one major component in Sara's perspective on Amarjit's quietness, namely the concept of "the big family secret". However I find two crucial differences in how they represent how Sara used this concept at the consulting session. The first difference is how decisive Sara was in stating that Amarjit's quietness could be explained by the concept of the "the big family secret" (the text in bold) and the second difference is the implications of "the big family secret" (the text in italics).

7.4.1 The status given to the concept of "the big family secret"

By marking in bold some words in the two representations I want to highlight a difference in how Sara and Tine think that the concept of "a big family secret" was used in Sara's perspective at the consulting. Sara's summary signals that at the consulting she was reflecting on whether there was a connection between Amarjit's quiet behaviour and the fact that her family had a policy about not speaking about her brother being in prison. On the other hand, Tine's summary signals that Sara implied that this secretiveness was THE explanation for Amarjit's quietness.

When I asked Tine to represent Sara's use of the concept Tine said:

...når Sara sagde noget om "den store hemmelighed I familien" som forklaring til Amarjit's problem så tænkte jeg at...Jeg tror faktisk at hun har rimelig meget ret i at på det punkt der (...) Jeg er ret sikker på at de [i familien] hver især har spørgsmål til [brorens fængsling] og godt kunne tænke sig måske at få snakket om det. Men der er ikke sådan rigtig nogen der tør tage hul på det. Så det ligger sådan og ulmer hele tiden. Men der bliver ikke rigtigt gjort noget ved det.

...when Sara said something about "the big family secret" as an explanation for Amarjit's problem I thought... I really think that she's pretty much right that on that point (...) I'm quite sure that [in the family] each one of them has questions about [her brother's imprisonment] and would probably have liked to talk about it. But there's not really anyone who dares to bring up the subject. So it's smouldering there all the time. But nothing is really being done about it.

This quote reveals that Tine assumes that Sara used the concept to give a decisive explanation for Amarjit's quietness in the class. However when I asked Sara about how she approached the issue of Amarjit's quietness, she replies:

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Jeg [ville] have fokus på "Hvordan har Amarjit det?" og "Hvad kan grundene være til Amarjit's problemer?"

I [wanted to] focus on "How are things with Amarjit?" and "What might be the reasons for Amarjit's problems?"

Following this line of thinking Sara explains in the interview that she made use of the concept of "the big family secret". In the following Sara explains how she described the concept at the consulting:

Når man har en bror eller en søster, som fylder på den ene eller på den anden måde, så kan det være rigtigt hårdt, at være den søster eller bror der skal være den nemme og bare fungere. Altså - der er f.eks. lavet rigtig mange undelsøgelser om hvordan det er at være bror eller søster til et handicappet barn. Men også et barn der ikke er der...Altså...Et dødt barn eller der i fængsel. Et barn der er der men ikke er det. Og netop det der med "Hvordan får vi talt om det i familen?", "Hvordan håndterer vi det?" Hun vidste ikke, hvor meget denne her søster vidste om at bror sad i fængsel. Hun vidste godt at hun havde en bror i fængslet. Men hvad er historien der hjemme? Hvor mange hemmeligheder er der? Det var der jeg indførte jeg en refleksion med begrebet "den store hemmelighed i familien".

When you have a brother or sister who needs attention in one way or another, it can be really tough to be the sister or brother who's the easy one, the one who just functions. I mean – there have been for example many studies of what it's like to be the brother or sister of a handicapped child. But also a child who's not there...I mean...A dead child or one in prison. A child who's there but isn't there. And precisely the matter of "How can we talk about it in the family?" "How do we deal with it?" She didn't know how much this sister knew about her brother being in prison. She knew very well that her brother was in prison. But what's the story in that home? How many secrets are there? That's where I brought in a reflection with the idea of "the big family secret".

I find it important that in the quote Sara underlines that she made a reflection on whether the explanation to Amarjit's quietness could be that the brother's imprisonment was "a big family secret".

Hence the quotes in this section have demonstrated that Sara used this concept as part of a reflection on the reasons why Amarjit had such quiet behaviour. On the other hand, Tina interpreted Sara's statement more as a definite explanation for Amarjit's quietness.

7.4.2 The implication of "the big family secret"

In my summary of Sara's representation of her own perspective in Table 6, it can be seen that Sara signalled that "a big family secret" implies that the members of the family are not allowed to share their feelings and thoughts about Amarjit's brother's imprisonment. In the summary of Tine's representation Sara's use of "the big family secret" implies that the family members are not allowed to talk about the imprisonment. Hence there is a difference in how they interpret what the concept implies, which I will illustrate with quotes from the interviews with Tine and Sara respectively.

In the interview Tine says:

Jeg tror at Sara mente at [den store hemmelighed] er sådan lidt et tabu. At have en bror eller en søn der sidder i fængsel.

I think Sara meant that [the big secret] is a bit of a taboo. Having a brother or a son in prison.

In this quote Tine states that she thinks that Sara meant that it is a taboo in the family that Amarjit's brother is imprisoned. Further on Tine says about Sara's concept of "the big family secret":

Jeg tror det betyder at vi tier det i hjel. Altså. Det bliver der ikke talt om.

I think that means we silence it to death. Like that. It's not talked about.

I also asked Sara about what she meant by the concept of "a big family secret":

Sara: Når der er en hemmelighed i en familie, så kan det være rigtigt svært for et barn at agere i det. Og børnene er utroligt samarbejdsvillige. Derfor vil de gøre alt for mor og far med den hemmelighed de har. Det er det rigtige. Når de så kommer over i skolen og det er noget andet der er det rigtige så bliver deres verden forstyrret, det er svært at være i.
Jóhannes: Er det det samme som en fortrængning? et tabu?... noget andet?
Sara: Jamen. Det er kun noget der ikke må siges. Der er noget endnu værre. En ting er at der er noget man ikke må sige, det er ikke så godt. Endnu værre er hvis der er noget man ikke ved så meget om. Børns fantasi kan jo vokse sig kæmpe enorm.

Sara: When there is a secret in a family, it can be really difficult for a child to operate in it. And children are incredibly cooperative. So they'll do anything for Mum and Dad with the secret they have. That's the right thing. When they get to school and something else is the right thing, then their world is disturbed, it's difficult to be in it.
Jóhannes: Is it the same as suppression? taboo? ... something else?
Sara: Well. It's something that cannot be said. It's something even worse. One thing is that it's something you mustn't say; that's not such a good thing. It's even worse if it's something you don't know much about. Children's imagination can grow

enormously.

I would argue that it is central that Sara explains in this passage that the concept "a big family secret" refers to the possibility that a family can pretend that something which has happened does not really exist. However Sara underlines that the consequences of what has happened will still remain. This scenario makes it difficult for the children to find a way of behaving in such a family setting. But because children always are loyal to their parents they will probably find some way to behave. However, this behaviour pattern in a family with secrets will probably be challenged when they enter another setting, e.g. the school.

Later in the interview Sara further unfolds her thoughts about "the big family secret":

"Familiens hemmelighed" er et fagudtryk. Og det er nok ikke i virkeligheden et sådant socialrådgiver udtryk. Det er nok et mere fagudtryk fra min behandler tid, hvor at man tit...Det er sådan lidt et begreb "Familier med hemmeligheder". Fordi at man i nogle sammenhænge arbejder ud fra at hvis der er store familie hemmeligheder så kan det være rigtigt svært for et barn at trives der. Og det kan være svært at finde ud af hvad der er ret og vrang, fordi "jeg føler noget" og "der er noget der er mærkeligt", men vi lader alle sammen som om "det er fint"". Så kan man som barn i ens indre blive helt forrykket. Man kan godt egentligt mærke det. Mærke sig selv. Og det man synes er mærkeligt. Men man bliver trænet – opdraget - til at sige noget andet. Og det betyder at hvis man vokser op en hel barndom og en hel ungdom på den måde så kan man blive voksen og blive sådan en voksen som slet ikke kan mærke sig selv "Hvad er klokken?" "Hvad synes du?" Man kan slet ikke…Man er aldrig blevet bekræftet i det du oplever, den følelse du har er rigtigt nok.

"The Family Secret" is a professional concept. And it's probably not really a social worker expression. It is probably more a technical concept from my time as a counsellor where one often ... It's a kind of concept like "Families with secrets". Because in some contexts you work from the assumption that if there are big family secrets, it can be really difficult for a child to feel ok there. And it can be hard to figure out what is right and wrong, because "I feel something" and "there's something strange", but we all pretend that "it's fine". Then you can as a child in your inner being be totally disturbed. You can in fact sense it. Sense yourself. And what you think is strange. But you are trained – brought up - to say something else. And that means that if you grow up this way through your entire childhood and youth, then you may become the kind of adult who can't sense himself, "What time is it?" "What do you think?" You just

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can't… You've never had it con-
firmed that what you're experiencing
or feeling is actually real.

In this quote I find it central that Sara explains that her concept of "a big family secret" derives from her work experience from family counselling rather than from her work experiences in social work settings. I find it possible to condense the meaning of the quote in the following way "The family's secret implies that it is difficult for children to sense and explore their feelings because it is forbidden to discuss certain matters in the family".

In this section I have shown how Tine thinks that Sara referred to a taboo with her concept of "the big family secret"; something that you must not talk about. While Sara says that she used the concept as implying that family members are not allowed to share their feelings and thoughts about Amarjit's brother's imprisonment; hence children are trained to not include their feelings and thoughts for certain things which appear in their lifeworld.

7.4.3 Accumulation of the two sub-sections

Now I will summarise the last two sub-sections of the analysis. 1) When Sara represents that she used "a big family secret" to reflect on the reason for Amarjit's quietness, Tine represents Sara's use of the concept as a decisive explanation for Amarjit's quietness. 2) When Sara represents that she implied that the concept meant that Amarjit was trained not to include feelings and thoughts for things in her lifeworld, Tine represents that Sara implied that "the big family secret" means that something must not be talked about.

It is now possible to conclude that Tine carries a much simplified version of the central concept in the perspective Sara demonstrated on Amarjit's quietness at the consulting session. Hence I must conclude that this is an unsuccessful outcome of the session. The Arendtian explanation for the unsuccessful outcome of such an *action* incident is that the participants have not been sufficiently aware of the complexity of such an *action;* in my research an *action* is characterised by the participants having different perspectives on the same issue. According to my Arendtian framework it is an important factor that every word uttered in an *action* will always be interpreted differently by each individual person. Hence every word must be uttered clearly. Even though every word is uttered clearly the participants must also realise that it is unavoidable that misunderstandings will occur because the web of relations between different people is always dense, especially when people have very di-

verse backgrounds (e.g. different professional backgrounds). But the vital point is that the solution in such misunderstandings is not to blame anyone but to work through a misunderstanding in the light of Arendt's emphasis on the faculty of forgiveness[20] and then move on positively to future interprofessional work conversations having learnt about the need to explain very clearly when using professional concepts.

This leads me to urge social workers to be very attentive to how school professionals may differently understand the implication of any professional concepts they use.

I should also point out that the professional use of the concept of "the family secret" is from Sara's earlier workplace; it is not a professional concept used by social workers. This fact demonstrates that it is not suitable for me to make a list of typical social worker expressions which must be carefully used in the consulting sessions because the social workers may also include other professional words and expressions. Even though I have not analysed examples of when school professionals use their professional terms in interprofessional work conversations it is very likely that my advice above also applies the other way around: school professionals must be careful in using their professional concepts in consulting sessions with social workers.

Even though my analysis demonstrates that Tine has carried out a much simplified representation of this component of "the big secret in a family", from Sara's perspective I conclude that the consulting session been a success in helping Tine to broaden her pedagogical viewpoint, because Section 7.3 demonstrated that Tine's learning of "the big secret in a family" resulted in a positive change in her intended approach on how to work with Amarjit's quietness. The positive change is that when Tine in the future has free talk with her pupils she wants to include subjects other than family in order to get Amarjit to participate, because she realises that family matters may be a sensitive issue for Amarjit. Similarly, the consulting session has led to Tine thinking beyond the classroom in relation to Amarjit's quietness. Hence I must conclude that the concept of "a big secret in the family" enriched Tine's further perspective and it is thus important to underline that I do not urge professionals to refrain from using professional concepts. They should use their profession-

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[20] Arendt (1958, p. 237) says: 'The possible redemption from the predicament of irreversibility—of being unable to undo what one has done though one did not, and could not, have known what he was doing—is the faculty of forgiving'.

al concepts but in doing so they must speak clearly and be attentive about their interlocutors' understanding of them.

7.5 The meaning of the letter

In all the previous analysis sections the things in the issues have been non-material things, which however have had their origin in some real life incidents in the vulnerable children's lifeworlds. The thing in this section is however a material thing, but nevertheless, in my Arendtian framework, it is important that a material thing is also intertwined with how people differently ascribe meanings to the thing.

In order to zoom in on the thing let us imagine that we are at the consulting session itself. We are at the point in the session where Tine has finished her description of her concern for Amarjit. Now Sara begins to ask Tine some questions about Amarjit's situation. After numerous questions from Sara, Tine suddenly realises that the questions Sara is asking her remind her of something and therefore Tine stops for a while and ponders over what it is. Then Tine realises that earlier the same morning she had received a letter where she was asked many questions about Amarjit, similar to the questions Sara was asking her. Tine then picks up the letter and shows it to Sara.

The letter was sent by the the local Social Service Department. It indicated that a Section 50 investigation on Amarjit had been initiated and therefore Tine as Amarjit's form teacher was asked to answer some questions about Amarjit and return the letter to the local Social Service Department.

One of the main reasons for starting a Section 50 investigation on a child is that the social service department has received a notification on a child which they find worrying. Another main reason for a Section 50 investigation on a child is they have received a notification on a child's siblings. (Den Sociale Højskole & Servicestyrelsen, 2007).

According to the Danish Social Service Act, a Section 50 investigation must look into the child's development and behaviour, family situation, school situation, health condition, leisure time activities and other relevant issues. The Danish Social Service Act requires that the Social Service Department confers with all relevant professionals working with the child concerned. The Section 50 investigation has to conclude whether there is a basis for starting an intervention to improve the child's well-being. For readers familiar with the British system, I may mention that the Danish Social Service Act's Section 50 investi-

gation is similar to a Section 47 enquiry relating to the UK Children's Act; however a Danish Section 50 investigation is also used to provide children with disabilities additional help and hence its scope is broader than that of the UK Section 47 enquiry.

After this explanation of the nature of a Section 50 investigation let us move back to the consulting session. We are at the point in the session where Tine has shown the letter to Sara. Tine and Sara then continued their conversation.

As the conversation on the letter continued I sensed that Tine and Sara were revealing different perspectives on the meaning of this letter. I therefore started drawing one of my circles, where I recorded statements from the two of them around the circle (see Section 4.5.3). When I came home I pondered over the statements I had written and thus concluded that they truly had demonstrated different perspectives on the meaning of the letter at this incident. In the two interviews, which were conducted the day after the consulting session, I therefore investigated their different perspectives on the meaning of the letter and whether the consulting session had influenced Tine to change her perspective on its meaning.

In order to present some aspects of the thing of "the meaning of the letter" I have combined central statements about the meaning of the letter from the interviews with Tine and Sara respectively into two poetic representations. The poetric representations are first presented in Danish then in English.

<u>Tine:</u>
Jeg tænkte,
at brevet havde noget at gøre med,
at Amarjits bror er i fængsel.
Og så vil kommunen
-eller socialforvaltningen er det måske –
gerne undersøge eller lige tjekke op på
om Amarjit var på vej det samme sted:
                        altså den gale vej!

Jeg har fået at vide fra mine kollegaer,
at brevet sender de ud for at mærke,
om der er grund til at være bekymrede,
på hendes vegne.
Det er derfor!
Det siger de andre!
I hvert fald de som har været her i 1000 år ik'?!

Min fortolkning af brevet var
også
ud fra de ting
jeg skulle svare på
i det der skema i brevet.
Det var noget med
"Hvordan fungerer hun socialt?"
og uden for skolen:
"Ses hun med danske kammerater eller kun tosprogede?"
Det var de der slags spørgsmål.

Man kunne ligesom blive drejet ind på hvad det handlede om.
Det handlede meget om fritidsinteresser: "Hvad bruger hun sin fritid på?"
Altså – der tænkte jeg med det samme,
at **det er fordi**
de vil vide om hun render og laver ulykker
eller om hun har nogle sunde interesser.

Sara:
Jeg vidste at
brevet betød
at børne og familie teamet
ad en eller anden vej har fået information
om Amarjits situation.

Om det er via at storebror sidder i fængsel
eller om det kan være fra Amarjit's fritidshjem
eller hvad –
det kan vi ikke vide.
Men de har i hvert fald fået nys om det.

Og derfor
er der blevet besluttet
at der skal laves en paragraf 50 undersøgelse.
Og derfor
sender de en skoleerklæring ud til skolen.

<u>Tine:</u>
I thought
the letter had something to do with
Amarjit's brother being in prison.
And so the Council
-or maybe it's the Social Services –
wants to investigate or just check up
on whether Amarjit was going the same way:
                              the wrong way!

I heard from my colleagues
that they send out this letter to find out,
if there's cause for concern,
on her behalf.
That's the reason!
That's what the others say!
(at least those who've been here 1000 years)
Don't they?!

My understanding of the letter was
also
based on the things
I was to answer
in the form in the letter.
It was something about
"How does she function socially?"
and outside school:
"Do you see her with Danish friends or just
bilingual ones?"
It was those kinds of questions.

You kind of got the message what it was all about.
There was a lot about leisure interests: "How does she spend her spare time?"
Aha – I thought straightaway
it's because
they want to know if she's messing about
or if she's got any healthy interests.

Sara:
I knew
the letter meant
the child and family team
somehow or other had got information
about Amarjit's situation.
Whether it's via the brother's imprisonment
or if it could be from the after-school centre
or something else –
we can't tell.
But they've certainly heard about it.

And that's why
it's been decided
they'll make a Section 50 investigation.
And that's why
they're sending a form to the school.

Even though the two poetic representations are very dissimilar in content there is also a similarity, namely that they both focus on the intention behind sending the letter; I have accentuated this by marking parts of the texts in bold. Hence this theme connects with the existential-phenomenological Arendtian basic assumption that people have a constant urge to ascribe a meaning to things they experience in their everyday life.

Even though there is this common theme of a search for the intention, we see that the two of them approached the theme of the "hidden intention" differently at the consulting session. I will now investigate how it influenced Tine when she encountered another perspective on the meaning of the letter at the consulting session.

7.6 The consulting session's influence on Tine's perspective

In Table 7 I present summaries of Tine's perspectives at the consulting session and the day after the consulting session.

Tine's representation of her perspective at the consulting session	Tine's perspective at the interview – the day after the consulting session
Yesterday: **I assumed that the letter came from somewhere like the social services.** *The intention behind sending the letter was to find out if Amarjit was about to go down the wrong path like her brother in prison.* I based my understanding of the meaning of the letter on the nature of the questions and from my colleagues' remarks on the intention behind the letter.	Today: **I know that the letter comes from the place where Sara is employed.** The investigation is not directly linked to Amarjit's brother's imprisonment; its goal is rather to *investigate the situation of Amarjit and her family as one complete package.*

Table 7. In this table it is possible to follow how Tine changed her perspective on the intention of the letter. I have indicated my meaning condensations of Tine's quotes which led up to these summaries in Appendix 6.

Seeing the two perspectives next to each other, the first thing we notice is that Tine after the consulting session is more accurate about where the letter came from (the text in bold). Secondly we see that the session has led Tine to

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change her mind about the intention behind the letter (the text in italics).

In the following I will investigate these changes with the use of quotes from my interview with Tine. I will also explore whether a change has taken place in Tine's adopted position to the meaning of the letter in the two versions of her perspective.

7.6.1 The sender of the letter (the component in bold)

When I asked Tine to represent the perspective she demonstrated on the intention behind the letter at the consulting session, she said:

Jamen...Jeg tænkte at brevet havde noget at gøre med at Amarjits bror er i fængsel. Og så vil kommunen-eller socialforvaltningen er det måske - gerne undersøge...	Well...I thought that the letter had something to do with Amarjit's brother being in prison. And then the Council - or maybe it's the social service department - wanted to investigate...

From this quote I have concluded that Tine thought that the letter came from somewhere like the social services department; "somewhere like" indicates Tine's imprecise understanding of the sender of the letter because she says 'the Council - or maybe it's the social service department'.

In the interview Tine says further:

Jeg var ikke klar over at brevet kom åbenbart fra....ja fra det samme sted - der hvor [Sara] arbejder. Det var dem som ligesom havde sendt det fordi de var i gang med at se på Amarjit's situation.	I didn't realise that the letter clearly came from...yes, from the same place – where [Sara] works. They were the ones who'd sent it because they were looking into Amarjit's situation.

This quote reveals that after the session Tine knows that the letter comes from the place where Sara is employed. However it is worth noting that Tine is still not completely clear about the name of the specific service.

The change illustrates that Tine has a more concrete understanding of the sender because she knows some people who work there. This resonates with the statement by that Frost (2005) that previous English research has shown that if professionals know some people at a service which is their interagency partner, their knowledge of the service improves.

Hence I will state that Tine changed her position on the letter from being unclear about the sender to a position in which she had a clearer idea of the sender.

7.6.2 The intention behind the letter (the component in italics)

I will now focus on the component marked in italics in Table 7. We see that in Tine's perspective at the consulting session it was phrased: *The intention behind sending the letter was to find out if Amarjit was about to go down the wrong path like her brother in prison.* In Tine's perspective after the consulting session, the phrasing is that the intention is to *investigate the situation of Amarjit and her family as one complete package.*

Regarding her earlier perception Tine says:

Min fortolkning af brevet var ud fra de ting jeg skulle svare på i det der skema i brevet. Det var noget med "Hvordan fungerer hun socialt?" og uden for skolen: "Ses hun med danske kammerater eller kun tosprogede?". Det var de der spørgsmål. Man kunne ligesom blive drejet ind på hvad det handlede om. Det handlede meget om fritidsinteresser: "Hvad bruger hun sin fritid på?". Altså – der tænkte jeg med det samme, at det er fordi de vil vide om hun render og laver ulykker eller om hun har nogle sunde interesse'.

My understanding of the letter was based on the things I had to answer in that form in the letter. It was something like "How does she function socially?" and outside school: "Do you see her with Danish friends or just bilingual ones?". It was those questions. You could kind of get the message as to what it was all about. There was a lot about leisure interests: "How does she spend her spare time?" So then I thought straightaway that it's because they want to know if she's messing about or whether she's got any healthy interests.

In relation to the intention behind the letter, this quote implies that Tine based her understanding of the meaning of the letter on the questions she had to answer. Tine reveals that she thought that the questions implied that the intention behind the letter was to investigate if Amarjit has any healthy leisure time activities or if she is behaving badly in her leisure time. In the interview, I also asked if Tine had other reasons for her interpretation of the intention behind sending the letter. Tine answered:

Det har jeg fået at vide fra de andre kollegaer, at [brevet] sender de ud for at mærke om der er grund til at være bekymrede på [Amarjit's] vegne. Det er derfor. Det siger de andre. I hvert fald de som har været her i 1000 år – ik?

It's what I've been told by my colleagues, that they send [the letter] out to get an impression of whether there is cause for concern on [Amarjit's] behalf. That's why. That's what the others say. Certainly those who have been here for 1000 years, don't you

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think?

This statement reveals that Tine's interpretation of the intention of the letter was also due to her colleagues' explanation.

However, Tine says that after the consulting session she had changed her perspective on the intention behind the letter:

Men hvor jeg tidligere sad med brevet og kiggede på det og tænkte på Amarjit og ville besvare det kun ud fra det jeg tænker om Amarjit. Så blev jeg påvirket af at Sara også mere tænkte på familien -altså ligesom den samlede pakke –ik?!	But whereas I previously sat with the letter and looked at it and thought of Amarjit and wanted to answer it only based on what I think about Amarjit. Then I was influenced by Sara's thinking more about the family – sort of the whole package, isn't it?!

Now Tine thinks that the letter indicates that they are investigating Amarjit in relation to her whole family context.

I therefore conclude that the consulting session with Sara has implied that Tine no longer thinks that the idea of the letter is to investigate if Amarjit is about to follow in her brother's footsteps but that the letter is a part of a broader investigation of Amarjit's family situation.

From this it follows that Tine's earlier position on the intention behind the letter was that she wondered whether Amarjit was being investigated as a potential future criminal, whereas after the consulting session Tine adopted a position on the intention where she viewed the investigation as having a broader scope.

7.6.3 Accumulation of the two sub-sections

My analysis has demonstrated that earlier Tine thought that the letter came from "somewhere like the social service department" and that the intention behind it might be to investigate whether Amarjit was about to follow in the footsteps of her brother in prison. Hence I stated that Tine's previous position was one where she was unclear about the sender of the letter and doubtful whether the intention behind the letter was to investigate Amarjit as a potential future offender – thus I can state that she was "unclear and doubtful" in her position to the letter.

Then my analysis shows that after the consulting session with Sara Tine knows that the letter comes from the place where Sara is working; furthermore Tine now believes that the investigation has a broader scope of finding out about Amarjit's whole family context. Therefore I stated that Tine had adopted a position in which she was clearer about the sender of the letter and

that she was more confident that the letter demonstrated that a broad investigation would be undertaken on Amarjit's family context – hence her new position on the letter is "clearer and more confident".

7.7 Tine's perception of what Sara said at the consulting session

In order to further investigate the change in Tine's perspective I have made use of my Arendtian theoretical framework. This framework suggests that the influence on Tine's perspective stems from how Tine in her *thinking* after the consulting has made use of the perspective Sara revealed at the consulting on the meaning of the letter.

Hence in my interview with Tine I investigated how she was able to represent the perspective Sara demonstrated at the session, and in my interview with Sara, how Sara herself made an account of her perspective at the session as to the meaning of the letter. With the use of the techniques of meaning condensation and the hermeneutical circle I have produced summaries of how they differently perceive Sara's perspective on the meaning of the letter. In Table 8 I compare the two summaries of their perspectives.

Tine's representation of Sara's perspective	Sara's account of her own perspective
Sara signalled that the letter came from her department and that she knew the exact meaning of the letter. Sara showed that the letter concerned Amarjit and her family as one complete package.	I signalled that the letter meant that a Section 50 investigation was initiated on Amarjit's situation by the child and family team. I further signalled that it was not possible to know the reason behind the Section 50 investigation and that I could not make any intervention in relation to Amarjit.

Table 8. Two different versions of Sara's perspective at the consulting session. I have indicated my meaning condensations of Tine's and Sara's quotes which led up to these summaries in Appendix 6.

When comparing the two summaries it is clear that they are different in nature: the content in Tine's version of Sara's perspective is imprecise whilst the content in Sara's account of her own perspective is precise.

In the analysis I will with the help of their statements focus on how they differently view the content of Sara's perspective on the meaning of the letter at the consulting session.

In my interview with Sara I asked her about her perspective on the letter at the consulting session:

Jóhannes: Og hvordan var det perspektiv du viste til brevet?

Sara: Jeg signalerede at [brevet] betyder at børne og familie teamet ad en eller anden vej har fået information om Amarjits situation og nu har de opstartet en paragraf 50 undersøgelse. Om det er via at storebror sidder i fængsel eller om det kan være fra Amarjit's fritidshjem eller hvad - det kan vi ikke vide.

Jóhannes: And what was the perspective you demonstrated on the letter?

Sara: I signalled that [the letter] means that the child and family team somehow or other has heard about Amarjit's situation and has now started a Section 50 investigation. Whether it's via the imprisonment of her brother or from Amarjit's after-school centre or something else – we can't tell.

Here Sara states that at the consulting session she signalled that the letter came from the child and family team, who had instigated a Section 50 investigation on Amarjit. She also signalled that it is not possible to know why the Section 50 investigation had been started.

Sara says later:

Mht. brevet reagerede jeg sådan "jamen, så skal jeg i princippet slet ikke ind igen her" for der er jo en paragraf 50 undersøgelse i gang.

I reacted to the letter like this: "But in principle I'm not supposed to be involved here" because there's a Section 50 investigation underway.

Sara expresses that she signalled that she was not supposed to dwell further on Amarjit's case because there was a Section 50 investigation. The reason for this is that Sara as a social worker visiting schools only works at the preventive stage of work with vulnerable children and not when a case on a child has been opened.

When I asked Tine to represent Sara's perspective, she did so in a much more simplified way than Sara did in the quotes presented above. Tine says in the interview:

[Sara] sagde: "Hvis det er et SÅDANT et" og så satte det lige nogen ting på plads. Så vidste hun lige hvad det handlede om og så var hun godt klar over, at der var nogen i hendes afdeling der var i gang med at se på

[Sarah] said: "If it's THAT kind of a letter" and then things fell into place. Then she knew exactly what it was about and she was quite clear that there was someone in her department

Amarjit's situation.   looking into Amarjit's situation.

I find it important to underline that Tine expresses in this quote that Sara signalled that she completely knew the meaning of the letter.

In my interview with Tine she does not however represent in any way that Sara signalled in her perspective that the letter meant there was a Section 50 investigation. However in the interview Tine did say once that at the consulting Sara said something about:

...en undersøgelse. Men jeg kan ikke huske   ...an investigation. But I can't remem-
hvad det var hun nævnte.'   ber what it was she mentioned.'

This quote indicates that after the consulting session Tine had a very weak understanding of a Section 50 investigation even though Sara mentioned this at the consulting session[21]. I can thus also conclude that the session does not seem to have taught her about the nature of a Section 50 investigation.

When thereafter I asked Tine how she perceived more precisely Sara's perspective on the letter, Tine replied briefly:

Sara forklarede at brevet handlede lige så   Sara explained that the letter was just
meget om familien. Altså hele familien og   as much about the family. So the
ikke bare Amarjit. Det er ligesom en sam-   whole family and not just Amarjit. It's
let pakke - ik´?!   like a complete package, isn't it?!

In this quote Tine says that Sara explained that the letter focused on Amarjit and her family as one complete package. I cannot find anywhere in my observation notes nor in the interview with Sara that Sara at the consulting session said that Tine needed to reply to the questions in relation to the whole of Amarjit's family context and not only Amarjit's situation. However as I have demonstrated in Section 6.3 Sara inspired Tine to include in her view Amarjit's family context, which probably is what Tine now is making active use of in how she represents how Sara ascribes a meaning to the letter.

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[21] I may add that it is not only Tine who lacks such an understanding. There is data from a Danish quantitative survey from 2009 that demonstrates that a large number of Danish teachers, school nurses and pedagogues lack an understanding of procedures around referrals, an understanding of Section 50 investigations and indeed general information about social service departments. The survey concludes that because of this lack of understanding Danish child care professionals write too few referrals to the social service departments (Ankestyrelsen, 2011; Zapera, 2009). The National Social Appeals Board has therefore since autumn 2009 carried out a campaign to inform child care professionals about referrals, Section 50 investigations and social services departments, see http://www.ast-tagsignalernealvorligt.dk/. This campaign was carried out after my observation of this consulting session and therefore Tine had not been exposed to the message of the campaign at that time.

I thus conclude that Tine does not represent Sara's perspective particularly accurately. When Sara represents that at the consulting session she implied that the letter meant that the child and family team had instigated a Section 50 investigation, Tine represents this as that someone in Sara's workplace is taking a closer look at Amarjit's situation from a whole family context view. It is also important to keep in mind that the heading of the letter indicated that the form for Tine to fill out was a part of a Section 50 investigation.

Hence I must conclude that the *action* incident about the letter could have produced a better result. I will now attempt to make suggestions within my Arendtian framework as to how the result could have been better. In Section 4.2 I described how Arendt says that we humans need to perceive a thing on three levels. Firstly, a person needs to dwell on the thing in order to let the thing itself speak to him or her. Secondly, the person needs to make a representation of the thing so that the person can think of the thing without the thing being present. Thirdly, the person needs to meet other people so that they can exchange with one another their individual representations of the thing in order to widen their view on the thing. Arendt recommends people to dwell on the thing itself for quite a long time if they want to get the best possible understanding of the thing. Therefore one solution to give Tine a better understanding of the letter is that she and Sara should have dwelt longer on the letter itself at the consulting session before they started to talk about it. After having taken time to read the letter, Sara and Tine should, according to Arendt, have investigated each other's perspectives on the meaning of the letter during their further talk about it. The point is that in an Arendtian line of thinking it is important to differentiate between the thing discussed and the various individual persons' perceptions of the thing. The key is therefore to listen carefully to each other's statements. In particular this concerns an interprofessional work setting where the participants come from totally different everyday practices.

7.8 Concluding remarks on "the meaning of the letter"

In Section 7.6 I concluded that the consulting session with Sara has implied that Tine has acquired a better understanding of the sender of the letter. Furthermore I concluded that Tine no longer thinks that the letter indicates an

investigation into whether Amarjit might follow the criminal path of her brother, but rather that it indicates that someone at Sara's workplace is taking a look at Amarjit's situation in the whole family context.

In Section 7.7 I compared Tine's representation of Sara's perspective with Sara's own account of the perspective she demonstrated at the consulting session. From this comparison I showed that Tine did not represent that Sara signalled that the letter indicated a Section 50 investigation on Amarjit's situation. Likewise I demonstrated that Tine did not understand what Sara said about the Section 50 investigation.

I therefore conclude that Tine's representation of Sara's perspective is not very precise since she did not transfer Sara's central element of the Section 50 investigation. However, I must underline that I am not arguing that it is Tine's fault alone that she did not learn about the investigation. According to an Arendtian line of thinking it follows that a successful *action* is dependent both on how cautious Tine was in her listening to Sara's statements as well as how careful Sara was in presenting her statements at a suitable level for Tine to understand.

During my observation of the consulting session I realised myself that a Section 50 investigation on Amarjit had been started. At that time I also assumed that Tine had understood this because she both heard Sara mention it in the session and had read it in the heading of the letter. But during my subsequent interview with Tine it suddenly dawned on me that Tine probably did not know what a Section 50 investigation was, neither did she know that the investigation meant that she did not need to submit referral on her concern for Amarjit. Hence I tested my conjecture:

Jóhannes: Hvad tænker du nu om en indberetning på Amarjit? Er det noget som er som stadigvæk er aktuelt at gøre?

Tine: Ja det er det. Det synes jeg helt sikkert. Og det er faktiskt bare det at jeg har været oppe at snakke med Sara der har gjort at jeg ser på flere aspekter af sagen. Kan man sige –ik'?! (...)

Jóhannes: Så du ser det endnu nærmere en indberetning nu?

Tine: Ja det gør jeg. Ja det må man sige.

Jóhannes: What do you think now about a referral on Amarjit? Is there something which still has to be done?

Tine: Yes there is. I think that's for sure. And it's actually just the fact that I've been up to talk to Sara which has meant that I can see more aspects of the case. You could say, couldn't you?! (…)

Jóhannes: So you are even closer to a referral now?

Tine: Yes I am. Yes I can say that.

After Tine said this I interrupted the interview and told her that the letter actually meant that she did not have to send in a referral on her concern on Amarjit, as the letter indicated that Amarjit's situation was already being looked at. I then briefly explained about a Section 50 investigation.

Drawing the whole analysis on the meaning of the letter together, I conclude that the session did not clarify to Tine the crucial information that a Section 50 investigation had been started on Amarjit's situation. But I can also conclude that even though the consulting session did not clarify to Tine the nature of the Section 50 investigation, there is no doubt that the consulting session enlarged Tine's perspective on the meaning of the letter. From this I can conclude that the consulting session has meant that Tine would probably answer the questions in the letter in more a satisfactory way than if she had not received the session, because in that case she would have answered the questions thinking that the meaning behind them was connected with an investigation into Amarjit's potential of becoming an offender like her brother.

It may astonish some readers that at the consulting session Tine thought that they wanted to check if seven-year-old Amarjit was in danger of becoming an offender like her brother. Hence I will now investigate the possible reasons for such a claim.

I have demonstrated previously that Tine's thoughts on the reasons for sending the letter were coloured by the fact that she had talked to some colleagues about the letter. The colleagues had said to her that the motive behind the letter was that they wanted to check if Amarjit was in danger of becoming a criminal offender like her brother. Tine told me that she adopted their understanding because she interpreted the questions as following this agenda ('How does she spend her spare time?', 'How does she function socially?' and 'Does she have Danish friends or just bilingual ones?'). I did not ask Tine any further questions on this issue, but in my observation notes of the consulting session, I have noted that Tine, just as with this incident in the interview, brought up something about Amarjit's bilingual and monolingual friends at the consulting session, where she also mentioned something about some riots that had taken place in the streets around the school some months earlier. Prior to my two months' fieldwork at this school there were many riots in the streets in various disadvantaged parts of this city where many immigrants live. In the media both journalists and politicians focused strongly on the fact that many immigrants' children were involved in these riots. Furthermore, during my field work period this municipality's crime prevention co-operation between the schools, social services and the police (in Danish called "SSP")

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trained the school professionals to spot children who were in danger of committing criminal acts. During my field study in Tine's school I attended together with the school professionals a one hour SSP presentation which provided them with tools to identify children who might become criminal offenders.

The two factors mentioned here could very well explain why Tine maintains that the intention of the letter is to investigate if Amarjit is in danger of being involved in criminal acts, especially since her brother was already in prison. If this assumption forms part of the perspectives of Tine and other school professionals on such investigations on immigrant children, then I will argue that they are making some political *thinking* over how the social department approaches immigrants and their children. However, it must also be said that according to the legislation in this area a third party like Tine will never get to know the reason for a Section 50 investigation. But following an Arendtian line of thinking I would like to argue that the professionals must be allowed to carry out such *thinking* and also to be able to discuss it freely somewhere. The Arendtian assumption for being allowed to do such *thinking* lies in her strong emphasis that everything concerned with the public should be tested in a public realm setting. Similarly Øjvind Larsen makes use of Arendt's and Habermas' thinking for his argument for a need to create spaces in modern welfare state services where professionals can put forward their ethical considerations about the structure of the services and the tasks they as professionals are asked to conduct. Larsen's goal is to contribute to the development of contemporary society so as to avoid technical procedures and general assumptions steering in a damaging way how professionals intervene in each individual client's lifeworld (Larsen, 2009A; Larsen, 2009B).

7.9 Summary

In this chapter I have analysed how Sara's consulting session has influenced Tine's further perspective on the two issues of "Amarjit's quietness" and "the meaning of the letter".

In relation to the first issue of Amarjit's quietness my analysis showed that at the consulting session Tine mainly thought of Amarjit's quietness as an issue in her classroom. But after the session Tine assumes that Amarjit's quietness is an overall issue in her lifeworld.

Furthermore, my analysis showed that at the consulting session Tine was

focused on getting Amarjit to participate generally in the social activities of the class, e.g. in the lessons when the children were to talk about what they had done at the weekend with their family. However, the consulting session resulted in Tine's resolve to ask Amarjit about matters other than her family, to help her open up more. The reason is that after the consulting session Tine now thinks that Amarjit's quietness probably stems from the fact that she has learnt in her family that it is best to "keep your cards close to your chest", more specifically about her brother in prison.

Even though my analysis showed that this latter change was directly linked to the fact that Sara at the consulting session introduced "the big family secret" in Amarjit's situation, I concluded that the change could have been better because Tine only partly made use of what Sara said at the consulting session. The most crucial difference is that when Sara used the concept of "the big family secret" to reflect on the reason for Amarjit's quietness, Tine interpreted this more as a definite explanation for the girl's quietness. Another difference was that when Sara implied that the concept meant that Amarjit was taught to not express feelings and thoughts about what happened in her lifeworld, Tine represents that Sara implied that "the big family secret" refers to the fact that it must not be talked about; Tine does not represent that Sara implied that Amarjit's feelings and thoughts about her brother's imprisonment were not being take care of properly.

Because of the difficulties with the concept of "a big family secret" I urged that in an interprofessional work activity professionals must be very careful when using professional concepts which are unknown to their interlocutor.

In relation to the issue of "the meaning of the letter" I concluded that the consulting session resulted in Tine's improved understanding of who sent the letter. I also concluded that Tine no longer thinks that the reason behind the letter is that they want to check if Amarjit is in danger of becoming a criminal offender like her imprisoned brother. But I concluded that after the consulting session Tine had a broader scope on the meaning of the letter in that it referred to Amarjit's family situation. However, I demonstrated that Tine did not represent that Sara signalled that the letter showed that a Section 50 investigation on Amarjit's situation was underway. I concluded that Tine had a lack of knowledge about procedures around referrals, Section 50 investigations and generally about social service departments.

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Macbeth:
To-morrow, and to-morrow, and
to-morrow,
creeps in this petty pace
from day to day.

                 William Shakespeare,
                            Macbeth
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Chapter 8: The consulting session on Zhou's strained life-world

In this chapter I will analyse data from the interviews I carried out after my observation of a consulting session between the <u>s</u>ocial worker **S**igbritt and the <u>t</u>eacher **T**anja. During this session Tanja raised her concern for eight-year-old Zhou. Zhou lives with his mother, father and brother; his brother is five years older than Zhou. Zhou's parents emigrated from China to Denmark 15 years ago. Frequently Zhou's father is on extended trips to China and hence during these periods Zhou's mother is alone with her two children.

8.1 The consulting session Sigbritt gave Tanja on Zhou

In this section I will briefly present Tanja's and Sigbritt's professional backgrounds and their current jobs. Then I will provide a description of the consulting session based upon the notes I took during my observation of the session.

Tanja is in her late 20s and has worked as a teacher for ten months. Tanja has passed all the exams in her teacher training but she has not yet handed in her final assignment for the professional bachelor degree.

Sigbritt is in her early 50s and has worked as a social worker at this school for one and a half years. Prior to working at this school Sigbritt was employed in a child and family team for ten years in the Care Unit which has responsibility for investigations and interventions in vulnerable children's families' lifeworlds.

I conducted this observation of Tanja's and Sigbritt's consulting session in the middle of May. At the end of April Tanja had a meeting with one of the schools' bilingual teachers. At this meeting they had evaluated the progress of the bilingual pupils in Tanja's class; they had talked particularly about their mutual concern on Zhou, as there were signs of him being neglected by his parents. It often happened that Zhou did not bring his books and lunchbox with him to school. Furthermore he was often tired and sad. Hence the bilingual teacher advised Tanja to write a referral to the Social Service Department.

When Tanja had written a first draft of the referral, she presented it to one of the school's AKT teachers[22]. The AKT teacher suggested they present the draft to Sigbritt, the social worker. Tanja agreed and they set up a 45 minute consulting session with Sigbritt. I obtained their approval to observe the consulting session and subsequently to interview them about it.

The consulting session started with Sigbritt asking Tanja questions about Zhou based on Tanja's draft of her intended referral on Zhou. Then Sigbritt advised Tanja to wait some months before deciding whether to send in the referral because Sigbritt thought that presently the draft was not substantial enough. Tanja agreed with Sigbritt's suggestion. Then Sigbritt advised Tanja on how to deal with Zhou's situation and how Tanja should conduct a meeting with Zhou's parents.

After the consulting session was finished I arranged appointments with Tanja and Sigbritt for interviews with them individually at the end of the following day. In the interviews, I asked questions about the *action* incidents which took place at the consulting session. For my research I have defined *action* incidents as incidents where they demonstrate different perspectives on a common issue.

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[22] Danish teachers who have received specialised training in helping children with emotional, social and behavioural difficulties ("*Adfærds, Kontakts og Trivsels-problemer*"). These teachers usually both work with such children themselves and advise other teachers on how to work with childen with these difficulties.

In the following sections I will analyse two issues from the consulting session where they demonstrated different perspectives. The issues are "Zhou's Chinese background" and "Zhou's waiting at the restaurant".

8.2 Zhou's Chinese background

When I returned home from my observation of the consulting session I could see in my notes that Sigbritt and Tanja had demonstrated different approaches to Zhou's Chinese background. Hence I investigated this issue in the interviews with Tanja and Sigbritt respectively.

The main aim of this analysis is to investigate if and how Sigbritt's perspective has made any impact on Tanja's further perspective on Zhou's Chinese background. But first I will present some characteristics of Zhou's Chinese background. However, it is crucial in my Arendtian approach that I can only reach an understanding of Zhou's Chinese background if several people identify the same themes from their different points of view. Hence now I will present poetic representations of Tanja's and Sigbritt's statements about Zhou's Chinese background and after this I will investigate whether I can identify common themes which appear in both poetic representations. The poetric representations are first presented in Danish then in English.

Tanja:
Jeg har aldrig set Zhou
som særligt "to-sproget",
heller ikke de andre to-sprogede
børn i klassen.
For de snakker jo alle
flydende dansk
i mine timer.
Sådan har jeg haft det hele tiden!
Der var en gang,
da vi startede i klassen,
at en far kom til mig
og spurgte hvor mange
to-sprogede var i klassen.
Og jeg havde svært ved at svare,
fordi jeg ser jo ikke forskel.

Dog er det ikke sådan,
at jeg ikke er bevidst om,
at Zhou har kinesisk afstamning,
Det står helt klart for mig,
at han har kinesisk afstamning!

Sigbritt:
Jeg tillagde
Zhou's families' kinesiske etnicitet
en stor betydning.
Jeg antydede
at det er vigtigt
at have med
til en helhedsforståelse.

Fordi jeg har jo en del erfaringer
med kinesiske familier
Og de kan have nogle
specielle normer
som jeg har respekt for.

Kinesere - det er nogle
meget stolte mennesker.
De vil gerne prøve selv,
og så beder de først om hjælp,
når de er helt ude!

Tanja:
I've never thought of Zhou
as specially "bilingual",
neither the other bilingual
kids in the class.
Because they all speak
fluent Danish
in my lessons.
It's always been like that!
Once before,
when this class started,
a father came up to me
and asked how many
were bilingual in the class.
And I had trouble answering,
as I can't see the difference.

But it's not the case
that I don't realise
that Zhou has a
Chinese background.
It's perfectly clear to me
that he has a Chinese background!

Sigbritt:
I considered
Zhou's family's Chinese ethnicity
very significant.
I suggested
it's important
to have
a holistic understanding.

Because I've quite a lot of experi-
ence
with Chinese families
And they often have
special norms
which I respect.

The Chinese – they're very
proud people.
They like to try themselves,
and only ask for help,
when they're really desperate!

The only common theme in the two poetic representations I can find is the certainty about Zhou's Chinese descent. The rest of the poetic representations reveal very clearly that Tanja and Sigbritt have very different perspectives on the influence of Zhou's Chinese background.

I now move on to the first part of my analysis, where I investigate how it has influenced Tanja to meet Sigbritt's perspective on the importance of Zhou's Chinese background.

8.3 The consulting session's influence on Tanja's perspective

The following table presents a summary of how Tanja represented the perspective she demonstrated at the consulting session and a summary of how she viewed the importance of Zhou's Chinese background at the interview.

Tanja's perspective at the consulting session	Tanja's perspective at the interview
I did not include anything about his Chinese background in my perspective on Zhou. I did not even conceive Zhou as bilingual, because he speaks Danish fluently. However, I was aware that Zhou was of Chinese descent.	Now I think that the Chinese culture is important in relation to Zhou's family. Because my eyes have been opened to the fact that Chinese people tackle certain matters in a different way than Danish people normally do. It is become a burden for me to now include in my thinking the importance of Zhou's Chinese background – not so much in my pedagogical work with Zhou but in relation to the coming parental meeting with Zhou's mother and our possible subsequent common initiatives.

Table 9. The table compares Tanja's perspective at the consulting session and after the consulting session.

In Table 9 we see that the only real component in Tanja's perspective at the session is an awareness that Zhou was of Chinese descent. Then we see that

the day after the session there is a new component of the importance of Chinese culture in Zhou's family. In the following I will illustrate how Tanja talks about this new component.

Tanja says:

Sigbritt åbnede mine øjne. Det der med at hun fortalte om hvordan hun mente, at mange kinesere har det i hendes forståelse. Men det var virkeligt rimeligt. Jeg har ikke tænkt at der var noget der var helt galt som hun sagde om kineserne. Så jeg har efterfølgende fået øjnene åbnet op for "ja måske de griber det anderledes an.

Sigbritt opened my eyes. When she told me how she thinks things are for many Chinese in her understanding. But that was quite reasonable. I haven't thought there was anything wrong in what she said about the Chinese. So afterwards I've realised that "maybe they do things differently"

Tanja reveals in this quote that Sigbritt opened her eyes to the fact that Chinese people tackle certain matters in a distinctive way.

Further Tanja says:

Men det er også en byrde for mig at skulle tænke på hvordan deres etnicitet spiller ind. Ikke så meget i forhold til Zhou, det tror jeg er nemt nok. Men mere til mødet med mor og det vi sammen skal sætte i gang. Pludselig skal jeg også sætte mig ind i hvordan… Hun er meget sådan at hun bare sidder og smiler - og det var også det Sigbritt sagde om kinesiske kvinder…

But it's also a burden for me to have to think about the role their ethnicity plays. Not so much regarding Zhou, I think that's easy enough. But more for the meeting with his mother and what we're going to do together. Suddenly I have to get an insight into how… She tends very much to just sit there and smile – and that's also what Sigbritt said about Chinese women…

In another place Tanja says:

Der var noget hun sagde [om det kinesiske] som jeg bagefter har tænkt, at det kunne gøre sig gældende med Zhou og hans mor - ud fra det samspil jeg har haft med moren.

There was something she said [about Chinese things] which I later thought could be the case with Zhou and his mother – based on the interaction I've had with his mother.

The first quote reveals that Tanja claims that she does not think of the Chinese background in relation to Zhou himself, but that she thinks of it in relation to her future work with Zhou's mother. However, in the second quote we see that Tanja thinks about the Chinese background in relation to both Zhou and his mother.

Hence I will conclude that after the consulting session Tanja actively includes the Chinese background when she thinks about her work with Zhou

and his mother but not when she thinks about her work with Zhou alone. My conclusion thus implies that Tanja used to adopt only an individual and classroom-oriented position to Zhou's everyday life, while after the consulting session Tanja adopts an "Individual and classroom-oriented position towards Zhou in school and a family and ethnicity-oriented position to Zhou after school".

8.4 Tanja's perception of what Sigbritt said at the consulting session

My Arendtian framework conceives the above changes in Tanja's perspective on Zhou's Chinese background as a consequence of the consulting session's *action* between Tanja and Sigbritt which has continued to Tanja's subsequent *thinking*. In the *thinking* Tanja has had the opportunity to see Zhou through the perspective Sigbritt used in their common *action*.

However, importantly, my framework also states that Tanja can represent Sigbritt's perspective in different ways. Thus I will now characterise how Tanja represents Sigbritt's perspective which hence frames which *thinking* Tanja has been able to carry out.

In the table on the next page I will compare Tanja's representation of Sigbritt's perspective with how Sigbritt makes an account of her own perspective.

Tanja's representation of Sigbritt's perspective	Sigbritt's account of her own perspective at the consulting session
Sigbritt's approach moved away from Zhou himself and instead she focused on Zhou's Chinese background. Sigbritt gave information about Chinese families' approaches to some things which seemed relevant to my work with Zhou. Everything Sigbritt said was reasonable, however it was not all applicable to Zhou's present lifeworld.	In my perspective I gave importance to Zhou's Chinese ethnicity. I presented to Tanja that it was important to take into account that Zhou's Chinese family could have norms that were different from Danish family norms. I implied that it is necessary to be able to characterise and respect a Chinese family's way of behaving without letting go of the professional duties Tanja has as a school professional.

Table 10. Summaries of Tanja's and Sigbritt's representations of Sigbritt's perspective at the consulting session. I have indicated my meaning condensations of Tanja's and Sigbritt's quotes which led up to these summaries in Appendix 7.

In Table 10 we can see that Tanja represents all the components which Sigbritt also represents in her account of her own perspective at the consulting session. This is also reflected in their respective statements about the perspective Sigbritt demonstrated at the consulting session. In the following I will illustrate this similarity with examples from Sigbritt and Tanja respectively.

Sigbritt says about the importance she gave to Zhou's Chinese background:

Jeg tillagde etniciteten en stor betydning (…) fordi det er professionelt hvis du kan sætte dig ned og sige "Jamen, de kommer fra forskellige normer" og "Med udgangspunkt i de normer vil jeg gerne vil behjælpelig med at vi får tilrettet til selvfølgeligt så at vi kan være her alle sammen men jeg har respekt for jeres normer". Jeg har respekt for at … - og det sagde jeg også til Tanja-…jamen kinesere det er noget meget stolte mennesker og de beder først om hjælp når de er helt ude af det .

I considered the ethnicity very important (...) because it's professional if you can sit down and say "But they come from different norms" and "Based on those norms I'd like to help us to arrange things so that we can all be here together, but I respect your norms". I have respect for... – and I said this to Tanja - ...you know the Chinese are a very proud people and they won't ask for help unless they're really desperate.

In my interview I also asked Tanja to represent the perspective Sigbritt demonstrated on Zhou's Chinese background. Tanja says:

Hun snakkede sådan om det generelle ved kinesere familier. Det gjorde jeg ikke, sikkert fordi jeg er så ny og har ikke mødt flere kinesiske familier. Bagefter har jeg tænkt på at det hun fortalte kan være rigtigt (…) Der er nok nogle mønstre, og der er en måde, hvorpå kulturen og alt det her det spiller ind (…) Men ikke sådan at alt hun har sagt har jeg taget til mig ukritisk.

She talked about general things in Chinese families. I didn't do that, obviously because I'm so new and haven't met any other Chinese families. Afterwards I thought that what she said may be right (...) There are certain patterns, and there's a way the culture and all that plays a part (...) But not that I've just accepted everything she said uncritically.

Looking at the two quotes there is no doubt that Tanja very accurately represents the perspective Sigbritt demonstrated on the importance of Zhou's Chinese background. Furthermore it is fairly obvious that there is a connection between Tanja's representation of Sigbritt's perspective and the fact that the previous section demonstrated that the consulting session led to Tanja including Zhou's Chinese background in her further reflections about how to help him.

8.5 Zhou's waiting at the restaurant

From my notes I could also see that at the session Sigbritt and Tanja had also demonstrated different approaches to the fact that some times Zhou waited for his mother until late into the evening to finish her work at a Chinese restaurant.

In my subsequent interviews with Sigbritt and Tanja respectively I investigated the different perspectives they had demonstrated to this issue at the session and asked questions to enable me to analyse if and how Tanja was influenced by meeting Sigbritt's different perspective to "Zhou's waiting at the restaurant".

Before I embark on the analysis of the outcome of the meeting of the two different perspectives I will focus purely on "Zhou's waiting at the restaurant". But as I have argued previously it is important to underline that the characteristics of "Zhou's waiting at the restaurant" can never be viewed as an independent entity because they will always be intertwined with how different persons perceive them. Hence I need to present the issue from Tanja's and

Sigbritt's different perspectives and then based on this access to two perspectives I can try to form a contour of the characteristics of the issue of "Zhou's waiting at the restaurant". The following poetric representations are first presented in Danish then in English.

Tanja:

Han er ...
Jeg er meget bekymret for Zhou.
Han er faglig dygtig nok,
men der er jo alle de her andre ting.

Jeg synes faktisk at
han er ekstremt forsømt,
- det siger jeg
fordi jeg sammenligner
ham
         med de andre
         i klassen.

Der er nogle tilfælde i min klasse,
hvor børnene har det hårdt.
Men så er det Zhou
Puhh..

Det er fordi
han er
jamen
han er så   stille en gang i mellem.
Jeg kan ikke komme under huden på ham.
Men også det at
han er
uren i tøjet,
usoigneret.
Dertil er det ofte at
han er
uforberedt
han har ikke madpakke, bøger og blyanter med i skole.

Så er der også et andet:
Når faren er på en af sine lange rejser i Kina,
så sidder Zhou tit og venter på sin mor
til langt ud om aftenen
- på hendes arbejdsplads
i restauranten.

Med hensyn til Zhou's venten tænkte jeg

under selve rådgivningen
"Det er jo bare
en del af hverdagen
Det er sådan de får det til at løbe rundt".

Men jeg er blevet påvirket at
 at Sigbritt syntes, at det var alvorligt.
Jamen jeg ser nu, at det er alvorligt!

Men så har jeg tænkt:
"Hvad kan jeg gøre med det?"
Og det havde hun ikke svar på!

Moren får jo ikke bare en barnepige
eller
råd til at gå derhjemme
fordi vi ønsker det.
Det gør hun jo ikke!

Men ja det er rigtigt nok,
jeg kan godt se,
at det er en stor ting,
det kan jeg godt se nu!

Sigbritt:

Ikke OK

Jeg lagde mærke til
at Tanja sagde dette om Zhou:
-Han har aldrig mad med i skole
(og når han så har mad med
så ligger det og flyder rundt).
-Han har aldrig penalhus med.
-Han har aldrig blyanter med.
-Han er altid træt.
-Han er altid trist.

Jeg må dog sige,
at jeg var allermest bekymret
over det der med
at Zhous' mor arbejder om aftenen
mens Zhou sidder og venter på hende.
Det er ikke ok!

Tanja:
He is ...

I'm very worried about Zhou.
He's clever enough,
but there's all these other things.

I actually think
he's very much neglected,
-I say that
because I compare
him
        with the others
        in the class.

There are some cases in my class,
where the kids have a tough time.
But then there's Zhou
Phew...

It's because
he's
well
he's so   quiet sometimes
I can't fathom him out.
But also the fact that
his
clothes are dirty,
unkempt.
What's more
he comes
unprepared
he doesn't bring his lunch, books and pencils
to school.

And there's another thing:
When his father's on his long China trips

Zhou often sits waiting for his mother
until late in the evening
-where she works
at the restaurant.

Regarding Zhou's waiting I thought
at the consulting session
"It's just part
of their everyday lives.
That's how they get by".

But I was influenced by
Sigbritt's opinion that it was serious.
Yes, I can see now it's serious!

But then I've been thinking:
"What can I do about it?"
And she didn't have an answer to that!

The mother won't get a babysitter
or
be able to afford to stay home
because we want it.
No way!

But yes, true enough,
I can easily see
it's a big thing,
I can see that now!

Sigbritt:
<u>Not OK</u>
I noticed
that Tanja said this about Zhou:
-He never brings food to school
(and if he does bring his food

it's all just messy).
-He never brings his pencil box.
-He never brings his pencils.
-He's always tired.
-He's always sad.

But I must say
I was most worried
about the fact
that Zhou's mother works evenings
while Zhou sits and waits for her.
That's not OK!

The two sets of poetic representations are created with the use of statements I have chosen from the interviews with Tanja and Sigbritt. I have formed these poetic interpretations in line with my interpretation of the main message of how Tanja and Sigbritt consider "Zhou's waiting at the restaurant" in the interviews. For further information on the poetic representations see Section 4.5.6.

When reading through Tanja's and Sigbritt's poetic representations, it can be seen that both of them think there is something abnormal about Zhou's lifeworld. We also see that Tanja and Sigbritt are raising their concern about Zhou because there are certain everyday things that worry them. They mention several things about Zhou's everyday life which make them concerned, and one which both mention is that sometimes in the evenings Zhou is waiting for his mother at the restaurant where she works.

In Tanja's poetic representation we see a change has taken place in her conception of Zhou's waiting at the restaurant. In the beginning Tanja mentions it as of equal or less importance compared to several other worrying things in Zhou's strained lifeworld. However at the end she states that Zhou's waiting is serious. Similarly we see in Sigbritt's poetic representation she considers Zhou's waiting a serious issue.

It is clear that both Tanja and Sigbritt disapprove of Zhou's waiting. Hence I can conclude that there is something worrying about a recurring situation in which a child needs to adapt his late evenings to his parents' obligations.

Now that I have made a contour of the characteristics of Zhou's waiting, I will move on to the scope of my research which is to investigate how at the consulting session Tanja and Sigbritt differently approached this issue. The goal of my coming analysis is to state how it influenced Tanja when she met Sigbritt's different perspective on Zhou's waiting at the restaurant.

8.6 The consulting session's influence on Tanja's perspective

In my interview with Tanja first I asked which perspective she had demonstrated on Zhou's waiting at the restaurant during the consulting session. Secondly I asked Tanja about her present perspective on Zhou's waiting at the restaurant (the day after the consulting session).

With the use of the technique of meaning condensation I have generated summaries of how Tanja characterises her perspectives at the consulting session and the day after the consulting session. On the following pages I will characterise the change that has taken place in Tanja's perspective on Zhou's waiting at the restaurant. I will also investigate how Tanja has changed the position she adopts to Zhou's waiting at the restaurant as an effect of her participation in the consulting session.

Tanja's perspective at the consulting session	Tanja's perspective after the consulting session
I saw Zhou's waiting for his mother at the restaurant as unavoidable because Zhou's mother has to work in the evenings in order for them to live a decent life.	Now I see that **it is a serious issue** that sometimes Zhou is waiting at the restaurant for his mother in the evenings. However, it seems to be an unsolvable issue because the mother must work in the restaurant in order for them to live a decent life.

Table 11. This table indicates how Tanja changed her perspective on Zhou's waiting at the restaurant. I have indicated my meaning condensations of Tanja's quotes which led up to these two summaries in Appendix 8.

Table 11 demonstrates that Tanja's earlier and present perspectives are quite similar. In both versions Tanja claims that it is unavoidable that Zhou must wait at the restaurant because Zhou's mother has to work in order for them to live a decent life.

However a clear change is that after the consulting session Tanja thinks it is a serious issue that during the evenings Zhou has to wait at the restaurant for his mother to finish her work. Tanja says in the interview:

Jeg kan godt se at det er en stor ting. Det kan jeg godt se nu. Men jeg tænker også "Det er deres hverdag. Det er sådan de får det til at løbe rundt". Men ja jeg er påvirket af at [Sigbritt] synes at det var alvorlig.	I can easily see it's a big thing. I can easily see it now. But I also think "It's their everyday life. That's how they get by." But yes, I have been influenced by [Sigbritt's] opinion that it was serious.

The quote reveals that even though the consulting session has caused a change in how seriously Tanja views Zhou's waiting, she still sticks to her claim that financially it is necessary for the mother to work in the evenings. Hence Zhou

must wait for her at the restaurant when Zhou's father is on one of his extended trips to China.

Because the main content is the same in Tanja's earlier and present perspective I conclude that Tanja does not adopt a totally different position on Zhou's waiting after she has received the consulting session from Sigbritt. In both cases Tanja focuses on the necessity for Zhou's mother to carry out her work in order to make ends meet. I therefore conclude that Tanja speaks from a position in which she acknowledges the circumstances of Zhou's family's financial situation. However I also conclude that after the consulting session Tanja thinks that it is serious that Zhou needs to wait at the restaurant in the evenings.

Thus I can conclude that at the consulting session Tanja adopted a position on Zhou's waiting of being aware of Zhou's family's tough financial situation. After the consulting session Tanja adopted a position of being both aware of the reality of the financial situation and of being concerned about this implying a strain on Zhou's lifeworld.

8.7 Tanja's perception of what Sigbritt said at the consulting session

In this analysis section I will analyse the material from the interviews in which I investigated how the above mentioned change in Tanja's perspective is linked with what Sigbritt said at the consulting session. First in the interview with Tanja I asked her to represent the perspective Sigbritt demonstrated to Zhou's waiting at the consulting session. Secondly in the interview with Sigbritt I asked her to give an account of the perspective she herself demonstrated to the same issue at the session. Hence in this analysis section I have a possibility to compare the two different representations of Sigbritt's perspective in order to investigate how Tanja represents Sigbritt's perspective.

I find it crucial to underline that the goal in my Arendtian inspired comparison of the two versions of Sigbritt's perspective is not to check if Tanja objectively can represent what Sigbritt said at the consulting session. The goal is rather to investigate how Tanja represents what Sigbritt said from her own point of view. However I will also consider whether there are crucial components or crucial aspects of some components in Sigbritt's account which Tanja does

not represent. Further I will consider if Tanja could have profited from these things and suggest possible reasons why Tanja does not represent these things.

In Table 12 I will set out my summaries of their two representations of Sigbritt's perspective and in the subsequent text I will make a comparison between them with the use of quotes from the two interviews respectively.

Tanja's representation of Sigbritt's perspective	Sigbritt's account of her own perspective
Sigbritt signalled that Zhou's waiting was a serious issue and that it should have been written in my draft for a referral. *Sigbritt thought that there was a need to investigate further Zhou's waiting and how it can be changed.* However, Sigbritt did not have any suggestions on how to change it.	**I signalled clearly that Zhou's waiting was not ok. Further** *I signalled that Zhou's waiting and other things needed to be investigated further. I implied that we needed to try to help Zhou's mother to solve the problems. I thought it was a good step forward to investigate the worrying things further at the coming parental meeting.*

Table 12. Two different versions of Sigbritt's perspective at the consulting session. I have indicated my meaning condensations of Tanja's and Sigbritt's quotes which led up to these summaries in Appendix 8.

In Table 12 it can be seen that both Tanja and Sigbritt characterise two main components in Sigbritt's perspective on Zhou's waiting which she presented at the consulting session. The first component is that Sigbritt signalled that Zhou's waiting was a serious issue (marked in bold). The second component is that Zhou's waiting has to be investigated and dealt with (marked in italics).

8.7.1 It is a serious issue (the component in bold)

When we read the component in bold we see that both Tanja and Sigbritt represent that at the consulting Sigbritt signalled that Zhou's waiting was a serious issue.

However my two summaries reveal that Tanja and Sigbritt represent differently in which context Sigbritt emphasised her remarks about the seriousness of Zhou's waiting. Tanja represents Sigbritt's remarks about this primarily in the context of Sigbritt's evaluation of the draft Tanja had written for a referral (**Sigbritt signalled that Zhou's waiting was a serious issue and that it should have been written in my draft for a referral**). On the other hand Sigbritt does not emphasise that she stressed this issue in relation to her evaluation of Tanja's draft referral on Zhou. Rather Sigbritt represents that she put

the worrying issue of Zhou's waiting in the broader context of the other worrying issues in Zhou's lifeworld ((...)**Zhou's waiting and other things**). In the following I will illustrate this difference with quotes from Tanja and Sigbritt respectively.

Tanja represents this component in Sigbritt's perspective in the following way:

Efter jeg havde nævnt noget om at Zhou venter tit på sin mor så sagde Sigbritt straks til mig: "Det er alvorligt. Det har du ikke skrevet i din underretning."

After I'd mentioned something about Zhou often waiting for his mother, Sigbritt immediately said to me: "That's serious. You haven't written that in your referral."

This quote illustrates that Tanja is very focused on the fact that Sigbritt told her that she should have written it in the referral.

However when Sigbritt represents how she talked about Zhou's waiting she sets it in the broader context of what is happening in Zhou's lifeworld. Sigbritt says:

Under rådgivingen viste jeg Tanja at der er noget i Zhou's venten og alle andre ting, som gør, at man er nødt til at undersøge det nærmere. Men jeg var rigtigt tilfreds med den aftale, vi lavede, at Tanja og moren har det her forældremøde i næste uge, hvor de foruroligende ting bliver undersøgt nærmere, at der bliver lavet nogle klare målbare mål og så samler man op på dem inden sommerferien. Ligeleds at mig og Tanja mødes igen om to uger. Det synes jeg var en rigtig rigtig god måde at arbejde på.

At the consulting session I showed Tanja that there's something about Zhou's waiting and all the other things that mean this has to be looked into more closely. But I was really pleased with that agreement we made that Tanja and the mother have this parental meeting next week, where the worrying things are looked at more closely, and some clear measurable goals are set and we put this all together before the summer holiday. And that Tanja and I meet again in two weeks. I thought that was a really really good way to work.

This quote reveals that compared to Tanja Sigbritt represents that she did not present the issue of Zhou's waiting primarily in relation to Tanja's draft referral and Sigbritt does not connect this issue with Tanja's referral in other places in the interview. Rather Sigbritt represents that she put Zhou's waiting into a larger context with all the other things Tanja was worried about in Zhou's lifeworld.

This difference reflects the overall difference in the direction of the two interviews. When I interviewed Tanja about the consulting session, throughout the interview she was very focused on the fact that Sigbritt did not think her draft referral was good enough. Tanja says for example:

Sigbritt var utroligt bombastisk. Og ja - men det er måske fordi jeg er meget følsom. Så jeg blev hurtigt sådan "uhhhh- er det mig der er på bænken her?!". Og så tænkte jeg "Hvorfor skrev jeg nu det her bekymringbrev" Pludseligt følte jeg det sådan, at det var mig der havde problemet. Men så fandt jeg ud af det bare er den måde hun griber det an på (...)til sidst tænkte jeg "det er meget rart med [den her rådgivingssamtale]".

Sigbritt was incredibly bombastic. And well – but maybe it's because I'm very sensitive. So I quickly got kind of "Huh – am I the pupil sitting at my desk here?!" And then I thought "Why did I write that letter of concern?" Suddenly I felt that it was me who had the problem. But then I found out that it's just the way she approaches it (...) finally I thought "it's very nice to have [this consulting session]".

The first part of this quote reveals that Tanja thinks that Sigbritt strongly rejected her draft at the consulting session. However Sigbritt does not in her representation of her perspective state that she rejected the draft as strongly as Tanja feels. Sigbritt says about her rejection:

Sigbritt: Jeg sagde til hende: Underretningen duer ikke som den er nu. Hvordan skal børne og familie teamet gå ind og forandre det hun nævner. Derfor sagde jeg til hende at de må selv prøve at forandre nogle ting hen ad vejen. Og det kan de godt. Og det vil de gerne. Istedet for at denne her underretning bliver sendt med at "han er snavset" og at "han kommer ikke til tiden". Der vil famile og børne-teamet's spørgsmål være "Har du talt med forældrene?" Og hvis så lærerne siger "nej" – så kan du se – ik'?

Jóhannes: Ja – at det må de prøve først!?

Sigbritt: Ja. Der skal være en substans. Altså det kan godt være, at vi i efteråret er nødt til at tage hendes underretning frem igen. Det sagde jeg også til hende. Men så har vi også

Sigbritt: I told her: The referral won't do the way it is now. How can the child and family team intervene and change the things she mentions? That's why I told her they have to try to change some things themselves on the way. And they can easily do so. And they do want to. Instead of sending this referral saying "he's untidy" and "he comes late". Then the question from the child and family team will be "Have you talked to the parents?" And if the teachers say "No" – well, you see – don't you?

Jóhannes: Yes – they have to try that first!?

Sigbritt: Yes. There must be some

en substans at lave den ud fra. Et handleforløb hun vil kunne dokumentere sin skolehjem samtale, hvor vi aftale sådan og da vi mødtes efter fem uger var der ikke sket en skid. Jeg er stadig bekymret.

substance. In fact it may well be that this autumn we'll have to take out her referral again. And I told her that. But then we'll have some substance to base it on. A course of events where she'll be able to document a parental meeting, where we agreed on this and that, and when we met after five weeks, things hadn't changed one bit. I'm still worried.

Regarding this quote I find it important to underline that Sigbritt says that she signalled to Tanja that her draft was not substantial enough regarding her intervention with Zhou and his parents. However Sigbritt also emphasises in the quote that they might make use of Tanja's draft later on.

The last quote implies that I can now firmly state that the day after the consulting session Tanja and Sigbritt give Sigbritt's rejection of the referral a different status in their representations of Sigbritt's approach at the consulting session. For Sigbritt the rejection was a minor thing whilst for Tanja it was a major thing.

Further I would like to argue that the last two quotes from Tanja and Sigbritt respectively support Tanja's claim that she had a sensitive approach while Sigbritt had a bombastic approach at the consulting session. It is however important following my Arendtian politically inspired approach that these two contrasting approaches can only be linked to the occurrence of this incident at this particular consulting session. I cannot conclude that Tanja on a general level is more sensitive then Sigbritt from my single observation of them. Even If I had carried out several similar observations in which they demonstrated these traits I could not maintain that they had permanent features of being bombastic and sensitive respectively, because Arendt claims that as long as people live they have an opportunity to act differently in future situations (Miðskarð, submitted).

However I can state that this temporary difference in their approach of being respectively sensitive and bombastic seems to have had an influence on how Tanja interprets Zhou's waiting in the light of Sigbritt rejecting her draft. This implies that Tanja interprets Sigbritt's statement about the seriousness of Zhou's waiting in the light of Sigbritt's bombastic words that she should have included it in the statement to improve the draft, while Sigbritt does not so

strongly represent that she talked about Zhou's waiting primarily in connection with the draft.

Hence this section underlines that personal approaches can be a trigger for misunderstandings in interprofessional work conversations. This finding resonates with Ejrnæs' (2006) demonstration that misunderstandings in interprofessional work are mainly rooted in personal attributes and not in professional differences between members of different professions. Even though in Chapter 2 I have questioned whether Ejrnæs too quickly rejects professional differences as part of the explanation for misunderstandings I agree with him that his data suggest that personal attributes seem to be a crucial factor in misunderstandings in interprofessional work.

I would further argue that professionals' personal attributes and approaches may tend to surface particularly forcefully in interprofessional work with vulnerable children because the children's strained lifeworlds seem to arouse strong personal feelings in the professionals (this is demonstrated frequently in my poetic representations). Furthermore the school professionals may be under stress because they both have responsibility for a large group of children and also have to deal with certain vulnerable children needing extra attention. However, following an Arendtian political approach it is important that the professionals choose not to let their feelings steer their utterances in interprofessional work conversations (which I classify as public sphere conversations). It is important to underline that this does not imply that personal feelings are to be suppressed following Arendt, but it means that feelings need to be dealt with in the private sphere and not acted out in public sphere conversations.

8.7.2 Zhou's waiting has to be investigated and dealt with (the component in italics)

When in Table 12 I compared Tanja's and Sigbritt's representations of the perspective Sigbritt demonstrated on Zhou's waiting I mentioned a difference in how the two of them represented what Sigbritt implied about what needed to be done about Zhou's waiting.

In my summary of Sigbritt's representation of this component I phrased it: *I signalled that Zhou's waiting and other things needed to be investigated further. I implied that we needed to try to help Zhou's mother to solve the problems. I thought it was a good step forward to investigate the worrying things further at the coming parental meeting.*

In my summary of Tanja's representation of this component I phrased it: *Sigbritt thought that there was a need to investigate further Zhou's waiting and how it can be changed. However, Sigbritt did not have any suggestions on how to change it.*

In the following I will illustrate and further investigate this difference with some of their quotes.

In my interview with Sigbritt she says:

Jeg sagde at vi er nødt til at få mere at vide om hvorfor Zhou venter på moren. Dernæst sagde jeg at sidenhen så må vi måske forsøge at hjælpe moren med at løse det på en anden måde. Videre sagde jeg at man kunne sige "Ok hvis det er rigtigt svært for dig at passe dit arbejde og have et barn på otte år - Hvordan kan vi så hjælpe dig med at løse det og gøre tingene på en anden måde?" Fordi folk har jo det arbejde som de har og mange af de forældre vi har arbejder på rigtigt mange tidspunkter af døgnet. Jeg sagde til Tanja at man må jo prøve at se hvordan man kan give og tage i forskellige ender. Til dette tænker jeg at måske en løsning kan være at de aftaler at Zhou og hans storebror er alene hjemme tre aftener om ugen indtil moren kommer hjem. (...)Men jeg var rigtigt tilfreds med den aftale vi lavede, at de har den her samtale i næste uge hvor de foruroligende ting bliver undersøgt nærmere (...)Så mødes mig og Tanja igen om to uger.

I said that we must find out more about why Zhou waits for his mother. Then I said that afterwards we should perhaps try to help the mother solve it in another way. I went on to say that we could say "OK, if it's really difficult for you to do your work with an eight-year-old child – How can we help you to solve it and do things differently?" Because people have the jobs they have and many of the parents we have work at all hours of the day and night. I told Tanja that we have to try to see how one can give and take at both ends. In this respect I think a solution might be that they agree that Zhou and his older brother are alone at home three evenings a week until their mother comes home. (...)But I was really pleased with the agreement we made, that they have this meeting next week where the worrying things are looked into more closely. (...)And then Tanja and I will meet again in two weeks.

This quote reveals that Sigbritt emphasises that at the session she said that they needed to get more facts about Zhou's waiting. After that they needed to help Zhou's mother to change it so that Zhou did not need to wait for his mother at her work late in the evenings.

However, when I asked Tanja to represent what Sigbritt said about how to deal with Zhou's waiting she says:

Hun sagde, at det må vi prøve at undersøge [Zhou's venten] nærmere og se om vi kan forandre det. Men så har jeg også tænkt, hvad kan jeg gøre med det og det havde hun ikke svar på.

She said we'll have to try to look into it [Zhou's waiting] more closely and see if we can change it. But I also thought what can I do about it and she didn't have an answer to that.

These two quotes make it clear that Tanja carries a simplified representation compared to Sigbritt's representation of what she said about how to deal with Zhou's waiting.

We see that Tanja is not able to represent that Sigbritt implied that there were different options available for action in helping them to avoid Zhou waiting at the restaurant in the evenings.

We also see that Tanja represents Sigbritt's two phases of investigating and making some interventions as very close together compared to Sigbritt's more separate representation of them: 1.) They need to get more information about Zhou's waiting and 2.) They need to try to help Zhou's mother to change it.

Hence I can conclude that Tanja wants some immediate actions to be taken whilst Sigbritt thinks that before such actions Zhou's waiting needs to be investigated further. This finding reflects a similar finding by Brønnum, Mørck & Veen (2008). Brønnum et al. claim that teachers often state that it seems that "nothing is happening" for a long time when they have asked for help or referred a child to a social service department. In the interview Tanja says exactly this:

Tingene tager lang tid oplever jeg. De gange jeg rent faktisk har prøvet at indstille børn og alle sådan nogle ting. Altså. Jeg ved ikke hvad der sker ligeså snart jeg har bedt om hjælp eller at jeg har afleveret et bekymringsbrev på kontoret eller sendt det til den adresse jeg lige har fået, så ved jeg ærlig talt ikke hvad der sker. Jeg synes ikke at der sker noget. Jeg oplever ikke rigtigt noget. Man hører ikke noget eller man hører sådan lidt. De andre lærere på skolen siger "ja så er det den og den og den de har indstillet og intet er sket".

Things take time in my experience. On the occasions when I have in fact tried to refer children and all those kinds of things. Like that. I don't know what happens as soon as I've asked for help or given a letter of concern to the office or sent it to the address I've just got, honestly I don't know what's happening. I don't think anything's happening. I don't get any feedback. You don't hear anything or you just hear a little bit. The other teachers at school say "Well, they've referred him and him and her and nothing's happened".

In this quote Tanja says that she thinks it takes a long time for the social service departments to take any action; she even says that often nothing happens. She bases this claim on her own experiences but also on what other teachers have told her. Using a concept from post-structuralist inspired Arnesen (2000) I will phrase it as follows: Among teachers there is a strong discourse about a long processing time and passiveness in the work of the social service department. If we then align this with Brønnum et al.'s (2008) findings from research in five Danish municipalities then I can conclude that this seems to be a national discourse in Denmark. Arnesen maintains that such discourses are affecting how people act in their everyday lives. In the concrete example here I would suggest that this discourse about a long processing time and passiveness is partly the reason why Tanja so quickly concludes that Sigbritt did not provide any suggestions on how to deal with Zhou's waiting at the restaurant.

In Arendtian terms such a discourse stems from the web of relations that exists between Tanja and other teachers in Denmark. Following my Arendtian existential-phenomenological inspired line of thinking a person must try to identify the discourses in his or her web of relations and then take a stance to the content of these discourses when they are used in our everyday conversations. In opposition to some post-structuralist inspired theories[23] it is crucial in an Arendtian existential-phenomenological approach that the stance must not mainly be based on a consideration of the content of the discourses but just as much on how the person and their various fellow human beings have experienced the "things" referred to by the content of the discourses. "Things" refers to objects or lived experiences on our physical Earth.

Hence in this particular case it is important that Tanja considers the discourse on a long processing time and passivity in the work of social service departments in terms of her own and others' experience of the social service departments (which Tanja states that she has done). However it is crucial in my Arendtian inspired line of thinking that Tanja includes different people's experiences with the issue. Hence she cannot solely rely on her fellow teachers' experiences to judge the content in the discourse but she needs also for example to get insights from some fellow professionals who work in social service departments. In relation to this issue I did ask Sara, the social worker

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[23] For example Hall (2001) uses inspiration from Foucalt to suggest that people's subjectivities are constructed in the discourses rather then viewing it as the discourses being descriptions of people's subjectivities.

at school A, about the fact that teachers often think it takes a long time for the social services to take action. She says:

Hvis der kommer en lærer og siger: "Der skal bare ske noget her og nu. Nu er det nu og vi kan ikke mere." Så er det vigtigt lige at trække sig og sige "Hvor hurtigt skal det her gå?" og "hvor akut er det?". Ja det er akut for læreren. Ja det må vi så tage os af. Så må læreren få noget supervision eller et eller andet. Men "Er det godt for barnet?" og "Får vi tænkt os godt nok om?". Og i min verden, i socialrådgiververdenen, så er det akut hvis man skal på skadestuen for at bevise et overgreb: voldtægt eller noget incest. Så er det selvfølgelig yderst akut og så skal der handles akut. Men de fleste ting kan vente lidt så man lige kan nå at falde ned og tænke sig om.

If a teacher comes and says: "Something's got to happen here and now. Now is now and we can't go on like this." Then it's important to take a step backwards and say "How soon must it happen?" and "How acute is it?" Yes, it's acute for the teacher. So yes, we must do something about it. Then the teacher can get some supervision or something. But "Is it good for the child?" and "Are we thinking this through?" And in my world, the world of the social worker, it's acute if you have to go to the emergency department to prove abuse: rape or incest. Then of course it's extremely acute and you have to act acutely. But most things can wait a bit so you have time to calm down and think about them.

Based on Sara's statement it is possible to say that in some cases social workers act promptly and in other cases they take more time to do their investigations and considerations. However I want to underline that I am not therefore arguing that it is not true that social services departments have too long processing time and too much passivity when teachers ask them for help; I am merely presenting an insider's view from a social worker on this issue which illuminates the issue from another standpoint. Sara's insider view emphasises that the employees in social services prioritise certain tasks for immediate action and others for more consideration before they take action. Hence we are now able to take another stance in relation to the discourse about a too long processing time in the social services departments.

One could also discuss in the context of this last perspective from Sara whether a shortage of social workers in the social service departments is the reason why social workers are forced to prioritise certain tasks instead of solving all of them as soon as possible. The reason I have come up with this sug-

gestion is that the Danish Union of Social Workers has several times maintained that social workers' caseload is too heavy (SL, 2009; Paulsen, 2009; Wilkins, 2012).

Finally, let me mention another reason that Tanja and her fellow teachers felt that "nothing happened" after they had asked for help or notified a child's situation to the social services. At the time of my interviews strict rules on confidentiality implied that without the parents' consent professionals were not allowed to access information on investigations and interventions. However, *"Barnets reform"* has implied that from 2011 professionals involved with vulnerable children may be informed to a limited extent about investigations and interventions in the children's lives.

8.7.3 Accumulation of the two sub-sections

In the two last sub-sections I have demonstrated that both Tanja and Sigbritt characterise two main components in Sigbritt's perspective on Zhou's waiting. The first component is that Sigbritt signalled that Zhou's waiting was a serious issue. The second component is that Zhou's waiting has to be investigated and dealt with.

In Section 8.4.1 I demonstrated that Tanja and Sigbritt both represent that Sigbritt demonstrated that Zhou's waiting was serious. However Tanja sees this issue in connection with Sigbritt's strong signal that Tanja therefore should have written about it in her draft referral. Sigbritt rather emphasises that she talked about Zhou's waiting as one of the problems in Zhou's life-world.

This analysis underlined that Tanja represented much of what happened at the consulting session in the light of Sigbritt's rejection of her draft referral on her concern for Zhou. I demonstrated that the two of them interpreted Sigbritt's rejection quite differently. Tanja thought it was a harsh rejection while Sigbritt did not see it that way. I concluded that their different representations of Sigbritt's rejection seemed to be linked to the fact that at the consulting session Tanja appeared sensitive while Sigbritt appeared bombastic. I underlined how this issue of how they appear as people seems to intermingle with how they approach one another professionally at the consulting session – I suggested that this circumstance may be exaggerated in interprofessional work conversations on vulnerable children because these often arouse strong feelings.

In Section 8.4.2 I demonstrated that Tanja and Sigbritt differently represent-

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ed the fact that Zhou's waiting had to be investigated and dealt with. Sigbritt represents that she suggested the following steps: 1.) They need to get more information about Zhou's waiting and 2.) They need to try to help the mother to change it. It seems that Tanja however ties Sigbritt's two phases of investigating and making interventions much more closely together. Because of this Tanja concludes that Sigbritt did not help her to think through how she could help so that Zhou did not have to wait for his mother at the restaurant in the evenings. I suggested Tanja's representations could be marked by the fact that she has a discourse on the long processing time and passivity in the social services' interventions in vulnerable children's lifeworlds.

8.8 Summary

In this chapter I have investigated how the interaction of Sigbritt's and Tanja's perspectives at the consulting session has influenced Tanja's further perspectives on "Zhou's Chinese background" and "Zhou's waiting at the restaurant".

In my investigation of the issue of "Zhou's Chinese background" I showed that at the consulting session itself Tanja did not imply in her pedagogical approach towards Zhou that Zhou's family had a Chinese background. Hence Tanja adopted an individual and classroom-oriented position to Zhou's everyday life. After the consulting session Tanja includes the Chinese background component in her reflections on how to work with Zhou and his mother. Hence after the consulting session Tanja adopts a more family and ethnicity-oriented position on Zhou's everyday life. I concluded that this change was linked to the perspective Sigbritt demonstrated at the consulting session on the importance of Zhou's Chinese background.

In my investigation of the issue of "Zhou's waiting" I concluded that Tanja's former perspective on Zhou's waiting was applied from a position of where she saw it as necessary because of Zhou's family's tough financial situation. After the consulting session Tanja took a position in which she still saw Zhou's waiting as necessary but now she has also become concerned because she is aware that the waiting implies a strain on Zhou's lifeworld.

Then I investigated how this change is linked to how Tanja had interpreted subjectively what Sigbritt said at the consulting session about Zhou's waiting.

Firstly I concluded that when Sigbritt represented that she talked about

Zhou's waiting as a part of the issues in Zhou's lifeworld, Tanja represents it as Sigbritt talking about Zhou's waiting in connection with criticism that Tanja should have included it in her draft referral on Zhou. I demonstrated that Tanja's representation was strongly marked by her feeling that her draft for a referral was firmly rejected by Sigbritt.

Secondly I concluded that when Sigbritt represents that she signalled that Zhou's waiting and the other issues needed firstly an investigation and secondly an intervention, Tanja represents this as that she needs to immediately investigate and help Zhou's mother to take some action on Zhou's waiting, and Tanja states that Sigbritt did not help her in this. I demonstrated that Tanja's representation was marked by a discourse that social workers do not see the immediate need of a teacher.

The overall conclusion of this chapter is that Tanja has profited from the consulting session with Sigbritt in relation to her changed perspective on "Zhou's Chinese background". However, I must conclude that the change in Tanja's perspective on "Zhou's waiting" is limited because the way their personalities appeared and a simplified discourse prevented Tanja in truly listening to Sigbritt's words about this issue at the consulting session. Hence I advocate that professionals in interprofessional work conversations speak clearly and truly listen to one another so that discourses and personal factors do not unconsciously overshadow the meanings put forward.

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Lady Macbeth:
How now, my lord, why do you keep
alone,
of sorriest fancies your compan-
ions making,
using those thoughts which should
indeed have died
with them they think on? Things
without all remedy
should be without regard: what's
done, is done.

        William Shakespeare, Macbeth
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Chapter 9: The findings

In this chapter I will draw together the findings from my analysis of the consulting sessions in the three previous chapters. This will lead me to make some conclusions about how the consulting sessions seem to influence the school professionals' further perspectives on how to work with issues in the lifeworlds of vulnerable children.

   Hence I will now move up to a more abstract level in which I will investigate what my analysis reveals about the general interpersonal dynamics between social workers and school professionals in how the three consulting sessions were carried out. At first glance this may seem to contradict my strong Arendtian approach of focusing on particular incidents, however the important point here is that Arendt does not denounce performing abstract generalisations but rather she maintains that abstract generalisations must always originate in concrete incidents.

9.1 Comparing the findings from my three analysis chapters

In summing up the findings I will follow the structure of my preceding analysis chapters. My analyses of the three consulting sessions were based on my research question: **How do consulting sessions with social workers influence school professionals' further perspectives on how to deal with issues in vulnerable children's lifeworlds?** From this research question, I first investigated how the school professionals were influenced by having taken part in a consulting session about their concern for a vulnerable child in their class. Then I investigated how this influence was connected to what the social workers had said at the consulting sessions.

9.1.1 The influence on the school professionals' perspectives

When I investigated the consulting sessions' influence on the school professionals' further perspectives I compared their perspectives at the consulting sessions with their perspectives at the interviews on the following days. In this comparison I focused in particular on the positions in their perspectives. Finally in my analysis, I stated the change that had taken place in their positions between the consulting sessions and the interviews on the following days. Table 13 presents the end result of my analysis.

	Rie's positions	Tine's positions	Tanja's positions
	Conducting the parental meeting	Amarjit's quietness	Zhou's Chinese background
At the consulting session:	A "responsible and cooperation-minded reception class teacher position".	An "involved and caring classroom-based teacher position".	An "individual and classroom-oriented position".
The day after the consulting session:	A "responsible, co-operation-minded, appreciative, specific goal-setting and alcoholism-aware reception class teacher position".	An "explanation-seeking, involved, caring and holistic teacher position".	An "Individual and classroom-oriented position" on Zhou in school and a "family and ethnicity-oriented position" on Zhou after school.
		The meaning of the letter	Zhou's waiting late in the evenings for his mother to finish off her work at the restaurant
At the consulting session:		An "unclear and doubtful position".	An "aware of Zhou's family's tough financial situation position".
The day after the consulting session:		A "clearer and more confident position".	An "aware of Zhou's family's tough financial situation and concerned that the waiting implies a strain on Zhou's life-world position".

Table 13. This table shows the positions the school professionals took at the consulting sessions and at the interviews on the following day on the issues I have investigated from the three consulting sessions.

When comparing the changes in Rie's, Tine's and Tanja's positions it is important to be aware that their positions are tightly linked to how they approached some specific issues in some specific children's lifeworlds at some specific consulting sessions. Thus I will only do a comparison on an overall level. On this overall comparison level I find it possible to make two conclusions.

Firstly, it is possible to state that the consulting sessions resulted in all the school professionals in this study adopting an enlarged position on the issues concerned. This means that the consulting sessions have implied that afterwards the school professionals seem to be better able to deal with the issues in the vulnerable children's lifeworlds when they return to their work with the vulnerable children.

Secondly, it is possible to state that in nearly all the changed positions the school professionals have an increased awareness of how to include the parents in their intentions on how to deal with the issues in the vulnerable children's lifeworlds. However when studying the details of Table 13 it is also possible to state that this newly achieved focus on the parents is differently intertwined with the nature of the issues investigated and hence it is difficult to compare the examples of enhanced parental focus with one another. But I can state that the consulting sessions have led to the school professionals' classroom-oriented view of the children being supplemented with different varieties of a family-oriented view. It is important however to emphasise that this more family-oriented view is linked to other enlargements in their positions, although I cannot find any similarities in these enlargements.

The main conclusion of this section is that there is no doubt that the school professionals' work with the vulnerable children seems to benefit from their having received a prevention and early intervention consulting session from a social worker.

9.1.2 The school professionals' benefit from the social workers' statements at the consulting sessions

The second aim of my analysis was to investigate how the enlargement of the school professionals' perspectives was connected to what the social workers had said at the consulting sessions. Following my Arendtian framework it was *action* incidents in the consulting sessions that prompted the enlargements in their perspectives. For my research I defined an *action* incident as an incident

in which the two professionals spoke together with different perspectives on the same issue. According to Arendt the consulting sessions' *action* incidents gave the school professionals an insight into the social workers' perspectives on the issues. Hence the school professionals could in their *thinking* after the sessions challenge their own perspective with the perspective the social workers had presented at the consulting sessions. Following Arendt such a *thinking* with several perspectives is what enlarges one's own perspective on an issue.

Following Arendt's line of thinking I therefore investigated how the school professionals were able to represent the perspectives the social workers demonstrated at the consulting session. In order to investigate the quality of their representations I likewise investigated how the social workers themselves made an account of their own perspectives at the sessions.

Then in my analysis I compared the social workers' own representations with the school professionals' representations of the social workers' perspectives. In Table 14 on the following page I have set forth the results of my analysis.

Consulting session 1	Consulting session 2	Consulting session 3
<u>Conducting the parental meeting</u> 1) When Sara represents that she talked about creating a positive atmosphere, Rie represents this component according to a pedagogical appreciative line of thinking. 2) When Sara represents that she talked about setting goals in a quantitative SMART-oriented manner, Rie represents this component in a more qualitative manner. 3) When Sara represents that she stressed that the difficult meeting called for proper preparation, Rie does not notice this in her representation.	<u>Amarjit's quietness</u> 1) When Sara represents that she used the concept "a big family secret" to reflect on the reason for Amarjit's quietness, Tine represents Sara's use of the concept as a decisive explanation for Amarjit's quietness. 2) When Sara represents that she implied that the concept meant that Amarjit was trained not to include feelings and thoughts about things in her lifeworld, Tine represents that Sara implied that "the big family secret" refers to that something must not be talked about.	<u>Zhou's Chinese background</u> 1) When Sigbritt represents that she talked about the importance of Zhou's family Chinese background, Tanja represents this accurately.
	<u>The meaning of the letter</u> 1) When Sara represents that she implied that the letter meant that the child and family team had instigated a Section 50 investigation, Tine represents it as that someone in Sara's workplace is taking a closer look at Amarjit's situation from a whole family context viewpoint.	<u>Zhou's waiting</u> 1) When Sigbritt represents that she talked about Zhou's waiting as a part of the issues in Zhou's lifeworld, Tanja represents it as Sigbritt talking about Zhou's waiting in connection with the idea that she should have included it in her draft

| | | referral on Zhou. |
| | | 2) When Sigbritt represents that she signalled that Zhou's waiting and the other issues needed first to be investigated and secondly action to be taken, Tanja represents it as that she needs to immediately investigate and help Zhou's mother to take some action on Zhou's waiting, and Tanja states that Sigbritt did not help her for this. |

Table 14. This table shows the result of my analysis of how the school professionals (Rie, Tine and Tanja) represent perspectives the social workers demonstrated at the consulting sessions.

Table 14 makes it clear that the school professionals' representations of the social workers' perspectives is in only one case equal to how the social workers themselves give an account of their own perspectives. This is when Sigbritt talked about the importance of Zhou's family's Chinese background. For all other issues the school professionals' representations differ from how the social workers represent their own perspectives.

It is important to underline that following an Arendtian line of thinking the goal is not that the school professionals should represent the social workers' perspectives as the social workers do themselves. Instead the objective should be that the school professionals' representations of the social workers' perspectives are marked by the school professionals' own positions. In Arendtian terms the school professionals' representations of the social workers' perspectives need to be authentic to their own point of view. This goal is fulfilled in many of the examples, e.g. **when Sara represents that she talked about creating a positive atmosphere, Rie represents this component of Sara's perspective according to her own pedagogical appreciative line of**

thinking and **when Sara talked about setting up goals in a quantitative SMART-oriented manner, Rie represents this component more following her own qualitative approach.**

However, we must also emphasise that although the goal is not for the school professionals to represent the social workers' perspectives as they do themselves, it is crucial that the school professionals do not misrepresent components in these perspectives and that they are aware of all crucial components.

Table 14 reveals both misrepresentations and lack of representation by the school professionals. Hence following my Arendtian framework I can conclude that the success of the consulting sessions could have been greater.

The misrepresentations are found in the following examples:

- When Sara represents that she implied that the concept of "a big family secret" meant that Amarjit was trained not to include feelings and thoughts about things in her lifeworld, Tine represents that Sara implied that the concept refers to that something must not be talked about.

- When Sara represents that she implied that the letter meant that the child and family team had instigated a Section 50 investigation, Tine represents it as that someone in Sara's workplace is taking a closer look at Amarjit's situation from a whole family context viewpoint.

- When Sigbritt represents that she talked about Zhou's waiting as a part of the issues in Zhou's lifeworld, Tanja represents it as Sigbritt talking about Zhou's waiting in connection with the fact that she should have included it in her draft referral on Zhou.

In my analysis of the first two examples I concluded that one reason for the misrepresentations was that the concepts of "the big family secret" and the "Section 50 investigations" were unfamiliar to the school professional. I also found other social worker concepts in my pilot studies which were unfamiliar to school professionals.

In the third example I concluded that the misrepresentation was due to Sigbritt's and Tanja's very different interpretations of how Sigbritt had rejected Tanja's draft referral on Zhou. Partly this was due to their different personal approaches to each other, being respectively bombastic and sensitive; I concluded that Tanja's sensitivity seemed to stem from her stress from working with Zhou and because Zhou's issues touched deep personal feelings within her. It was likewise seen in other analyses that the children's issues

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touched upon the professional's feelings; this is particularly clearly revealed in the poetic representations. I also concluded that the misrepresentation in the third example was partly because Tanja lacked information about the work routines of the social service department.

The components that were not represented are found in the following incidents:

- When Sara represents that she used "a big family secret" to reflect on the reason for Amarjit's quietness, Tine represents Sara's use of the concept as a decisive explanation for Amarjit's quietness. (Here Tine is not aware of Sara's reflection).

- When Sara represents that she stressed that the difficult meeting called for proper preparation, Rie has not noticed this.

- When Sigbritt represents that she signalled that Zhou's waiting and the other issues needed first to be investigated and secondly for action to be taken, Tanja represents it as that she needs to immediately investigate and help Zhou's mother to take some action on Zhou's waiting, and Tanja states that Sigbritt did not help her for this. (Here Tanja does not represent the two different phases but comes up with only one common phase).

In the first example I concluded that the reason for Tine's lack of awareness of Sara's reflection on the concept of "a big family secret" was due to the fact that the concept was unfamiliar to Tine.

In the two last incidents I concluded that the reason for the school professionals' lack of awareness of crucial components was powerful simplified discourses about each other's professions and institutional settings. In one case it was because the social worker had a strong simplified discourse about the fact that all school professionals (including Rie) find it challenging to set up parental meetings on difficult issues even though the reality is that Rie does not find it hard to set up such meetings. In the other case it was because the teacher had a powerful simplified discourse about the fact that the social service department has a long processing time and shows passivity when school professionals ask them for help.

From this section I can conclude that the school professionals were only able to a limited extent to represent the perspectives the social workers had demonstrated on the issues that were discussed at the consulting sessions. Rather the school professionals misrepresent some components and do not rep-

resent other components of the perspectives of the social workers. In my analysis I have identified four reasons for this.

> The first reason was the school professionals' lack of crucial information about: referrals, Section 50 investigations, and social workers' work routines.

> The second reason was incidents when the social workers were not sufficiently aware that they were using concepts unfamiliar to the school professionals.

> The third reason was simplified discourses about each others' professions and each others' institutions.

> The fourth reason was that the professionals were highly sensitive to each others' personal approaches as the issues and the stress in vulnerable children's strained lifeworlds evoked deep feelings in the professionals.

A further important point to be mentioned is that my analysis has consistently demonstrated very high complexity in the content of these consulting sessions which only last 45 minutes; in particular for those school professionals (Tine and Tanja) who receive a consulting session for the first time and are thus not used to talking about children's general social issues. Furthermore, when a school professional speaks to a social worker for the first time, the first ten minutes are often used for presentations and for the social worker to provide important information about her work at the school. This leaves only about 35 minutes for the talk about the school professionals' concern on a vulnerable child; these children's situations are generally highly complex as demonstrated in all the three examples I analysed. In the first analysis I demonstrated that Rie, a reception class teacher, had had no less than seven different professionals involved in Jette's case! In the second analysis I demonstrated that teacher Tine's thinking about Amarjit's situation was influenced by two simultaneous interprofessional activities: the social worker's consulting session and the crime prevention cooperation lecture. In the third analysis I demonstrated that Tanja, a teacher, found herself obliged to think through a lot of different levels in connection with Zhou's strained lifeworld: an individual level, an ac-

ademic level, an emotional level, a bilingual level, a classroom-based level, a family finance level, a family level, an ethnic level and a leisure time level. Based on these findings I will include a fifth reason:

> The fifth reason was that school professionals have difficulty in encompassing all the different aspects of the issues in the vulnerable children's lifeworlds in a consulting session lasting only 45 minutes (in particular for school professionals who receive a consulting session for the first time).

Finally, I will draw attention to a finding revealed by two of my analyses. In my analysis of Rie's concern on Jette and Tanja's concern on Zhou, we saw that both of them had been asked by other interprofessional collaborators to write a referral to the social service department. Those who had recommended this were a doctor and a bilingual teacher. In both examples we saw that the school professionals did not feel that they had total ownership of the referral they were about to write and hence they seemed somewhat alienated from certain issues in the children's lifeworlds at the consulting sessions. I concluded that this created a great deal of ambiguity for the school professionals. Based on these findings I will now include a possible sixth reason for disturbance in the interprofessional conversation in the consulting sessions:

> The sixth reason was problems arising from a school professional being asked by someone else to send in a referral on a vulnerable child.

9.2 Summary

In this chapter I have presented two main findings from my analysis in the preceding three chapters.

My first main finding is that after the consulting sessions the school professionals have enlarged their perspectives on how they intend to deal with issues in the strained lifeworlds of vulnerable children.

My second main finding is that the influence of the sessions was limited compared to its potential due to various circumstances that disturbed the in-

teractions in the sessions between the school professionals and the social workers.

In Chapter 11 I will discuss issues around my findings but now in Chapter 10 I will investigate aspects of how the consulting sessions were conducted.

Chapter 10: A broader perspective on the Danish consulting sessions

In this chapter I will illuminate what my Arendt-inspired analysis reveals about the Arendtian-political space in the setting of the Danish consulting sessions. Here I will sum up relevant findings from my analytical chapters and I will also make use of a focus group interview I carried out in England. This focus group interview was conducted on the basis of on one of the scenarios from a Danish consulting session analysed in this thesis.

10.1 The Danish circumstances

In the previous chapter I concluded that the consulting sessions between social workers and school professionals are characterised by a high degree of complexity. Arendt claims that in our modern age we tend to reduce the complexity in human activities by imposing techniques and methods. With my Arendtian framework I argue that the use of techniques and methods simplifies our conception of our common things and tends to minimise the human aspects of relational work.

In my research my existential-phenomenological stance has implied that I have mostly focused on the interactions between the social workers and the school professionals. However, I have also occasionally touched upon the organisational setting of the consulting sessions. During these reflections I have

identified two incidents in which techniques and methods seemed to overrule the interaction between the professionals in the consulting sessions.

The first example I identified was when the social workers used the method of "setting specific goals". I pointed out that the social workers' goal-setting approach may sound like a common sense approach but in my analysis I stated that their use of the "setting specific goals" approach shares many similarities with a specific well developed management tool propounded by psychologist Edwin Locke in his "Goal Setting Theory" (Locke & Bryan, 1966; Locke & Latham, 1990). This theory is often referred to as the SMART approach. SMART stands for Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Time-targeted goals (Cantore & Passmore, 2012). But even though such a SMART approach can be interpreted as a danger following Arendt, I demonstrated that the school professionals did not take over the more quantitative elements of the social workers' "setting specific goals" approach; rather they seemed to give the approach a qualitative twist, so that it is suitable for their relationally-oriented work.

The second example I identified was a case of a method that should help professionals to identify pupils in danger of committing criminal acts. However it is important to mention that this was not introduced by a social worker, but by a teacher who had been introduced to the method in a Crime Prevention Co-operation lecture (an '*SSP' lecture)*. Even though the method seemed to be presented in a quite technical quantitative framework at the lecture, the school professional's use of it in the consulting session was more qualitatively oriented. Thus neither in this case can I conclude that there was any negative tendency prevailing in this example.

Hence I can conclude that the Danish consulting sessions do not seem to be excessively flooded with techniques and methods. Rather my analysis has shown that the way the sessions are conducted seems to result in fruitful, but complex, learning opportunities so that the school professionals can enlarge their perspectives on how they intend to deal with issues in vulnerable children's lifeworlds.

10.2 An English contrast

While I undertook the 1½ year training for my research degree in England I also wanted to carry out an English contrast to my Danish fieldwork. Hence

with help from English colleagues I planned to hold a focus group interview in which I wanted to investigate how English professionals would have responded to a vulnerable child's strained situation such as I had learnt about in my Danish fieldwork.

In my coming analysis of the focus group interview it is necessary to keep in mind that I will only focus on how English school professionals say they would act if they had a concern about the situation of a child in comparison with the Danish school professionals' use of a social worker for help with a vulnerable child. This comparison is not a full scale comparative study of the Danish and English welfare state services for vulnerable children because I am not including any analysis of e.g. the school systems and national cultures.

Before I present the analysis of the focus group interview, I will briefly describe the circumstances for interprofessional work in England and Denmark respectively. In Table 15 on this page and the next page I have set out the legal requirements for interprofessional work in policy documents for children's services in Denmark and England in a broad time line starting from the 70s.

	Denmark	**England**
70s–80s		A call for better interprofessional work in reports and circulars after investigations into the deaths of several children, e.g. Maria Colwell (**1973**), Jasmine Beckford (**1984**), Tyra Henry (**1984**), and Kimberley Carlisle (**1986**). **1989**: A requirement for interprofessional work in the Children Act.

	Denmark	**England**
90s	**1996:** A demand for interprofessional work for children in the Health Act.	**1992:** The Higher and Further Education Act led to the merging of earlier smaller separate educational institutions (e.g. teacher colleges and social work colleges) with either universities or polytechnics. The polytechnics were then given the status of *University* or *University College*. Individual courses of study were often merged into areas of similar disciplines, e.g. the social work course was in many places merged into health or social science institutions. Furthermore, all courses for professionals working with children could lead to a bachelor degree.
2000-2012	**2000:** The Higher Education Act brought together the education of teachers, pedagogues, nurses, social workers and similar educations in new institutions which in 2005 were given the status of University Colleagues. The courses were given the status of a Profession Bachelor Degree. The Higher Education Act required the start of an interprofessional work module in **2005**. **2001:** A requirement for advisory interprofessional work groups and more collaboration for vulnerable children in a revision of the Social Service Act. **2010:** Interprofessional work was further enhanced in "*Barnets*	**2003:** The demand for interprofessional work gets stronger in the green paper *Every Child Matters* and in the subsequent passage of the Children Act in **2004**. **2007:** The establishment of a common Department for Children, Schools and Families. **2010:** Abandonment of the common Department for Children, Schools and Families to be replaced by the Department for Education.

	reform".	

Table 15 (previous pages). The history of the introduction of important aspects of legislation relevant to interprofessional work in England and Denmark throughout the last 30 years.

Table 15 illustrates that requirements for interprofessional work began earlier in England than in Denmark. In England the first legal requirement for inter-professional work appeared in 1989 in the Children Act, whereas in Denmark it first appeared in 1996 in the Health Act in a section on services for children. In England in 1992 courses in various aspects of child care began to be brought into larger educational units whereas a similar process first started in Denmark in 2000.

Table 15 also shows that in 2007 in England there was established a com-mon Department for Children, Schools and Families which brought together the earlier Department of Education and the children's units from the Health Department and the Social Service department.

The new Department for Children, Schools and Families was behind many initiatives in England to promote interprofessional work, e.g. The Children's Workforce Development Council and the Children's Centres.

The task of the Children's Workforce Development Council is to connect the work of different agencies in England. It also upgrades the educational level of English professionals working with children. They achieve this by var-ious initiatives which bring together the different services for children and by promoting the development of a new integrated post-qualifying diploma.

The children's centres bring together in one place many different support agencies which offer a wide range of services to meet the needs of parents and children (Anning and Ball, 2008). The children's centres are developed in line with the needs of the local community and therefore vary in nature from place to place[24].

As Table 15 shows the common Department for Children, Schools and families in England was abandoned in 2010. Simultaneously the biggest cuts ever in public spending were carried out as a response to strained UK finances after the worldwide financial crunch in 2008. Hence in 2010 the Children's Workforce Development Council and the children's centres lost a large amount of their previous state funding. This has forced several children's centres to close and the Children's Workforce Development Council ceased working on March 31st 2012.

But even though many interprofessional work initiatives seem to have come to a halt in England, Table 15 demonstrates that the legal requirements for interprofessional work in children's services in England are still more comprehensive than in Denmark.

Just as the history of legal requirements for interprofessional work is more comprehensive in England so is the research on interprofessional work more voluminous in England than in Denmark. I demonstrated in 2008 that there have only been three primary research projects in Denmark on interprofessional work in children's services (Miðskarð, 2008B). In 2005 Nick Frost identified 35 primary research projects on interprofessional work in the UK (Frost, 2005). When I was attached to Leeds Metropolitan University in 2008 Professor Nick Frost estimated that the number of primary English research studies on interprofessional work had at least doubled to 70. Then the ratio of the re-

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[24] There is a core set of services which all children's centres must provide: child and family health services, ranging from health visitors to breastfeeding support, high quality childcare and early learning and advice on parenting, local childcare options and access to specialist services (for example speech therapy, healthy eating advice and help with managing money). Besides this core set of services many children's centres also provide the opportunity to: see a dentist, dietician or physiotherapist, visit the 'stop smoking' clinic, talk to Citizens Advice, take parenting classes, improve the parent's English if it is not their first language and get faster access to expert advice, support and short-term breaks if a child has learning difficulties or disabilities. (Direct Gov, 2011).

search in 2008 in Denmark compared to the UK is therefore approximately 1:23[25], whilst the ratio of the two countries' populations is approximately 1:9[26].

There are therefore strong indices that interprofessional work is much more widespread in England than in Denmark. This agrees with my own impression after having spent one and a half years in Denmark and a similar time in England doing research on interprofessional work in children's services. During my time in England I participated as a lecturer in several student and post qualifying teaching events on interprofessional work with my co-supervisor Nick Frost. Furthermore, I have participated as a guest speaker in two seminars on interprofessional work for the junior leaders of local authority children's services. The seminars were arranged by the Children's Workforce Development Council, Serco (an international service provider company) and the University of Wolverhampton.

Even though I argue that interprofessional work is more widespread in England than in Denmark I would strongly emphasise that I have not claimed that the overall development of children's services is more developed in England than Denmark; there is no doubt that Denmark has a longer and more stable history of prioritising child welfare services with greater financial resources than England (Harder & Pringle, 2007). However, during the 1990s and 2000s the UK parliament allocated increased state funding and policy initiatives to children's services (Frost & Parton, 2009). The changes were introduced in the belief that by improving children's services it was possible to adapt the UK welfare state to the future demands of globalisation (Frost & Parton, 2009). Some of these changes were also made in response to certain critical outcomes of international reports on UK children's services, such as a UNICEF report on the overall well-being of children and young people in economically advanced nations where Britain was placed lowest in 21st position. By comparison Denmark was in 3rd position (Frost & Parton, 2009).

My conclusion in this section is that there are strong indices that interprofessional work is much more prevalent in England than in Denmark, but that this does not necessarily mean that the quality of children's services is better in England than in Denmark. Now I will demonstrate how certain professionals in England express their experiences and thoughts about interprofessional

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[25] Because there are 3 Danish and 70 English primary research publications on interprofessional work.

[26] 5.5 million in Denmark and 51 million in England.

work between schools and social services. The focus group interview was conducted during my stay in England in 2010.

10.3 The focus group interview in England

On an overall level it is possible to distinguish between two different ways to conduct focus group interviews. Firstly, such interviews can be conducted with a group of people who regularly carry out some common actions. Secondly, focus group interviews can be conducted with people who do not know each other; hence the researcher decides on the participants in the focus group interview (Halkier, 2008, 2010).

In my existential-phenomenological line of thinking I decided to carry out a focus group interview with professionals who regularly work together in order to gain insight into their everyday work routines. Therefore I started looking for an interprofessional work team in an English school. I found several schools in which the interprofessional work teams met up on a fortnightly or monthly basis. However, when I tried to arrange a focus group interview with an interprofessional work team at a school I learned that this was difficult due to two reasons. The first reason was my lack of time, because it required considerable work to obtain consent from all the various authorities. The second reason was the difficulty in finding a time where all the professionals in a team could meet up besides their regular meeting. As a side remark I can mention that these experiences illustrate the complexity of organisational structures in an interprofessional work setting. A similar finding is revealed by Brandi (2007) who studied the introduction of a new interprofessional work initiative in a Danish municipality.

Because of the difficulties of interviewing a school interprofessional work team I decided to carry out my two focus group interviews with people who did not know each other as this was easier to arrange (because I then would only interview them as private persons and not as representatives of any authority).

Following Morgan (1988, p. 46) my criteria for selecting participants needed to follow the scope of my research, namely how school professionals are influenced by receiving a consulting session from a social worker. First I found a primary school teacher and then I tried to find a social worker who had regular duties in schools. However, I did not manage to find any such social

worker in Leeds, and instead I came across a social worker who worked in a social service department which regularly had telephone contact with primary school teachers in Leeds.

In the following presentation and analysis of the focus group interviews I have generated two sub-sections: The informants' education and current job position and the informants' intended actions in a scenario from my Danish fieldwork.

10.3.1 The informants' education and current job position

I have chosen to call the two English participants **S**carlet, a qualified **s**ocial worker, and **P**atricia, a qualified **p**rimary school teacher.

Scarlet has a bachelor's degree in play work and a master's degree in social work. The latter is a two-year qualification as a social worker. The two year social worker master's degree requires a previous relevant bachelor's degree. Scarlet's master's course included two six-month placements, one each year. In the second year Scarlet had her placement in an assessment unit where referrals on concerns about children were being handled. Scarlet describes the assessment unit as follows:

> [It is] the place where the referrals came through. We screened them - and then actually you had to go out and visit the families to find out what the concerns were about. And we just sort of checked…yeah the accusations or whatever…and then decided if there was a genuine need for involvement from social caring. If so then you would have to do an initial assessment. You go out to meet the families and ask sort of questions and then write up the assessment and then make a decision with the managers to sort of decide whether there still needed to be more assessment.

Scarlet's quote reveals that she has insights into how referrals are being handled in England because she has had a placement in an assessment unit. Scarlet's explanation reveals the first crucial difference in procedures around assessment between England and Denmark. In Denmark during my data collectioin period in 2009 it was uncommon in the Danish municipalities to have a pure assessment unit and during the assessment unit it was not required to conduct an immediate visit to a referred child's family house (however sometimes they would do it but they would also speak to the parents). The purpose of the visits in England is to assess any immediate risks and to give the social

worker a better idea of the child and family concerned. Lately research in England indicates that these statutory visiting procedures only serve the purpose of demanding considerable energy from the social workers because in most cases the short visits do not reveal anything of depth about the difficult issues in the families concerned (Munro, 2010; Munro 2011A; Munro 2011B).

After Scarlet passed her master's in 2010 she got a job at the Social Service Children's Department where she had had her placement. However, her job was not in the assessment unit but in the care unit.

After this description of Scarlet's educational background and her current job position I will now describe that of Patricia. Patricia explains that she has a bachelor's degree as a state school primary teacher. Patricia says this about the content in her teaching degree:

> 'It is a four year degree, where we learn the craft of teaching and learn to be teachers. Lots of placements and in different state schools - one each year. And I also did a history specialism. So throughout the four years I did the first year of the history bachelor degree programme.'

Besides the fact that Patricia's history specialism was part of the bachelor degree course in history her teaching degree seems very similar to a Danish teacher's professional bachelor degree. After her degree Patricia could have immediately taken up a full-time teaching post in a state primary school. However, Patricia got a job in a private school; hence she had to do a diploma qualifying her to teach in private schools throughout her first year of working there. Patricia passed the diploma the year before I interviewed her and at the time of the interview she was working in her second month as a fully qualified private primary school teacher.

In this section I have presented Patricia's and Scarlet's educational background and their current job position. Now I will present how they say they would approach a scenario which I observed during my fieldwork in Denmark.

10.3.2 The informants' possible reactions to an imagined English Amarjit

After I had asked Patricia and Scarlet about their educational background I presented to them the two poetic representations "What if they never get to go anywhere?!" & " IT is silenced to death" (as shown in Figure 6 on the

coming page). I told them that I had made the two poetic representations from an interview I had carried out with Tine, a Danish teacher who had a concern for Amarjit.

The poetic representations portray Amarjit as very quiet in class compared to the other children. The representations also reveal that Amarjit has a brother in prison.

Figure 6. The poetic representations I presented in my focus group interview in England.

<u>**What if they never get to go anywhere?!**</u>
The other children come and tell
at g r e a t l e n g t h
what they've done at the weekend.

But what if
she just sits
       alone
at home
– and her Dad isn't around –
then she probably hasn't
been doing anything exciting.

And then
she
doesn't feel like
telling the others.

    <u>**IT is silenced to death**</u>
I'm pretty sure that each one of them
in her family
has questions about IT,
And that maybe they'd like to
talk about IT.
But no one really dares to break the ice.

But I'm pretty sure that her entire
family knows about IT.
And I also think that Amarjit knows
where her brother is.

Having a brother in prison is not a good
thing.
And Mum is sort of embarrassed that he's
in there.
And so, I believe, is Amarjit.

He may be a good brother and a nice boy,
but she
n e v e r
tells any stories about him.

After I had read aloud the poetic representations at the focus group interview I told Patricia and Scarlet that I would like them to say how they in their current job would have dealt with a girl like Amarjit. Patricia first said:

> I would be in constant dialogue with another teacher. I think. We are quite good at just going through each others' class -chatting about the different children. It ends up feeling a bit like spreading gossip. But it is not. It is more like "Have you noticed this child?" "Is she actually talking?". And through that dialogue we often kind of are trying to create situations to get Amarjit to talk or maybe give her a book that has some similar themes in it, so that she could identify herself with it. Try to give natural opportunity for her to open up. If she wants to. But you would not be able to force her.

In the quote above Patricia mentions that she first would start up a dialogue with a colleague if she came across a girl like Amarjit. If I go back to Tine herself this is the same thing as she did in the actual case of Amarjit; first she discussed Amarjit's situation with her colleague Tim. Furthermore, we see in the quote above that Patricia has a very concrete suggestion for dealing with Amarjit's quiet behaviour; she suggests finding a book which portrays a child who is quiet amongst other children.

Now I will move on to describe how Patricia said that she would have reacted further to a girl like Amarjit. In the focus group interview I continued as follows:

> Jóhannes: And if...after doing this you are still concerned… what would you then do?
>
> Patricia: It would be difficult to know what exactly I would do. But in my context I may mention it to the school nurse if it was a more psychological concern or a social concern. The other option is that if I was concerned about an almost emotional abuse or neglect then I would mention it to the Child Protection Officer - if I was worried. Because what we are trained to do is that if we are concerned we shall go to the Child Protection Officer. Even if we are not sure that it is abuse or neglect. Because it may be a piece in a jig-saw. Then the Child Protection Officer can put together information from different teachers.

We see in this quote that Patricia says that she can either go to the school nurse or to the Child Protection Officer. We see that Patricia is very clear

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about when she would approach each of the two persons: if it is a psychological or social concern, she would go to the school nurse and if it is a concern on abuse or neglect, then she would go to the Child Protection Officer.

From Patricia's statements on the social concern it seems like the area of responsibility of an English school nurse overlaps with that of the Danish social worker who regularly comes to Tine's school. As an important side remark I may mention that I received confirmation of Patricia's statement about the English school nurse's focus on social concerns from a lecturer in school nursing at Leeds Metropolitan University.

I was not totally familiar with the Child Protection Officer, so I asked further:

> Jóhannes: and the Child Protection Officer, is that a teacher?
>
> Patricia: For me it is the head teacher at my junior school. But in other schools it may be just a named person who has got the relevant training to know which person to go to. It could be a school nurse, a teacher. It tends to be a teacher or someone who is on the management team who is in contact with the children too. But for me it happens to be the head teacher because we are in a small school. And once that happens I would be in a dialogue with the person still but it is kind of off my hands. So that is how it works for me... I have not had any experiences with social workers being involved, I am guessing that once they are involved they do tend to have more contact with the teacher particularly in... I don't think it would happen in Amarjit's case but if a child was in care or something.

In this quote, we see that Patricia explains that the Child Protection Officer would 'know which person to go to'. Patricia is also very clear that if she brings the case to the Child Protection Officer then it is this person who has the further responsibility for the case. She goes on to say that she does not think that there will ever be a social worker involved at her school in a case like Amarjit's.

During these statements by Patricia, Scarlet did not say anything. Therefore in the focus group interview I gave her the opportunity to voice her opinion:

> Jóhannes: What about you Scarlet?
>
> Scarlet: I would never meet a case like that because our job nowadays is mostly only about serious child protection issues.

Here Scarlet says that she would never meet a case like Amarjit's, because nowadays English social workers only meet the more serious cases. After this remark Patricia takes over again:

Patricia: I am thinking that for Amarjit's problem the solution could be a part of PSHCE - Personal Social Health and Cultural Education. Actually a lot of children would be quite used to having that sort of workshops because we try ... and it is part of state schools as well….In terms of talking about slightly more abstract concepts that are not necessary academic…it is more for life…

Scarlet: I am thinking as well that I would like to reach her as a part of the group. Rather than go off and individually think about it, because Amarjit feels these emotions within the group. I think that it is important to address this in the group as well.

Jóhannes: What if the group does not help?

Scarlet: Then the teacher must go to the Child Protection Officer or the school nurse. One of the things they can do is a **C**ommon **A**ssessment **F**ramework meeting. This CAF meeting can highlight aspects of Amarjit's issues.

I mentioned previously that Patricia had a very concrete suggestion on how to get Amarjit to talk by presenting her with a suitable book. In this last quote, we see that Patricia again mentions a very concrete opportunity for how to deal with Amarjit's quiet behaviour – the PSHCE group. Furthermore Scarlet mentions the CAF as an option. The CAF is a standardised approach to conducting an assessment of a child's additional needs and deciding how those needs should be met. The CAF is a shared assessment and planning framework for use across all children's services and all local areas in England. It aims to help the early identification of children's additional needs and promote co-ordinated service provision to meet them. (Direct gov, 2011).

Even though in the final interview passage above, Scarlet and Patricia point towards the PSHCE group and the CAF group, which are established methodological approaches, the quote also reveals that the two of them are letting their perspectives supplement each other and in this process they point to an interesting suggestion about not dealing with Amarjit's problem individually but in a group setting. Hence this reveals that Patricia and Scarlet are performing an Arendtian *action*. As a side remark I can mention that this suggestion did not emerge in the Danish reflections on how to deal with Amarjit's issues.

To sum up how the English primary teacher Patricia and the social worker Scarlet say that they would react if they came across a girl like Amarjit, I present a list in Figure 7.

1. Patricia would first talk with one of her colleagues about Amarjit's quietness.
2. Patricia would then arrange a pedagogical situation where Amarjit's quietness is being dealt with (for example Patricia could give Amarjit a book about a child who is quiet and then initiate a conversation with Amarjit).
3. Consider signing Amarjit up for a PSHCE workshop.
4. If these three steps do not help, then Patrica should
        A. Bring a possible psychological or social concern to the school nurse.
        B. Bring a possible child protection concern to the Child Protection Officer.
5. Then the Child Protection Officer can initiate a CAF meeting.
6. Then maybe they will notify their concern for Amarjit to the Social

I will now compare the list in figure 7 to how Tine acted towards Amarjit in Denmark in 2009. However firstly I want to underline that at the time of my Danish fieldwork in 2009 the consulting sessions were in their initial trial period and thus it is conceivable that today these sessions are carried out differently.

One similarity between how Tine acted and how Patricia would act is Point 1, because Tine similarly to Patricia first discussed Amarjit's situation with her colleague Tim. In my interview with Tine she does not come up with any suggestion similar to Patricia's Point 2, however I cannot conclude that Tine did not think of any similar intervention because I did not ask her about this.

Option No. 3 with the PSHCE workshop would in a Danish school be an activity which the *AKT* teachers[27] would initiate. The Danish *AKT* teachers would not have a standard group like PSHCE, but some of their options might share some similarities with such a PSHCE group activity.

Another similarity prevails in Patricia's Point 4 in which she would discuss

Figure 7. A list over how Patrica would act if she came across a girl like Amarjit.

her concern with the school nurse or the Child Protection Officer. Similarly Tine did discuss her concern with another professional who had a different area of responsibility than her own (the social worker). However there are also four crucial differences here.

The first difference is that Tine's Danish social worker at the school seems to cover the responsibilities of both the English school nurse and the English Child Protection Officer.

The second difference is that the Child Protection Officer is employed by the school whilst the social worker is employed by the local social service department - however similarly to the Danish social worker the English school nurse is employed by an outside agency.

The third difference is that Tine has the voluntary choice of seeking advice from the social worker whilst Patricia is specifically trained to immediately

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[27] Danish teachers who have received specialised training in helping children with emotional, social and behavioural difficulties ("*Adfærds, Kontakts og Trivsels-problemer*"). These teachers usually both work with such children themselves and advise other teachers on how to work with children with these difficulties.

contact the Child Protection Officer when she has a concern; however it is more up to Patricia whether and when she wants to contact the school nurse.

The fourth difference is that the Child Protection Officer may be a trained teacher while the social worker obviously has a different training than the school professionals in Tine's school.

Patricia's Option No. 5 of taking Amarjit's case to a CAF meeting is in my observation not similar to any of the options of the Danish professionals. However Patricia's Option No. 6 of sending a referral is similar to Tine's option.

I can conclude that some of Danish Tine's options and English Patricia's options in a case like Amarjit's are similar. However compared to Tine's options, Patricia's options seem to be more concrete and standardised: the PSHCE group, the CAF meeting and when to involve the Child Protection Officer and the school nurse. Furthermore it can be mentioned that in England all public and private organisations that provide services for children and families must have in place a child protection policy in accordance with the common guidelines of their local authority and their locally agreed inter-agency procedures (DCSF, 2010, p. 18). This is not found to such an extent in Denmark. Finally, it is worth mentioning that the focus group interview also revealed that in England the social workers attached to the assessment units of social services departments are required to carry out a standardised procedure of paying a visit to a child's family which is being referred to a social service department; this is not seen in Denmark.

Following my Arendtian framework I can say that the English options seem to be more *work* oriented while the Danish options seem to be more *action* oriented. A *work* oriented activity implies that without undue considerations and discussions one moves swiftly to specific interventions while in *actions* there are more free considerations and discussions with others before intervening.

The reason for the *work* oriented options in England could be that England is more advanced in the development of interprofessional work services (as I demonstrated in Section 10.2). Hence it is possible to argue that some of the complexity in interprofessional work settings in England is being dealt with by imposing *work* oriented standardised procedures and methods[28]. By contrast, in Denmark the interprofessional work settings in their early development

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[28] Glisson and Hemmelgarn (2003) argue that because of the complexity in interprofessional work settings it is necessary to have standardised procedures and methods.

have more space for *action* oriented activities where the professionals can truly share their diverse perspectives and hence get new inspiration from each others' different lines of thinking. However this difference may also be partly due to different cultural and pedagogical norms.

I want to underline that above I have not argued that professionals do not need to have any procedures or informational guidelines, but it is important that such procedures and informational guidelines do not dictate how to act in every individual incident. I also wish to stress that I have not argued that an *action* oriented activity is always to be preferred to a *work* oriented activity when a school professional has a concern on a vulnerable child. It can be argued that in a case of serious abuse or neglect it is not worth spending time on participating in an *action* oriented activity, the goal being instead to act as quickly as possible; therefore a more *work* oriented activity is more appropriate to a case where there is a strong suspicion of serious abuse or neglect. However, having said this, it is important to bear in mind that Arendt maintains that in our present modern times we are tempted to transform too many *action* oriented activities into *work* activities and she strongly argues that this is a dangerous development in our society. Hence in our organisation of services we must be aware whether a planned *work* oriented activity is really suitable for the need described or whether it is more used to tone down the complexity of people's plurality and hence destroy the chance for new unique initiatives to arise which would meet our users' needs in a unique way.

10.4 Summary

The last sections in this chapter have demonstrated that around the Danish consulting sessions there are few standardised procedures and methods compared to how my English interviewees say they would handle a similar case with a vulnerable child in a primary school in England.

Since the English professionals reveal that they have many standardised procedures and methods if they come across a girl like Amarjit who displays an unusual quietness, my Arendtian framework suggests there is a greater danger for the English professionals to miss important insights from each others' perspectives on how to deal with issues in vulnerable children's lifeworlds.

However I likewise concluded that for cases in which there is little time for consideration, e.g. serious abuse or neglect, the English professionals can act

more efficiently because they have these standardised procedures and methods. Hence these procedures and methods serve a purpose, but the danger is that they will dominate the rest of the work with vulnerable children which would profit more from a freer and more time-demanding interplay between various professionals' distinctive perspectives.

Finally I find it crucial to emphasise that even though the English professionals have more standardised procedures and methods, my focus group interview reveals that the English professionals also make many considerations with the help of their various perspectives. Hence I can conclude with Arendt that the existential condition of the plurality of people can never be totally suppressed even in the context of many standardised procedures and methods. In such contexts Arendt urges that whenever appropriate we should seize the incidents where it is not possible to suppress the plurality of people's perspectives (Hull, 2002, p. vii).

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Hamlet:
The time is out of joint.
O cursed spite,
that ever I was born to set it right.
Nay, come, let's go together.
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William Shakespeare, *Hamlet*

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Men in the plural, that is, men in so
far as they live and move and act in
this world, can experience meaningful-
ness only because they can talk with
and make sense to each other and to
themselves.
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Hannah Arendt, *The Human Condition*

Chapter 11: Concluding chapter

This chapter is divided into three sections: a discussion section, a conclusion section and a section in which I place my research in a broader perspective.

11.1 Discussion

In this section, I will present an overall discussion of the relationship between my research project's findings (presented in Chapter 9) and similar findings in other Danish research projects (presented in Chapter 2). In addition I will discuss how the issues in my findings can be dealt with according to my application of Arendt's theorisations (presented in Chapter 3). Finally in this section I will discuss strengths and weaknesses of the Arendtian existential-phenomenological framework I have developed.

The focus of my research has been to investigate how consulting sessions with social workers influence school professionals in their further perspectives on how they intend to deal with issues in the lifeworlds of vulnerable children. From this focus the goal of my research was to come up with an understanding of how the dynamics between the social workers and the school professionals in the consulting sessions were feeding back to the school professionals' intentions in their pedagogical work with the vulnerable children. Hence I constructed three levels for my analysis of my qualitative data. First I investigated the consulting sessions' influence on the school professionals' further perspectives on how they intended to deal with issues in the specific vulnerable children's lifeworlds. Secondly I sought an answer to how this influence was linked to how the social workers' perspectives interacted with the school professionals' perspectives at the consulting sessions. Thirdly with inspiration from Arendt's theorisations[29] I suggested how the conversational dynamics could be developed further in order to secure the best outcome of the consulting sessions.

> **My first main finding is that after the consulting sessions the school professionals had enlarged their perspectives on how they intend to deal with issues in vulnerable children's strained lifeworlds.**
>
> **My second main finding is that the influence of the sessions was limited compared to their potential. This was due to various circumstances that disturbed the interactions in the sessions between the school professionals and the social workers.**

These two main findings are similar to the conclusion in my review chapter on previous Danish research on interprofessional work with vulnerable children. There I conclude that interprofessional work seems to be useful to improve the quality of services for vulnerable children, but that there are greater challenges involved in it than we often presuppose due to the complexity of interprofessional work settings. Further I conclude that previous research has identified that the complexity in interprofessional work settings is played out on a

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[29] An introduction to Arendt's theorisations may be found in Chapter 12.

variety of levels, e.g. on a conversational level, on an organisational level, on a professional group level and on a legal framework level. These different levels have not been researched extensively in Denmark.

In my research I have in particular investigated the complexity on the conversational level and in the following I will present and discuss my findings in detail. However firstly I will introduce the basis on which my findings must be approached.

My research has been undertaken with the use of an Arendtian existential-phenomenological methodological framework. This framework urged me first to have a strong focus on concrete matters before moving up to more abstract considerations about the interpersonal dynamics between the social workers and the school professionals in consulting sessions.

In this chapter I will discuss my findings solely on the abstract level but it is important to keep in mind that my comments about general tendencies in social workers' and school professionals' approaches to vulnerable children's issues have emerged from an in-depth investigation of how specific social workers and school professionals have *acted* in relation to specific vulnerable children's issues.

Furthermore it is necessary to take into account that my more abstract findings are intended to be used for reflections about specific conversations in consulting sessions where a specific social worker and a specific school professional discuss issues in a specific vulnerable child's lifeworld. The point is that my abstract findings must not be allowed to overrule what goes on in the particular consulting sessions but must rather be used as an opener to initiate a reflection on the particular consulting sessions. In such a reflection it is crucial to take into account that my findings about social workers' and school professionals' approaches in general will always be personalised individually due to the uniqueness of individual professionals. And most crucially the professionals' approaches must always be viewed in relation to the situation of the specific vulnerable children discussed.

On an overall level in my research I have demonstrated that it can be difficult for the school professionals and social workers to follow the conversations about vulnerable children's issues in the consulting sessions as these conversations can be disturbed by the following factors: their lack of crucial knowledge, aspects of their past experiences, certain emotions and because they carry simplified discourses about each others' professions and about how

each others' institutional organisational structures prompt their employees to behave.

These factors seem to become intertwined in a complex way with how particular professionals speak about concrete issues concerning vulnerable children during the consulting sessions. Furthermore these factors disturb how the professionals listen to each others' utterances. Hence these factors cause disturbances in the interpersonal dynamics in the consulting sessions so that the sessions only exert a limited influence on the school professionals' further perspectives on how to deal with issues in the lifeworlds of vulnerable children.

In Chapter 9 I identified six possible reasons why lack of crucial knowledge, past experiences, emotions and discourses cause disturbances in the interpersonal dynamics in the consulting sessions.

The first reason for disturbance in the consulting sessions is the school professionals' lack of crucial information about: referrals, Section 50 investigations, and social workers' work routines. Similarly, a large quantitative survey in 2009 reveals that Danish teachers, pedagogues and school nurses lacked crucial information about referrals, Section 50 investigations and social workers' work routines (Zapera, 2009). Hence my finding is not new in itself but the new aspect I have clarified is that even though the school professionals have attended a presentation about referrals, Section 50 investigations and social workers' work routines they are not able to make use of this knowledge in concrete consulting sessions on a vulnerable child. Furthermore I have shown that in the sessions it is hard for the social workers to pin-point the exact lack of knowledge of their particular school professional interlocutor. These findings point towards the fact that school professionals' view of working with vulnerable children is totally different than that of social workers. Hence it is not enough to give the school professionals the information they lack but they need to be introduced to a whole different line of thinking.

It is obvious that in order to improve the outcome of the consulting sessions the school professionals need to be taught about referrals, Section 50 investigations and social workers' work routines and that this teaching needs to take into account that the whole line of thinking within the social services is probably unfamiliar to many school professionals. But even though the school professionals receive this training it is important to underline that my research has demonstrated that social workers must always find out whether the particular school professional interlocutor in a consulting session has the necessary

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basic knowledge to understand the particular social service department's involvement in the case discussed. However, following my Arendtian approach, it is vital that the social workers during this process do not discard components of the school professionals' perspectives in which they perceive some matters differently from the professionals. Expressed in Arendtian terms, authentic components of the school professionals' perspectives must not be abandoned because they differ from the perception of the social workers.

The second reason for disturbance is incidents when the social workers are not sufficiently aware that they are using concepts unfamiliar to the school professionals. This second reason may seem similar to the first one, however it is important to underline that this second finding indicates the social workers' use of professional concepts and not knowledge about work procedures in the social service sector. Similarly Brønnum, Mørck & Veen (2008) and Mørck (2008) identify difficulties in communication between teachers and social workers because they use different professional concepts.

I find it important to underline that even though professional concepts can disturb the outcome of the consulting sessions I am not urging social workers not to use their professional concepts – rather the opposite. In fact there are two Arendtian suggestions to ease a possible problem with the disturbance by unfamiliar professional concepts. The first one is similar to my suggestion for the first reason above, i.e. that social workers should always check if their interlocutor is familiar with the professional phrases and terms they expect to use. The second one is that when the social workers use professional concepts they must always connect to the specific vulnerable children's issues. This will enable the school professionals to follow better the social workers' line of thinking and also help to avoid neglecting the children's real issues because the focus turns towards the social workers' professional techniques and methods.

Finally let me remark that even though I have only analysed how the social workers are influencing the school professionals' further perspectives, many of my observations testified that this second reason I have identified also applies the other way around. Hence school professionals must also be aware of not using concepts unfamiliar to social workers without an explanation and a concrete example of how the concept is being used.

The third reason is the presence of simplified discourses about each others' professions and about how the organisational structures of each others' institutions prompt their professionals to behave. This finding is similarly reported

by Hansen (1999) who states that those belonging to one kind of profession working with children were often prejudiced against other types of professions involved with children. However in my research I have demonstrated more specifically how simplifired discourses are sometimes suddenly activated and at other times not; for example I have shown that simplified discourses tend to surface more when the issues discussed are more complex.

I have demonstrated that with these simplified discourses the professionals tend to view one another as a stereotype professional in a one level way. My Arendtian framework suggests that in order to reduce the effect of the simplified discourses, a professional in a consulting session must rather regard the interlocutor on three levels: a common level, a professional group level and an individual level (Miðskarð, submitted).

At the common level the social worker and school professional need to be aware that both of them share the same basic similarities as human beings: the Earth, natality, mortality, life, worldliness and plurality. This implies that no matter which other differences there are between these two people, they can still talk with and understand one other at the most basic common human level.

At the group level individuals need to realise that they share certain characteristics with the other people in the groups they belong to. My research on the interprofessional consulting sessions shows that it is particularly relevant to focus on the professional groups. At the professional group level the professionals need to understand that their different professions give them certain characteristics as social workers, teachers and reception class teachers respectively. In an Arendtian line of thinking it is crucial that these professional group characteristics become established on the basis of the nature of the work they are carrying out instead in terms of their specialised professional techniques and methods. This is because Arendt claims that if we use a professional-techniques-and-methods lens then we enhance a world alienation of the professionals and the work they are doing.

However, even though the professionals in a group share certain similarities because they are carrying out similar work, it is vital to be aware that each social worker and each school professional is also a person with individual characteristics which are unique compared to the other members in their professional group. This is the implication of the individual level.

It is on the group level that the identified simplified discourses are located. In the following with my Arendtian framework I will explain where the simpli-

fied discourses stem from. Furthermore, I will suggest how it is possible to lay aside the simplified discourses about each other's professions and how their organizational structures prompt them to behave.

Following an Arendtian line of thinking the simplified discourses stem from the web of relations the professionals share with other people. My research has shown that such simplified discourses about others' professions and institutions stem mostly from members of the professionals' own profession.

My Arendtian framework urges the social workers and the school professionals to first identify whether they have such discourses about each others' professions. In an Arendtian line of thinking this checking cannot be done as a "desktop test" because people will often be unconscious of the simplified discourses they may have. One is usually unable to determine whether one has simplified discourses until one's subsequent *thinking* about how one acted in a particular situation where aspects of other professions became relevant in relation to a specific issue.

If a professional after participating in an activity with others realises that he or she has a simplified discourse, the professional first needs to ascertain the content of this discourse and then to take a critical stance to this content about another profession and about how the organisational structure of another institution prompts another professional to behave.

The use of the post-structuralist inspired discourse concept in the suggestion above reveals that I am following Allen (2002) and Villa (1992) who claim that with certain precautions it is possible to bridge Arendt's theorisations and post-structuralist inspired theories. But importantly I have underlined that in opposition to some post-structuralist inspired theories, it is vital in an Arendtian existential-phenomenological approach not to merely consider the content of the discourses but also to include the earth-bound experiences people have had in connection with this content. Furthermore, it is crucial in my Arendt-inspired line of thinking that people must include various experiences from many different people in their reflections on the content of their discourses. Hence the school professionals and the social workers also need to include each others' perspectives when they are taking a stance on discourses about how the other party acts professionally.

This process will most likely nuance their discourses and hence they will not be inclined to have a simplified perception of each others' professions and of how the structure of each others' institutions prompts their employees to behave.

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However I wish to strongly underline that some people may choose to keep to what a discourse tells them about how the members of another professional group normally behave because their own and others' experiences in fact confirm the content of their discourse. It is crucial that following an Arendtian line of thinking even though a professional keeps to some of the content of the discourse, he or she should keep in mind that his or her particular interlocutor in a consulting session may *act* contrary to the discourse because that person also has a uniqueness which may override his or her professional characteristics in some particular *action* incidents (Miðskarð, submitted).

The fourth reason is that professionals can be highly sensitive to each others' personal approaches because the issues in vulnerable children's strained lifeworlds can evoke stress and deep feelings. Similarly a vignette study by Ejrnæs (2006) demonstrates that the personal level plays a central role in how professionals approach an issue in an interprofessional work setting. Compared to Ejrnæs I have however in more detail clarified how the professionals' sensitivity to each others' approaches can disturb their perception of what their interlocutor is saying at the consulting sessions.

The Arendtian urge for reducing this disturbance is that the professionals must first acknowledge their feelings. Secondly they must choose not to let their feelings determine how they are *acting* in the interpersonal activity of the consulting sessions when the sessions are conceived as an Arendtian political activity. It is important to stress that this does not imply that personal feelings should be suppressed following Arendt, but it means that feelings need to be dealt with in the private sphere and not acted out in public sphere conversations.

The fifth reason is that it is hard for school professionals to encompass all the different aspects of the issues in the vulnerable children's lifeworlds in a consulting session lasting only 45 minutes (in particular for school professionals who receive a consulting session for the first time). This fifth reason raises the issue of the complexity of the consulting sessions on vulnerable children. The research project *"Hånd om alle børn"* likewise states that conversations between social workers and teachers are often very complicated *(*Brønnum, Mørck & Veen 2008; Mørck, 2008). Furthermore Ejrnæs (2006) concludes that there is high complexity in conversations between Danish social workers, teachers, pedagogues and school nurses.

In situations with such complexity Arendt points to a possible danger in that the professionals will be tempted to simplify the content with regard to the

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use of techniques and methods. The Arendtian framework urges that the professionals should rather be trained to maintain the complexity in their conversations because it is within complexity that new insights arise. In my theory section (4.4) I underlined that Arendt's theorisations point towards three activities which require attention in complex conversations: speaking, asking and listening.

Firstly, every professional has to be cautious in speaking to his interlocutor. When both professionals are cautious in expressing themselves to each other, they are laying a good foundation.

But in order to truly understand each others' utterances in the best way, the professionals need to ask each other questions. The goal of such questions is to allow each professional to gain a nuanced picture of the other's perspective.

Arendt emphasises that the third central aspect of trying to understand the interlocutor's perspective is to listen carefully to the other's utterances (Arendt, 1982, p. 40). This means that when a professional listens carefully to another professional, he or she need not regard the interlocutor as passively steered by emotions, preferences and discourses. Rather a professional needs to listen carefully to how the other actively chooses to approach the topics of their conversation: 'I can only understand the other's viewpoint so long as I view him as an actor' Knauer (1980, p. 303).

But even if the principles presented above are followed, the professionals must also be aware that misunderstandings are unavoidable because the web of relations between people is always dense, in particular when those involved have very diverse backgrounds (e.g. different professional backgrounds). But it is crucial that the solution in such misunderstandings is not to blame anyone but to make use of Arendt's emphasis on the faculty of forgiveness[30] and then move on positively to future interprofessional work conversations having learnt about how to avoid the misunderstandings one has experienced.

The last Arendtian recommendation regarding the issue of complexity is that the professionals need time to reflect on what happened during their participation in a consulting session. Arendt labels this activity *thinking*. Arendt claims that in *thinking* a person continues the conversation he or she took part

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[30] Arendt (1958, p. 240) says: 'Trespassing is an everyday occurrence which is in the very nature of action's constant establishment of new relationships within a web of relations, and it needs forgiving, dismissing, in order to make it possible for life to go on by constantly releasing men from what they have done unknowingly.'

in with others, and that it is *thinking* that enlarges a person's perspective so that he or she is better able to deal with the matters of this world.

The sixth reason for disturbance is when a school professional is asked by someone else to send in a referral on a vulnerable child. There are no previous Danish research projects which have come to this conclusion. Hence this sixth reason has a weaker foundation in the context of my desire to make school professionals and social workers aware of potential disturbing factors in a discussion about a vulnerable child. But my finding calls for research which illuminates how professionals involved with children discuss who is responsible for writing referrals.

In line with my Arendtian framework it is crucial that a person does not completely take over another's point of view. Hence if one professional has such a great concern about a child that he or she thinks a referral is necessary, this professional cannot just transfer this concern to another professional and ask that person to write a referral. It is important then to underline that an Arendtian approach urges this professional to share his or her concerns with the other professional because it is in a conversation with others that one tries out one's own perspective.

A sharing of a concern may result in the two professionals deciding to write the referral jointly. It could also lead to the second professional adopting the concern of the first one and writing a referral from his or her own point of view but including the first one's perspective (it is vital in an Arendtian line of thinking that the interlocutor must always add the other's perspective to his own unique perspective of the matter). If as a result of the sharing the second professional sees no reason for referral, he or she should urge the first professional to write it him or herself.

Following the above discussion of my findings, I will now discuss strengths and weaknesses in the Arendtian existential-phenomenological framework I have developed for the research of this thesis. After this discussion I will make a practice oriented conclusion on my investigations of the consulting sessions' influence on the school professionals' further perspectives. Finally in this thesis I will put my conclusion into perspective by making some recommendations as to how to conduct consulting sessions between social workers and school professionals about issues in vulnerable children's lifeworlds.

Regarding my use of Arendt's political theorisations there is no doubt that it has been a comprehensive task to apply Arendt's intricate theorisations to an

empirical design for my research on the consulting sessions which as an inter-professional work activity in themselves are also complex in nature.

In particular there were three circumstances that complicated my application of Arendt's theorisations as an empirical design for my research on the consulting sessions.

Firstly, it was complicated because I have not found any other research projects that have applied Arendt's theorisations, following a qualitative methodological research approach, to the extent I have done in this PhD thesis. The development of the methodological framework has however been possible because I have relied on inspiration from Dalsgaard and Pahuus (2009), Knutas (2008) and Pahuus (2007, 2009), who have applied Arendt's theorisations solidly, although in a limited way, to research for practice. Furthermore for the development of my methodological framework I have made extensive use of the phenomenological research method insights of Kvale & Brinkmann (2009), Van Manen (1997, 2007) and Aspers (2009).

Secondly, it was complicated because in my application of Arendt's theorisations I needed to be cautious about the fact that sometimes Arendt is rather rough in her handling of other theories and hence she often rejects important insights. One example is that Arendt in her heavy critique of psychology and psychoanalytic theory rejects insights which may be relevant in many of her studies (Lading, in progress; Meehan, 2010). Later on in this section I will dwell on this criticism of Arendt's theorisations.

The third complicating factor was that during my in-depth work with Arendt's theorisations I realised that there were certain gaps in her line of thinking. Hence I needed to supplement Arendt's line of thinking with insights from other scholars. One gap was that Arendt has only weakly described her concept of natality and for this I used the work of Mortensen (2008), Wright (2000) and Hull (2002). Another lack is that Arendt has not written extensively about how *thinking* is a continuation of *action,* and in this case I made use of the works of Pahuus (2003), Disch (1994) and Berkowitz (2010). A further gap is that Arendt is not explicit about what our web of relationships brings to our *actions* with other people; here I made use of inspiration from Arnesen's (2000) post-structuralist influenced definition of the "discourse" concept which I have given an Arendtian twist.

Even though I have mentioned that it has been a comprehensive task to apply Arendt's theorisations to my empirical research I would still argue that I have shown previously in this section that my Arendtian existential-

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phenomenological research has revealed useful findings which allow us to investigate and make suggestions on how to improve the interprofessional work conversations between school professionals and social workers. Hence I agree with Stivers (2008), Dwoskin (2003) and Froggett (2002) that Arendt's theorisations seem to be able to provide concepts which can be explanatory and change drivers in our contemporary climate of a welfare state system which in many ways is driven solely by a greater wish for efficiency and therefore often pushes aside human aspects.

In this thesis I have used the existential-phenomenological Arendtian framework both to develop my methodological approach and to investigate the interpersonal issues raised in the consulting sessions.

In relation to my methodological approach Arendt's theorisations urged me to avoid the temptation to move beyond particular incidents too early and encouraged me to exceed my own subjective interpretation of the data.

In order not to move beyond the particular incidents too early I strove to have a strong focus on how the children's issues were playing out in their everyday lives during my data collection and analysis. However following the Arendtian line of thinking I also acknowledged that it is not possible to present these incidents purely because a presentation of the incidents will always be intertwined with how the different professionals perceive the incidents. Therefore my focus throughout the data collection and analysis has been to focus on how the various individual professionals perceive the incidents differently. In order to find out how they have uniquely perceived the incidents I have made use of the existential-phenomenological principle of "meaning condensation" and of the hermeneutical circle in my interpretation of the interviews. It is crucial to bear in mind that such an existential-phenomenological methodological approach to collect and analyse interview data is fairly blind to how societal and cultural issues also define how things are being perceived by the professionals.

Furthermore in relation to my methodological approach Arendt's theorisations urged me as a researcher to exceed the subjectivity involved in the fact that my interpretations were always being marked by my own orientation in relation to the collected data. The Arendtian advice to avoid the danger of a too subjective interpretation was for me to bring the data to other people and listen to their interpretation of the data and hence I could challenge my own interpretation with how other people were interpreting the same data. However following Arendt I still needed to keep a firm grip on my own interpreta-

tion of the data but the crucial point here is that after discussing with other people I was able to perform an enlarged interpretation of the data.

Next I will discuss what it has meant that I have used Arendt's theorisations to investigate the interpersonal issues raised in the consulting sessions. In relation to this issue in Section 3.2 I mentioned that the most basic aspect in my Arendtian approach has been the "political arena" view of the conversations in the consulting sessions. It is important to emphasise that Arendt's concept of "politics" differs from a conventional understanding of the word (see Section 3.2). Following Arendt's conception of "politics" I have first and foremost studied the interplay between the professionals' different perspectives in their talks on vulnerable children. I have also peripherally discussed how much room there is for the professionals' different perspectives in the consulting sessions in the setting of the contemporary Danish welfare state.

In the following I will discuss the strengths and weaknesses of conceptualising the consulting session conversations with an Arendtian "political arena" view.

Firstly, I would argue that one strength of an Arendtian existential-phenomenological "political arena" view is that it focuses strongly on the "here and now". It does not however imply that the "here and now" is totally cut off from the past; rather it implies that the past is viewed as a line of events that have led up to the "here and now". But then there is a strong emphasis on the fact that people in an *action* have several choices in how to further bend the line. The Arendtian foundation for the choices is the human condition of natality, i.e. that every person in terms of his or her uniqueness has the possibility to come up with totally new ideas on how to further bend the line of events. It is however crucial in an Arendtian line of thinking that such ideas are discussed and sharpened in conversations with one another.

In my research this has implied that the harsh circumstances in the vulnerable children's strained lifeworlds do not totally determine the children's further development. Rather I have accentuated that it is possible for the professionals to help to release the strain in the children's lifeworlds and support a positive development in their future overall well-being. However in my application of the "here and now" component of my Arendtian existential-phenomenological political framework I have tried to avoid focusing so much on a positive further development that I have neglected the seriousness of their issues.

Another strength is that my Arendtian existential-phenomenological approach has given me the ability to maintain a strong focus on concrete incidents in the vulnerable children's lifeworlds while investigating the interaction between the perspectives of social workers and school professionals on issues related to these incidents.

Hence my Arendtian existential-phenomenological framework gives an answer to how it is possible to act on Højholt's (2001; 2006) and Nielsen's (2001) criticism of earlier research and practice regarding interprofessional work for vulnerable children. Højholt (2001) and Nielsen (2001) claim that children's issues have too often been minimised in previous Danish research and practice in interprofessional work settings because the focus too quickly moves towards other issues such as conflicting professional group interests, organisational structures and legal frameworks.

Even though I have not focused on professional group interests, organisational structures and legal frameworks but rather on children's issues it is important to underline that my Arendtian political approach has implied that the children's issues have mostly been approached through the different views of the professionals. But even though the children's issues have in general not been approached objectively I would like to argue that my use of poetic representations has provided a contour of the issues which has been as pure as possible. However, it is clear that my Arendtian framework has implied that I have had no intention to present the issues objectively because the basis in my Arendtian existential-phenomenological line of thinking is that the being of things is always intertwined with how things appear to different people; following Arendt things always appear uniquely to each and every person.

It is this strong focus on the fact that all people have distinct perspectives that has enabled me to carry out my analysis of how the social workers' utterances at the consulting sessions have influenced the school professionals in their further perspectives on how they intend to deal with the issues of the vulnerable children. In these talks, viewed as an Arendtian political arena, the school professionals' and the social workers' utterances were seen as links in a chain in which each link always belonged to one of them. Hence this political arena view did not provide any space for a common middle ground in which they shared exactly the same understanding of an issue. This can be seen as a deficiency but on the other hand this assumption of no common middle ground has allowed me to investigate what happens when social workers' utterances at the *action* incidents at the consulting sessions have been trans-

formed during the school professionals' *thinking* about the sessions. In accordance with my Arendtian framework it is this *thinking* that will inspire the school professionals in their further work with the children's issues.

One may thus be tempted to accuse Arendt of being too individualistically minded because I have argued that her line of thinking implies that there is no middle ground for a common understanding. But to counter such criticism it is important to emphasise that the Arendtian *thinking* originates from people's involvement in *actions* with one another. In her essay "The Crisis in Culture" (2006), Arendt presents a brilliant description of the importance that others play in an person's *thinking*: 'even if I am quite alone in making up my mind, [I find myself] in an anticipated communication with others with whom I know I must finally come to some agreement with'.

These last paragraphs have revealed the most crucial limitation of my Arendtian existential-phenomenological approach. In this approach I have solely focused on how the professionals use their words differently to talk about the children's issues. I have not at all included their expressed feelings and gestures in my notes from my observations of the consulting sessions or how the professionals in interviews express their feelings. Instead in my notes I only focused on their different ways of talking about a common issue in order to facilitate my interviews with them about specific conversational episodes from the sessions. Furthermore the Arendtian political focus has implied that in my analysis and suggestions on how to improve the consulting sessions I have consistently urged that the professionals' feelings must not be allowed to enter the space of the consulting sessions. This is quite controversial as many of the issues discussed are precisely those which often evoke deep feelings in professionals. However I have underlined in my application of Arendt's political theorisations that I do not imply that the professionals must suppress their feelings, but rather that they must take care of their feelings. But in Arendt's line of thinking such feelings must not be taken care of in the political public arena but in a private arena, e.g. with their partner or a psychologist (it may be worth considering whether the employer should pay for the professionals to have sessions with a psychologist as the issues have been raised at work).

I find it necessary to emphasise strongly that because Arendt has this objection about revealing feelings in a political activity my Arendtian existential-phenomenological approach must not be applied in conversations with vulnerable people about their personal issues!

Even though Arendt makes a strong demarcation about not allowing personal matters in her politically oriented conversations (*action*), I think it can be argued that my analysis gives a fairly accurate picture of how the professionals personally choose to approach the issues discussed. Hence by reading my analysis the reader can form a good idea of the professionals' personal matters. This discovery is not just an empirically proven experience from my analysis but it is also the subject of an ongoing theoretical discussion about Arendt's approach to personal matters in her theorisations, see e.g. Hull (2002) and Benhabib (1994).

In the context of this discussion Meehan (2010) argues that Arendt's antipathy towards the focus of psychology and psychoanalytic theory on personal matters must be understood in the light of Arendt's annoyance at the fact that in the post-war period totalitarianism was conceived only as the handiwork of a few demonic individuals manipulating innocent masses. Meehan (2010) argues that if Arendt's theorisations are read in detachment from Arendt's annoyance about this, they are in fact not so negative towards the emphasis of psychology and psychoanalytic theory on personal matters. Meehan (2010) argues that Arendt sees our upbringing as crucial for forming who we are, but further in line with some psychology and psychoanalytic theory Arendt wants to highlight that the political space is the opportunity to either accept or reject parts of our upbringing. Whilst agreeing with Meehan (2010) I would like to add that Arendt's political arena focus also represents an opportunity to exceed our individual perspectives by "borrowing" insights from other people's perspectives.

Another crucial limitation of my Arendtian framework is that the strong focus on the interpersonal dynamics did not allow me to investigate deeply the institutional and organisational structures which obviously also shape how the school professionals' perspectives are influenced by the consulting session with a social worker. However Arendt's theorisations did give me an opportunity to investigate whether the consulting space seemed to be structured so tightly that they were unable to reveal their different perspectives to each other; Arendt argues that if an interpersonal activity is filled with standardised procedures and methods, the space for revealing personalised perspectives will be more limited.

During my analysis of the Danish consulting sessions I only twice came across the use of standardised methods and techniques. Hence I concluded that it is easy for a Danish professional in a consulting session to carry out Ar-

endtian *action* oriented activities in which professionals can gain new insights from discussing their different perspectives with one another. This finding was furthermore confirmed by my analysis of a focus group interview I carried out in England. In the focus group interview I presented a scenario from a Danish social worker consulting session to English professionals. From this focus group interview I generated a contrast between the Danish and English school professionals' possibilities to seek help if they have a concern for a vulnerable child. This contrast demonstrated that there are fewer standardised procedures and methods in Denmark than in England in such cases. Hence I concluded that there is a greater danger that the English professionals will miss important insights from each others' perspectives on the children's issues.

However I likewise concluded that for cases of serious abuse or neglect, the English professionals can act more efficiently because they have such standardised procedures and methods. Hence these procedures and methods seem to serve a purpose, but the danger is that they will dominate the rest of the work with vulnerable children which would profit more from a freer and more time-consuming interplay between various professionals' distinctive perspectives.

Finally I concluded that even though the English professionals had more standardised procedures and methods, my focus group interview revealed as well that the English professionals also make many considerations with the help of their various perspectives. Hence I can conclude with Arendt that the existential condition of people's plurality can never be totally suppressed even in a context of many standardised procedures and methods. On such occasions Arendt urges that whenever possible we must seize the incidents in which the plurality of people's perspectives comes to the surface.

11.2 Conclusion

In this PhD thesis I have investigated the newly started interprofessional work activity of consulting sessions between Danish social workers and school professionals (reception class teachers and teachers). In these sessions the social workers give the school professionals advice on how to deal with issues in vulnerable children's lifeworlds following a prevention and early intervention line of thinking.

At the beginning of the thesis I set up a research question which directed my focus towards how the consulting sessions influence the school professionals in their further perspectives on how they intend to deal with issues in the lifeworlds of vulnerable children.

The starting point for my research was influenced by the fact that several researchers claim that the children's issues often disappear too soon in interprofessional work practice and research because at an early stage the focus often turns towards more abstract issues like professional group interests, organisational structures and legal frameworks. Hence I chose to develop an Arendtian existential-phenomenological framework for carrying out my research because Arendt's aim is to keep a strong connection between speech and specific matters. Thus I was able to investigate the talk in the consulting sessions with a strong situated focus on the specific vulnerable children's issues which were the centre of attention of the actors involved, before making more abstract conclusions on how social workers' consulting sessions influence school professionals' further perspectives on how to deal with issues in vulnerable children's lifeworlds.

A further basis for my research was that previous research has called for a clarification of the complicated dynamics in interprofessional work conversations. The framework I have developed allowed me to investigate the complicated interpersonal dynamics by viewing the talk in the consulting sessions as Arendtian political conversations where people meet and exchange their different perspectives in order to gain new inspiration from one another. The existential-phenomenological embeddedness of Arendt's theorisations has allowed me to accentuate that the professionals' identities, and hence the perspectives they adopt to various issues, are in a constant state of flux as a result of how they continually choose to orient themselves in response to their ongoing life experiences.

The goal of my research has been to reach some deep-level conclusions which can be used in reflections on the conducting of the consulting sessions between social workers and school professionals.

In order to undertake my research at a significantly deep level I chose to analyse three consulting sessions. From my analysis of the collected data I first conclude that consulting sessions influence school professionals to enlarge their perspectives on how they intend to deal with issues in vulnerable children's lifeworlds. Hence my study suggests that vulnerable children are likely

to receive a better service when social workers offer consulting sessions to school professionals.

However I also conclude that the influence on the school professionals' perspectives is limited when compared with the potential of the consulting sessions. In my research I identify six reasons for this limited influence:

> 1. The school professionals' lack of crucial information about: referrals, Section 50 investigations, and social workers' work routines.
>
> 2. Incidents where the social workers are not sufficiently aware that they are using concepts unfamiliar to the school professionals (furthermore I argue that this probably also applies the other way around).
>
> 3. Simplified discourses about each others' professions and institutions.
>
> 4. The professionals' high sensitivity to each others' personal approaches as the issues and the stress in the vulnerable children's strained lifeworlds evoke deep personal feelings.
>
> 5. Difficulties in encompassing all the different aspects of the issues in the vulnerable children's lifeworlds in a consulting session lasting only 45 minutes (in particular for school professionals who receive a consulting session for the first time).
>
> 6. A situation where a school professional is asked by someone else to send in a referral on a vulnerable child.

It is important to underline that these six reasons are identified as possible disturbances in the interpersonal dynamics between social workers and school professionals in the consulting sessions. My research firmly underlines that the six reasons may play out differently according to the individual traits of the specific social workers and school professionals involved in a consulting session. Hence it is important that the issues raised are mostly addressed within the situated interpersonal context of the consulting sessions. In order to make suggestions on how to address the issues which gave rise to disturbances, I made use of Hannah Arendt's theoretical framework in this thesis. My main suggestion is that professionals need to be focused on speaking more clearly themselves and listening more carefully to their interlocutor while keeping in the centre of their conversations the complex issues involved in the lifeworlds

of the specific vulnerable children.

Arendt claims that in situations of such high complexity people can be tempted to reduce the complexity by imposing standardised procedures and methods. Only twice could I identify the use of standardised procedures and methods in my investigation of the Danish consulting sessions. I considered whether my discovery of only a small number of occurrences of standardised procedures and methods could be due to my purely interpersonal focus, but my finding was confirmed by the outcome of my analysis of an English focus group interview in which I introduced English professionals to a Danish social worker consulting session. My limited, but interesting, contrast revealed that in England there were many more standardised procedures and methods. From my comparison of the development of interprofessional work in both countries it is possible to argue that the more frequent occurrence of standardised procedures and techniques in England may be because England is more advanced in the development of interprofessional work activities. Hence it is likely that more and more standardised procedures and methods will be used in the future in Danish school professionals' and social workers' interprofessional work with vulnerable children.

An important message in this PhD thesis is that such standardised procedures may be effective in serious and urgent cases but in other cases they will reduce the possibility to see the vulnerable children's issues from the professionals' distinct perspectives. This is unfortunate because my research has demonstrated that it is precisely the meeting of the social workers' and school professionals' distinct perspectives that enriches the school professionals' further perspectives on how to work with issues in the vulnerable children's lifeworlds. Hence, rather than concentrating primarily on imposing standardised procedures and methods, this research project urges that first and foremost the professionals should be trained in their collaboration to acknowledge, uphold and make use of the diversity of their distinct perspectives on issues in the lifeworlds of vulnerable children.

11.3 Putting the research into perspective

Based on the findings in my research I will now present some recommendations in this section. In Chapter 1 I explained that presently many Danish mu-

nicipalities are increasing the collaboration between their social services departments and their schools. The central feature of this enhanced collaboration is generally that social workers are sent out to schools to enable the school professionals to receive consulting sessions in which they can get advice on how to deal with issues in vulnerable children's lifeworlds. In most of these municipalities the social workers visit the schools fortnightly but in some municipalities, e.g. where I carried out my fieldwork, social workers are sent out to the schools more frequently.

My recommendations which follow are particularly aimed at other Danish municipalities that are considering sending social workers regularly to the schools, whether fortnightly or more frequently, in order to enable the school professionals to receive a consulting session due to their concern for a vulnerable child.

I have arranged my recommendations in three phases: An introduction for school professionals to consulting sessions with social workers; training in interprofessional work and how to conduct the consulting sessions.

An introduction for school professionals to consulting sessions with social workers

It is crucial that school professionals are given a proper introduction to the purpose of having a social worker regularly visit their school. In this introduction it is important to inform the school professionals of their obligation to notify if they have a concern on a child's well-being, and also enlighten them on confidentiality rules, referrals, Section 50 investigations and social workers' work routines. This introduction needs to be based on the acknowledgement that social workers and school professionals have very different lines of thinking and work procedures for dealing with issues in vulnerable children's lifeworlds.

Furthermore, school professionals need to be introduced to the prevention and early intervention line of thinking which often is referred to as the foundation for such consulting sessions on vulnerable children. The school professionals need to be informed about the strength of this approach in dealing with vulnerable children's issues at an early stage so that the issues do not hinder the children's future social and psychological development. However, they also need to be informed about the weaknesses of the approach in its tendency not to include the children and the parents themselves at the early stage and

in that it often identifies small issues as large problems which preferably should solve themselves over time without any intervention.

Training in interprofessional work

It is important that school professionals and social workers in a common setting receive training in how to carry out sound interprofessional work. It is also advisable to include school nurses, educational psychologists, speech therapists and other interprofessional workers in the training.

   In the training the professionals need to be informed that research has consistently demonstrated that interprofessional work is often more complicated than legislators and they themselves initially anticipate and hence for interprofessional work conversations they need to be solidly trained to navigate within complex dynamics.

   Furthermore it is crucial that the professionals must be brought to acknowledge that interprofessional work alone cannot completely solve all problems in all vulnerable children's lifeworlds as these problems will often be deeply entrenched, e.g. a parent's drinking issue may reach back several generations or a parent may have deep-seated psychiatric problems. However they must also be educated about the fact that research has demonstrated that interprofessional work compared to mono-professional work can improve the quality of the efforts for vulnerable children and their families.

How to conduct the consulting sessions

In order to conduct the consulting sessions effectively the social workers and the school professionals need to be trained to speak carefully and listen properly to each other.

   In their speech they need to be keen on speaking from their own point of view but also to be aware that the professional concepts they use may be unfamiliar to their interlocutor. Furthermore they always need to be fervent about focusing on the children's issues when they speak, based on how these issues are playing out in the lifeworlds of the specific vulnerable children. This will prevent a smothering of the children's issues under an over-focusing on other issues like professional group interests, organisational structures and legal frameworks. These latter issues however need to be addressed in other arenas.

   With regard to their listening they need to be attentive to how their interlocutor uniquely chooses to speak about the issues in the vulnerable children's

lifeworlds. Their listening should also involve an awareness of how their perception of the interlocutor's remarks is being shaped by their own past experiences, feelings and possibly simplified discourses about the other's profession and institutional setting.

After the consulting sessions the school professionals need to be given some time to perform some Arendtian *thinking*. Following Arendt's definition the school professionals must in their *thinking* try from their own point of view to represent the perspectives demonstrated by the social workers during the sessions to enable them to carry out on-going conversations with themselves during their further pedagogical work with the specific vulnerable children.

My final recommendation is that the first time a school professional is given a consulting session it will often need more time than a typical Danish school lesson slot of 45 minutes in order to extract the maximum benefit.

After these concrete recommendations, on an overall level I finally wish to call for a consideration of an increased use of Hannah Arendt's theorisations for the challenges we face in our modern times. This is because her theorisations seem to be able to provide concepts which can be explanatory and change drivers at a time when we are tempted to focus solely on efficiency and are therefore inclined to push aside human aspects in our activities with one another. There are many ways of using Arendt's theorisations in relation to various issues raised in our modern times. In the climate of an enhanced focus on interprofessional work Arendt's concept of power may very likely be an eye-opener in an analysis of how professionals position themselves and others in interprofessional work and furthermore her three collaborational modes of "division of labour", "co-operation" and "action" may be of help in defining how the common tasks in a collaboration should be carried out. In the following chapter I present an article that I have written for a Danish peer-review journal. In this article I use Arendt's focus on people's uniqueness to create an alternative line of thinking in making employees aware of their unique approach in a collaboration compared to most contemporary consultancy teaching about collaboration which is based on theories of personality typologies which I claim give employees limited possibilities for further professional and personal development.

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Jacques:
All the world's a stage,
And all the men and women
merely players;
They have their exits and
their entrances,
And one man in his time plays
many parts,
His acts being seven ages.
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William Shakespeare, *As you like it*

Chapter 12: The article 'Arendts jordnære forskelligheder'

This is the first version of an article which aims to create a foundation for the development of an Arendt-inspired approach to collaboration in workplaces. My Arendt-inspired approach starts from the assumption that all people are unique and hence this approach is a counter perspective to much contemporary teaching about collaboration which assumes a limited number of personality types.

This article serves two purposes in this PhD. Firstly, insights from the article have provided foundational elements for using Arendt's theorisations in the design of my research methodology in Chapter 4. Secondly, the article puts into play some of the theoretical achievements of the thesis in a slightly different context.

The article has in its first version recently been submitted to a peer-review journal. On the next page first I present the original Danish version of the article, followed by an English translation which starts on page 301.

12.1 Danish version:

Arendts jordnære forskelligheder

- et alternativ til de begrænsende forskelligheder i den personlighedstest-baserede tilgang til samarbejde

Jóhannes Miðskarð

RESUMÉ:

Artiklen tager afsæt i de seneste årtiers efterspørgsel af viden om samarbejde på arbejdsmarkedet. Derefter beskrives kort hvordan dette behov ofte opfyldes ved at mange kursus- og konsulentvirksomheder underviser om "samarbejde" primært ved hjælp af teori om forskellige personlighedstyper. I artiklen beskrives deres sædvanlige fremgangsmåde, som består af at medarbejderne først bedes om at udfylde en personlighedstest som bruges til at inddele medarbejderne i grupper efter nogle forudbestemte personprofiler. Derefter undervises medarbejderne i, hvordan folk med deres persontype bedst samarbejder med folk af andre personlighedstyper.

Sidenhen bruges hoveddelen af artiklen til at undersøge, hvordan menneskers samarbejde alternativt kan karakteriseres ud fra Hannah Arendts tanker om det enkelte menneskes aktuelle samspil med andre. Undersøgelsen konkluderer, at modsat den personlighedstest-baserede tilgang til samarbejde, opprioriterer Hannah Arendt, hvordan mennesker udviser unikhed, når de handler i fællesskab med andre.

Introduktion

I de seneste årtier har tendensen været, at der inden for det private og offent-lige arbejdsmarked er sket mange fusioner af tidligere separate afdelinger eller endda hele institutioner/virksomheder. Disse fusioner bevirker en intensive-ring i samarbejdet mellem medarbejderne fra de tidligere separate afdelinger/institutioner/ virksomheder. Derfor har der været efterspurgt og gennemført megen undervisning om samarbejde i de seneste årtier.

Judge, Klinger, Simon & Yang (2008) påviser, at megen af denne undervis-ning gennemføres af kursus- og konsulent-virksomheder, der tager udgangs-punkt i medarbejdernes svar på personlighedstests til deres undervisning og rådgivning om samarbejde. Judge et al. (2008) fremfører ligeledes, at person-lighedstestene hyppigt anvendes til ansættelser af nye medarbejdere således, at de nye medarbejderes persontyper passer sammen med de allerede ansattes.

Morgeson, Campion, Dipboye, Hollenbeck, Murphy & Schmitt (2008) kriti-serer denne kursus- og konsulent-virksomhed om samarbejde for ofte entydigt at definere den enkelte medarbejder ud fra nogle forudbestemte fastlåste ka-rakteristika i stedet for at give plads til personernes unikke forskelligheder.

Som et modsvar til undervisningen i samarbejde ud fra personlighedstest præsenterer denne artikel en tankegang om samarbejde ud fra Hannah Arendts teoridannelser, der netop opprioriterer det unikke ved hvert menne-ske i dets fælleshandlinger med andre mennesker. Sidst i artiklen sammenlig-nes de to tankegange om samarbejde. For at muliggøre denne sammenligning vil der gennem artiklen anvendes følgende tre niveauer til beskrivelse af de to tilgange: 1.) Det almenmenneskelige niveau 2.) Grupperings-niveauet 3.) Det individuelle niveau. Med det alemmenneskelige niveau undersøges, hvad hen-holdsvis personlighedstest-tankegangen og Arendt antager, at alle mennesker har til fælles i deres beskrivelse af det enkelte menneske. Med grupperingsni-veauet undersøges, hvordan personer grupperes efter nogle forudbestemte faktorer til at sige noget om den enkeltes medarbejders adfærd. Med det indi-viduelle niveau undersøges, hvor meget højde der tages for det specifikt indi-viduelle hos det enkelte menneske.

Den moderne kursus- og konsulent-praksis om samarbejde

I dette afsnit vil jeg karakterisere den undervisning om samarbejde der er baseret på personlighedstestning. Ifølge Sander (1999) kan tests, der anvendes til arbejdsmarkedet, opdeles i to grupper: Kognitive tests og færdighedsprøver i den ene gruppe, og i den anden adfærdsbeskrivende personlighedstests. Kognitive tests søger at afdække den enkelte persons maksimale præstationsevner; færdighedsprøver afdækker den enkelte persons kundskaber/færdigheder på et afgrænset område. De adfærdsbeskrivende tests befatter sig derimod med menneskers ydre adfærd. I henhold til Sanders kategorisering af forskellige tests, understreges det, at de undersøgte tests i denne artikel tilhører gruppen af adfærdsbeskrivende personlighedstests.

Som nævnt i introduktionen har Morgeson et al. (2007) samt Judge et al.(2008) påvist at sådanne adfærdsbeskrivende personlighedstests aktuelt ofte anvendes til undervisning om samarbejde. Det må dog understreges, at ovenstående anvendte referencer ikke er udarbejdet fra forskning i det danske arbejdsmarked. Dog tyder meget på, at situationen ikke er anderledes i Danmark. I december 2010 fortalte tv-magasinet "DR Penge", hvordan en bølge af tests de seneste år har skyllet ind over det danske offentlige og private arbejdsmarked (DR Penge, 2010).

I det følgende tages udgangspunkt i to danske eksempler på personlighedstestbaseret samarbejdsundervisning for at undersøge hvordan den personlighedstestbaserede tilgang til samarbejde kan karakteriseres efter ovenfornævnte tre niveauer: 1.) Det almenmenneskelige niveau 2.) Grupperingsniveauet 3.) Det individuelle niveau.

Det første eksempel stammer fra en bog om samarbejde, som anvendes ved etablering af nyoprettede selvstyrende lærerteams i grundskolen. Rasmussen og Bak (2004, s. 43) hævder, at et lærerteam kan yde en maksimal indsats, hvis de enkelte medarbejdere bliver klogere på sig selv og deres samarbejdspartnere, ved at de enkelte medarbejdere studerer deres egen personprofil samt får viden om de andres teammedlemmers personprofiler. Rasmussen og Bak (2004) forklarer videre, at sådanne personprofiler findes ved gennemførelse af personlighedstests.

Det næste eksempel er en annonce for et seminar afholdt i København i 2010 som var rettet mod pædagogiske institutioner. En reklame for seminaret

løs: "[Det gode teamsamarbejde] kræver viden om teammedlemmernes personlighed og deres samspil samt metoder for at optimere samarbejdet. På dagen får I indsigt i, hvad det gode teamsamarbejde indeholder, og hvordan I kan øge energien og engagementet – med afsæt i metoder og strategier, der har vist sig at være effektfulde i praksis. Vi går derfor i dybden med et persontypeværktøj kaldet X der vil give jer en bedre forståelse for hinanden."[31]

For det første er det værd at bemærke at annoncen antyder helt klart, at det nævnte 'persontype-værktøj', som for anonymiseringens skyld her kaldes X, bygger på samme principper som de tidligere nævnte personlighedstest. Navnet 'persontype-værktøj' modsat 'personlighedstest' signalerer dog, at persontype-værktøjet ikke er udviklet i psykologien men snarere indenfor 'human ressource' fagfeltet. Men idet den bagvedliggende tankegang i persontype-værktøjer og personlighedstest er ens, anvendes videre i artiklen kun begrebet 'personlighedstest'.

I de to ovenstående eksempler argumenteres for nødvendigheden af at identificere de enkelte medarbejderes personprofiler ved hjælp af personlighedstest for at optimere et samarbejde. Den sædvanlige procedure i disse personlighedstest er, at de enkelte medarbejdere enten på papir eller over internettet skal besvare en mængde spørgsmål. (Sander, 1999).

Dernæst optælles de besvarede test og de enkelte medarbejdere grupperes efter om medlemmerne ligner hinanden mht. til nogle udvalgte personmæssige træk. Medlemmerne i en sådan gruppering refereres der sidenhen til ved at bruge én benævnelse i form af en bestemt personprofil, der symboliserer de fremtrædende træk for alle gruppens medlemmer. Når deltagerne er kategoriseret efter forudbestemte personprofiler ved hjælp af personlighedstest, får den enkelte medarbejder som oftest individuelt tilbagesvar på sin personprofil. (Sander, 1999).

Dernæst undervises alle medarbejdere i, hvilke gevinster og problemer der opstår ved, at de forskellige personprofiler møder hinanden i et samarbejde. Der undervises f.eks. i, hvordan "entreprenøren" med sin trang til konstant nyskabelse interagerer med "koordinatoren", der har trang til systematisering. Der påvises, hvordan vanskeligheder kan opstå, hvis de to slags medarbejdere ikke har viden om deres egen og den andens personprofil. (Sander, 1999).

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[31] Jeg oplyser ikke hvilket kursus- og konsulentfirma, der står bag denne annonce for ikke at rette min kritik mod et enkelt af de forholdsvis få danske konsulentfirmaer der agerer i denne branche.

Ikke kun i undervisning om samarbejde anvendes en sådan viden om adfærd ud fra personlighedstest; Jesper Tynell (2001) gengiver i sit kandidatspeciale et eksempel, hvor man i en større dansk virksomhed anvender medarbejdernes personprofiler til at forstå og intervenere i opståede konflikter.

Nu undersøges hvordan den personlighedstest-baserede tilgang til samarbejde kan karakteriseres i forhold til de tre niveauer: 1.) Det almenmenneskelige niveau 2.) Grupperings-niveauet 3.) Det individuelle niveau.

Ud fra den tidligere beskrivelse af proceduren ved personlighedstest er det muligt at stadfæste, at det almenmenneskelige niveau er til stede i kursus- og konsulentvirksomheden, der anvender personlighedstest ved antagelsen om, at alle mennesker kan testes, og at resultaterne fra alle mennesker kan sammenlignes med hinanden. Derudover synes der ikke at være andre ting i brugen af personlighedstest, der kan henføres til det almenmenneskelige niveau.

Det afsløres ud fra den tidligere gennemgang af gennemførelsesproceduren af denne type kursus- og konsulentvirksomhed, at det snarere er grupperings-niveauet i personlighedstestene der først og fremmest anvendes til at karakterisere, hvordan det enkelte menneske skal betragtes i samarbejdssituationer i forhold til andre.

Man kan fristes til at argumentere for det individuelle niveaus tilstedeværelse i personlighedstestene ved den enkeltes udfyldelse af testen, samt i den samtale den enkelte får med den involverede konsulent. Men i forbindelse med testbesvarelsen bliver svarene fra de enkelte deltagere optalt og den enkelte grupperes ud fra én overordnet personprofil; denne procedure medfører, at den individuelles svar på testen ret hurtigt forlades til fordel for fokusering på gruppens gennemsnitlige personprofil. Når den enkelte får svar på sit testresultat, er personprofilerne udgangspunktet for samtalen. Derfor konkluderes, at det individuelle niveau står svagt i testningen og tilbagemeldingen. Det må nævnes, at næsten samtlige leverandører af adfærdsbeskrivende personlighedstest oftest argumenter med, at der også findes noget unikt ved hvert enkelt menneske, som testene ikke indfanger. For at indfange og videreudvikle det unikke tilbydes køb af individuel coaching. (Morgeson et al., 2007). Problemet ved denne procedure er, at det særligt unikke ved det enkelte menneske prioriteres lavere end personlighedstestens forrang af grupperings-niveauet.

Opsamlende konkluderes derfor, at grupperingsniveauet er det eneste niveau, der står stærkt i den personlighedstestbaserede tilgang til samarbejde. Taggar og Parkinson (2009) argumenterer for, at disse personlighedstest, hvor deltagerne grupperes efter personprofiler endvidere medfører et statisk syn på

den enkelte medarbejder. Konsulenterne der udfører de adfærdsbeskrivende personlighedstest vil sikkert argumentere for, at de netop mener, at mennesker kan forandre og udvikle sig, idet personlighedstesten kan gøre dem klogere på deres aktuelle adfærd og anvise områder til forandring. Men det kan i alle fald konkluderes, at i tests- svargivnings- og undervisningsperioden anses det enkelte menneske som værende statisk; denne periode kan på en større arbejdsplads sagtens strække sig over en periode på seks måneder (Sander, 1999).

Som alternativ til den personlighedstestbaserede tilgang til samarbejde præsenteres i det følgende et forslag til en tankegang om samarbejde, der snarere anser mennesker for foranderlige, uforudsigelige og unikke ud fra Hannah Arendts teoridannelser (Deveaux, 1999, p. 7). Men først præsenteres en kort oversigt over Arendts arbejdsmåder og værker, hvor formålet er at argumentere for hvorfor og hvordan, jeg i denne artikel placerer Arendts teoridannelser i en eksistentiel fænomenologisk tradition for bedst at kunne udnytte hendes tanker i forhold til en alternativ tilgang til samarbejde.

Arendt og hendes værker

I dette afsnit præsenteres fire karakteristikker af Hannah Arendts arbejdsmåder og værker. For det første udfoldes hvilken disciplin Arendt videnskabeligt kan siges at tilhøre. For det andet undersøges hvilken genre hendes værker kan siges at holde sig indenfor. For det tredje karakteriseres Arendts videnskabsmetodiske arbejdsteknikker. For det fjerde undersøges det ud fra de tre første karakteristikker, om der er nogle oplagte videnskabsteoretiske traditioner at placere Arendts værker i. Ud fra denne gennemgang vil jeg placere mig indenfor en bestemt videnskabsteoretisk position, som passer til denne artikels emne.

Hannah Arendt er oprindeligt uddannet indenfor filosofi, men hun ville snarere selv kategoriseres som en politisk tænker ("politisk tænker" må ikke forveksles med "politisk filosof"). Det må understreges, at Arendts definition af politik er anderledes end politik forstået som det, der udføres i folketing og kommunalbestyrelser, altså en forståelse af politik i en ramme af et repræsentativt demokrati. Politik i Arendts forståelse ligger tættere på definitionen af nærdemokrati (particapatory democracy) idet Arendt påstår, at alle "handlinger" har et indbygget politisk element (Barber, 1984). Igen tages forbehold fordi begrebet "handling" hos Arendt kun i ringe grad kan sammenlignes med

vores almindelige anvendelse af begrebet "handling", forstået som at mennesker individuelt eller kollektivt udøver en eller anden form for aktiv handlen. For Arendt er "handlinger" altid betinget af at foregå mellem mennesker, og knytter sig tæt til samtaler. Der konkluderes, at Arendt med sin etiket af "politisk tænker" antyder, at hendes mål er at tænke over menneskers handlen i form af samtaler med hinanden.

Efter at have stadfæstet at Arendt ikke vil betragte sig som tilhørende nogen traditionel videnskabelig disciplin, men selv utraditionelt kategoriserer sig som "politisk tænker", undersøges karakteristikken af værkernes genre. Hvis alle Hannah Arendts værker samles for at danne sig et overblik over hendes forfatterskab, opdager man, at samlingen spreder sig over mange forskellige udtryksformer. For eksempel findes værker, der mest af alt kan karakteriseres som filosofiske videnskabelige prægede værker som f.eks. "The Life of the Mind" (1978), arbejdstudieværker som f.eks. "Menneskets vilkår" (1958), mere historisk og sociologisk prægede værker som f.eks. "Det totalitære samfundssystems oprindelse" (1951), mere journalistprægede værker som f.eks. "Eichmann i Jerusalem" (1963) og så en del litterære essay-samlinger som f.eks. "Between Past and Future" (1961). Dermed konkluderes det, at Arendts værker spreder sig over mange forskellige genrer samt at hendes emner ligeledes har stor spredning.

Alle Arendt-fortolkere er enige om, at Arendt anvender mange forskellige teknikker i sine værker, bl.a. filosofiske diskussioner, indsigter fra skønhedslitteratur, etymologiske analyser, egne helt særprægede historiske analyser, sociologiske analyser, filosofisk-antropologiske tilgange, eksistentielfænomenologiske og antropologisk-lignende betragtninger (Auden, 1959; Pahuus, 2006; Mortensen, 2007; Swift, 2009; Bernasconi, 2002; d'Entrèves, 1994; Schanz, 2003; Schanz, 2007). Flertallet mener dog, at den mest gennemgående teknik er Arendts meget grundige arbejde med at skelne tætliggende begreber fra hinanden, hvor hun også tit indfører nye begreber. Ligeledes er det et gennemgående træk, at Arendt hyppigt tillægger et begreb et anderledes indhold end den gængse nutidige konnotation begrebet lægger sig op ad (Ricouer, 1983; Knauer, 1980; Benhabib, 2003).

Da de foregående tre karakteristikker viser, at Arendts videnskabelige disciplin, genrer og videnskabsmetodiske arbejdsteknikker er så særprægede, at det er svært at argumentere for eksistensen af én "Arendt-teori", anbefaler jeg at anvende betegnelsen "Arendts teoridannelser", idet det signalerer en løsere struktur.

Idet jeg vil placere Arendts teoridannelser inden for én videnskabsteoretisk tradition, er der ikke megen hjælp at hente fra de tre karakteristikker, der er gennemført i dette afsnit, idet de ikke viser ét sammenhængende billede af Arendts værker. Derfor undersøgtes det, i hvilken videnskabeligteoretisk retning andre forskere placerer Arendt i. Resultatet var, at forskere anvender Arendt indenfor en række forskellige videnskabsteoretiske traditioner, f.eks. indenfor en fænomenologisk tradition (Moran, 2000), en eksistentiel-fænomenologisk tradition (Hinchmann & Hinchmann, 1984; Pahuus, 2006), en kritisk videnskabsteoretisk tradition (Negt, 1985; Bowling, 2011) og en postmodernistisk tradition (Honig, 1992, 1993).

Hinchmann & Hinchmann (1984) samt Pahuus (2006, 2010) følges i deres anvendelse af Arendts teoridannelser som eksistentiel-fænomenologiske, idet min karakteristik af det enkelte menneske i samarbejde med andre skal fremhæve den konstante dannelse af det enkelte menneskes identitet udfra hans/hendes oplevelser gennem livet – arbejdspladsoplevelser indbefattet.

Arendts eksistentiel-fænomenologiske islæt tilskrives mest udfra, hvordan Arendt i "Menneskets vilkår" (1958) og "The Life of the Mind" (1978) gør brug af fænomenologiske teknikker, samt de eksistentielle indsigter hun har arvet fra Martin Heidegger og Karl Jaspers (Pahuus, 2006; Hinchmann & Hinchmann, 1984).

Selvom Arendt kan placeres indenfor en eksistentiel-fænomenologisk tradition, understreger Pahuus (2006, s. 8ff), at Arendts originalitet i forhold til andre eksistentiel-fænomenologer består i hendes tanker om, at det enkelte menneskes dannelse i mindre grad er den individuelles sag. Arendt forstår snarere det enkeltes menneskes dannelse som betinget af et samvær med andre mennesker, fordi mennesker lever, handler og bevæger sig i flertal i denne verden. Arendt påstår endda, at det kun er i samtaler med andre, at det enkelte menneske kan erfare og tilskrive mening til egne oplevelser. Arendt (2005, s. 33) siger: "Men mennesker i flertal, det vil sige, mennesker i det omfang de lever, handler og bevæger sig i denne verden, kan kun erfare mening, så længe de kan tale og gøre sig forståelige for hinanden og for sig selv."

Hovedkonklusionen er, at Arendts teoridannelser er svære at placere indenfor én videnskabsteoretisk tradition. Idet artiklens formål er at undersøge hvordan samarbejde kan betragtes ud fra Arendts forståelse af det enkelte menneskes samspil med andre, synes det eksistentiel-fænomenologiske videnskabsteoretiske udgangspunkt at være det mest gunstige videnskabsteoretiske udgangspunkt at positionere sig i, fordi det fremhæver, at det enkeltes menne-

skes identitet er under konstant dannelse i et fællesskab med andre mennesker. Spørgsmålet er, på hvilket grundlag Arendt baserer sin antagelse om, at det enkelte menneske er tvunget til indgå i handlinger med andre mennesker for at udvikles som menneske. Dette undersøges i følgende næste afsnit.

Jorden som grundvilkår

Én sætning optræder gentagne gange i forskellige variationer i Arendts forfatterskab (her fra *Menneskets Vilkår* s. 234): "Intet menneske kan være suverænt, eftersom jorden ikke bebos af et enkelt menneske, men af mennesker".

Ovenstående citat stadfæster Pahuus' tidligere pointering af, at det enkelte menneske ifølge Arendt hele tiden må anskues som en del af et fællesskab med andre mennesker. Ligeledes demonstrerer citatet det lidt pudsige ved Arendt, at hun fremhæver planeten JORDEN som grundlaget for menneskers fællesskab med hinanden, hvilket for de fleste er så selvfølgeligt, at vi sjældent italesætter det.

Arendts pointering af jorden som vores grundlæggende vilkår kan ses som en parallel til Heideggers begreb "i-verden-væren". Dog er det vigtigt at pointere, at Arendt i højere grad end Heidegger anser menneskers fællesskab med hinanden sammenvævet med menneskers afhængighed af planeten jorden. (Miðskarð, 2012; Benhabib, 2003, s. 104ff).

Arendt skriver mest om menneskers fællesskab på jorden i "Menneskets vilkår" fra 1958 (på dansk 2006). Arendt (2005, s. 35) argumenterer for, at dette "jorden" som menneskets grundvilkår er nødvendigt at pointere, idet der siden afslutningen af Anden Verdenskrig er opstået en tendens til, at mennesket tager afstand fra jorden som dets grundvilkår. Et konkret tegn på flugt ser Arendt (2005, s. 29ff) i ønsket fra sidst i 1950'erne om at bosætte sig i rummet, idet man var begyndt at afprøve og planlægge udsendelse af satellitter og raketter til rummet. Ligeledes anser Arendt datidens begyndende genetiske videnskab, hvor man i laboratorier eksperimenterede med naturgivne gener, som et andet konkret tegn. Arendt påstår, at aktiviteterne er tegn på flugt fra jorden ud i rummet og ind i sig selv (Arendt, 2006, s. 30).

Hvis man sammenligner situationen anno 2012 med 1958, vil jeg argumentere for, at selvom mennesket ikke længere så tydeligt udtrykker et ønske om at bosætte sig i rummet, er menneskets fjendtlige indstilling til jorden meget lig. Et eksempel er den digitale verden, specielt i computerspils-industrien,

hvor der udvikles muligheder for, at mennesker kan flygte fra deres omgivelser og medmennesker ind i en digital verden, hvor man iklæder sig en selvskabt digital identitet for at begå sig i kunstige digitale omgivelser. Et andet eksempel fra 2010 er indenfor den genetiske videnskab, hvor det er lykkedes at fusionere gamle organiske gener til nye kunstige levende gener (Gill, 2010).

Arendt forklarer, at denne jordflugt er forårsaget af filosofiens og teologiens udskillelse af ”tanken” som højere og noblere end menneskelige ”aktiviteter” i jordens omgivelser. Arendt mener, at denne forkerte udvikling startede allerede tilbage hos Platon og har fulgt den vestlige civilisations historie til i dag. Dog pointerer hun, at der i slutningen af middelalderen påbegyndtes en udvikling, som endte med et omvendt hierarki, hvor det praktiske sejrede over tanken. Arendt påstår, at det dog ikke har bevirket menneskets tilbagekomst til jorden i den nyeste tidsalder. I stedet fokuserer det nyere tids menneske på de instrumenter, der kan anvendes i dets aktiviteter på jorden i stedet for at fokusere på udførslen af menneskets aktiviteter i dets naturlige jordiske omstændigheder. (Arendt, 2006, s. 286ff).

Det stadfæstes ud fra Arendts teoridannelser, at jorden må være grundlaget for den forestående karakteristik af det enkelte menneske i samspil med andre mennesker. Når denne artikel derfor ønsker at beskrive, hvordan det enkelte menneske er en del af et samarbejde med andre mennesker, kan dette ikke gøres uden det konkrete grundlæggende vilkår, at alle mennesker lever på samme jord og derfor deler grundlæggende erfaringer. Denne grundforudsætning betyder, at selvom en tilfældig samling af mennesker umiddelbart ikke synes at have noget tilfælles, deler de alligevel ret grundlæggende erfaringer. Derfor placeres jorden som grundlag for min kommende beskrivelse af menneskers samarbejde ud fra Arendts teoridannelser. For at muliggøre sammenligningen af den arendtske tilgang til samarbejde med den personlighedstestbaserede tilgang anvender jeg de tre tidligere omtalte niveauer: 1.) Det almenmenneskelige niveau 2.) Grupperings-niveauet 3.) Det individuelle niveau.

Det almenmenneskelige niveau

Når det almenmenneskelige niveau i Arendts teoridannelser beskrives, er det oplagt at begynde med forrige afsnits konklusion: At grundvilkåret, der binder alle mennesker sammen er, at de lever på samme jord. Ud fra dette grundvilkår udleder Arendt nemlig fem andre eksistensvilkår, som deles af alle menne-

sker: livet, fødtheden (nataliteten), dødeligheden (mortaliteten), verdsligheden og pluraliteten (Arendt, 2006, s. 40).

Disse fem vilkår gennemgås nedenfor i henhold til illustrationen af, hvordan de fem grundvilkår relaterer sig til hinanden.
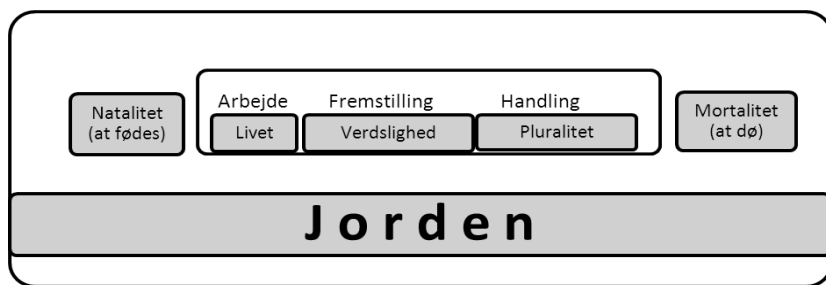
FIGUR 1: En illustration af forbindelserne mellem Arendts fem eksistens-vilkår, tre typiske menneskelige aktiviteter og jorden.

Ifølge Arendt er de to mest almene vilkår af disse fem, at alle mennesker fødes ind i denne verden (nataliteten), og at alle mennesker dør ud af denne verden (mortaliteten). Her kan kort nævnes, at hendes mest indflydelsesrige læremester, Martin Heidegger, i sit forfatterskab i stedet udelukkende tillagde mortaliteten den største betydning, hvorimod Arendt indfører nataliteten som mere grundlæggende end mortaliteten.

De tre andre arendtske vilkår (livet, verdsligheden og pluraliteten) gør sig dernæst gældende indenfor rammen af de to grundlæggende vilkår: nataliteten og mortaliteten. Arendt (1978A, s. 70) siger, at disse tre vilkår er forbundet med henholdsvis de tre typiske menneskelige aktiviteter: arbejde, fremstilling og handling (på engelsk "labour", "work" og "action"). Det er vigtigt at have in mente at Arendt definer "arbejde", "fremstilling" og "handling" på sin helt egen måde hvilket jeg vil gennemgå nedenfor. Men først må det understreges, at Arendts opdeling i præcis disse tre aktiviteter ikke er udsprunget af empirisk analyse, men snarere af, at Arendt i en fænomenologisk ånd har historisk undersøgt hvilke aktiviteter mennesker har udført gennem hele verdenshistorien (Hinchman & Hinchman, 1984).

Arendts "arbejde" er den aktivitet der mest direkte er forbundet med jorden. Hendes begreb "arbejde" indbefatter de aktiviteter mennesket er nødt til at udføre for at holde sig i live. Arendt påstår, at det grundlæggende er nødvendigt for mennesket at høste fra jorden og dens dyr samt at drikke vand for at

holde egne biologiske processer i gang. Idet Arendt (2005, s. 98ff) påstår, at "arbejde" er knyttet til livet som grundvilkår, har mennesket brug for bestandigt at "arbejde". Dette konstante krav om "arbejde" har betydet at "arbejdets" aktiviteter ofte udvikler sig i faste rutiner.

"Fremstilling" befatter sig derimod med ikke-biologisk materiale. Arendt (2005, s. 143ff) knytter "fremstilling" til vilkåret "verdsligheden", der ikke skal forstås som "det sekulariserede", men snarere er udtryk for, at mennesket prøver at skabe sig fysiske omstændigheder, der er mere vedvarende end jordens iboende nedbrydelige biologiske cyklus. I forbindelse med vilkåret "verdslighed" stadfæstes derfor, at for Arendt er det ikke kun de biologiske processer, der betinger menneskets eksistens som menneske, men at mennesket også har brug for en menneskeskabt "verdslig" verden for at være menneske. Selvom der er forskel på "arbejde" og "fremstilling", er grænsen mellem "arbejde" og "fremstilling" ikke ligetil. Arendt forklarer, at der i "fremstillingen" ofte bliver opfundet redskaber til at lette "arbejdet", men så snart sådanne redskaber kommer i "arbejdets" tjeneste, mister de deres fremstillingsaspekt og bliver en del af "arbejdet" (Arendt, 2005, s. 151).

"Handling" er den eneste aktivitet, som ikke direkte er materielt formidlet i forhold til jorden. Dog mener Arendt (2005, s. 51), at handling betinges af at foregå mellem mennesker, som jo lever på den samme jord. Derfor er også denne aktivitet indirekte forbundet til jorden som grundlæggende vilkår. Arendt siger, at til "handling" knyttes pluraliteten som vilkår. "Pluralitet" antyder, at selvom mennesker har ligheder i fælles vilkår på jorden, er alle unikke i forhold til hinanden (Arendt, 2005, s. 37). Det er i "handlingerne", at mennesker mødes og beriger hinanden med unikke perspektiver, hvilket oftest resulterer i opstart af nye fælles initiativer i tanke og/eller gerning. I forbindelsen mellem "handling" og opstart af nye initiativer etablerer Arendt et link til begrebet "natalitet", der betyder fødsel. Ifølge Arendt fødes/opstår noget hver gang mennesker "handler" sammen. Arendt påstår, at nataliteten også spiller ind i opstarten af "arbejds"- og "fremstillings"-aktiviteterne, men hun understreger, at "nataliteten" står i tættest forbindelse til "handling" (Arendt, 2005, s. 38).

Selvom vilkåret "nataliteten" er knyttet til "handling", er "handling" som tidligere nævnt primært knyttet an til vilkåret "pluralitet" (se figur 1). Idet "pluralitet" antyder, at alle mennesker både er ens og unikke, er det gennem fælles "handlinger", at det enkelte menneskes unikum træder frem. Når et deltagende menneskes unikheder fremtræder i en "handling", er "handling", iføl-

ge Arendt, en kompleks størrelse, hvorfor det aldrig er muligt at forudsige "handlingers" udfald. "Handlinger" forstyrrer alle adfærdslove for menneskets ubevidste opførsel, idet unikke mennesker altid kan påbegynde nye initiativer, hvor resultatet ikke kan udregnes på forhånd.

Det stadfæstes, at der er seks grundvilkår hos Arendt, der kan karakteriseres som tilhørende det almenmenneskelige niveau i en beskrivelse af mennesket. Yderligere redegjordes der for, hvordan disse grundvilkår er forbundet til menneskets tre grundlæggende aktiviteter "arbejde", "fremstilling" og "handling". I henhold til aktiviteten "handling" fremhæves eksistensvilkåret "pluralitet", som både antyder, at alle mennesker er ens men også unikke. Derfor er det allerede nu, i henhold til det almenmenneskelige niveau, knyttet en ansats til det individuelle niveau hos Arendt. Efter at have beskrevet vilkårene gældende for alle mennesker i Arendts forståelse, vil jeg nu se på, hvordan Arendt forholder sig til at beskrive mennesker i grupper.

Grupperings-niveauet

Hensigten med dette afsnit er ikke at undersøge Arendts fokus på individuelle menneskers handling i en gruppe. Fokus er derimod på hvordan mennesker beskrives i kraft af træk, de deler med andre mennesker, hvorfra man danner grupperinger af mennesker, der ligner hinanden. Dette medfører, at man til hver gruppering fremstiller et idealtype-menneske, der kan genfindes i alle gruppens medlemmer, som det gøres i den personlighedstest-baserede tilgang til samarbejde. Der er ingen tvivl om, at Arendts teoridannelser stiller sig kritisk til den fremgangsmåde personlighedstests anvender, men det understreges, at Arendt aldrig har skrevet direkte kommentarer til brug af personlighedstest. I sit andet hovedværk, "The Life of the Mind" (1978) kommer Arendt med en kort bemærkning om, at hun har iagttaget, hvordan vi i vores moderne tidsalder ofte ukritisk tænker i idealtyper: "…we construct 'ideal types' … out of the crowd of living beings … who seem to possess a representative signifiance" (Arendt, 1978A, s. 169). Arendt beskriver dernæst, hvordan denne fremgangsmåde på uheldig vis nedprioriterer menneskers individuelle særkende, hvilket hun anser for det vigtigste menneskelige træk.

I sine værker skriver Arendt om, hvordan vi anvender denne idealtypetænkning på flere forskellige områder. Nedenfor præsenteres hendes eksempel på idealtype-tænkningen i arbejdsorganisering i kraft af idealtypetænkning om

folks professioner og i undervisningsregi i kraft af idealtypetænkning om "barnet".

Arendt (2005, s. 317) påstår, at man til arbejdsorganiseringen, som begyndte under den industrielle revolution, hyppigt definerer idealtype-medarbejdere til de forskellige opgaver, der skal udføres. Arendt argumenterer for, at i en sådan arbejdsorganisering bedes det enkelte menneske om at opgive sin individualitet for at blive en idealtype-medarbejder med en bestemt adfærd. Arendts konklusion i denne forbindelse er følgende: "Problemet med de moderne adfærdsteorier er ikke, at de er forkerte, men at de tværtimod kan blive sande."

Arendt genoptager temaet om idealtype-medarbejderen i sin tale, da hun i 1975 får overrakt Københavns Universitets Sonningpris hvor hun forklarer hvordan professionerne typologiserer folk til at have en bestemt adfærd. Arendt siger: "På den scene, som er verden, fremtræder vi og bliver altid genkendt i overensstemmelse med den rolle, som vores profession tildeler os som læger, som advokater, som forfattere eller forlæggere, som lærere eller studerende og så videre." Videre forsætter Arendt i fænomenologisk stil med at fortælle om det interessante i at observere, hvordan mennesker dog fralægger sig sin professions særkender når de kommer hjem fra arbejde og deltager i hverdagslivets gøremål, f.eks. "når værtinden, som vi socialt set kender som lægen, serverer drinks i stedet for at tage sig af sine patienter". Dette bruger Arendt til at understrege at et folks professionsadfærd ikke siger særligt meget om den enkelte persons' identitet. Dog benægter Arendt ikke at folks professioner siger noget om forskelle mellem folks handlemuligheder. Men Arendt argumenterer kraftigt for at vi må huske at professionsforskelle stammer fra hvordan arbejdsrutiner er blevet organiseret og at vi ikke må lade disse professionssærkender træde for meget frem når vi ønsker at karakterisere det enkelte menneskets identitet. Arendt (2005, s. 107ff).

Lige som Arendt advarer mod primært at definere personer udfra arbejdsorganiseringsprincipper og professioner, påpeger hun (1961, s.181) faren ved at konstruere idealtypebegrebet "barnet" i forhold til "den unge", "den voksne" og "den ældre". Arendt siger følgende om konstruktionen "barnet": "it takes into account only the group and not the individual child". Arendt ønsker, at børn altid omtales i flertal med opmærksomhed på forskelligheden blandt børnegruppens individuelle medlemmer.

Ifølge Hull (2002) understreger Arendt gentagne gange, at det er vigtigt at huske på at der er større forskelligheder på spil indenfor hver gruppe end

grupperne imellem. Arendt mener, at dette ligeledes er gældende for grupperinger af etnicitet, køn og tro (Hull, 2002, s. 123ff)).

Det konkluderes, at Arendt er tilbageholdende i forhold til at beskrive mennesker i grupper, idet det medfører manglende syn for medlemmernes individuelle forskelligheder.

Det individuelle niveau

Eftersom Arendt er tilbageholdende med at identificere og fremskrive fællestræk i grupperinger af mennesker, fordi det enkelte menneskes unikke karakter går tabt, kan man forledes til at tænke, at Arendt går ind for en stærk individualisme, hvor mennesker alene opfattes ud fra hvem, de er i sig selv som et biologisk og genetisk væsen. Men Arendt understreger, at vi ikke må stadfæste den enkeltes unikhed i hans biologiske substans, selvom Arendt fremfører at ethvert menneskes fysiske udformning er unik. Snarere vil Arendt, at vi forsøger at definere den enkeltes unikhed ud fra deres optræden blandt andre. Det er altså fællesskabet med andre som er nøglen til at stadfæste menneskers unikheder. (Pahuus, 2006).

Selvom det ifølge Arendt er tydeligt, at det enkelte menneske er unikt i sin optræden blandt andre, mener hun, at det er svært at stadfæste, hvad den enkeltes unikhed består i, idet vi nemt anvender en eller anden form for idealtypetænkning. Når vi ønsker at beskrive HVEM, det enkelte menneske er, indfanges vi let af at beskrive HVAD, den enkelte er: "Vi bliver rodet ud i beskrivelser af egenskaber, som den enkelte nødvendigvis må dele med andre, der minder om ham; vi begynder at beskrive en type eller en "karakter" i dette ords oprindelige betydning, hvilket blot resulterer i, at hans specifikke unikum undslipper os" (Arendt, 2005, s. 186).

I stedet for fokusering på fællestræk mener Arendt, at nøglen til en succesfuld beskrivelse af det enkelte menneske ligger i at fastholde blikket på de "handlinger", som den enkelte deltager i sammen med andre. Hver gang dette menneske deltager i en "handling", afsløres nemlig lidt af den enestående karakter ved det enkelte menneske. Det enkelte menneske afsløres ikke kun for de andre, men også for sig selv, idet Arendt mener at det også er skjult for én selv, hvem man er. (Arendt, 2005, s. 180ff).

Arendt påstår, at selvom vi ved en karakteristik af det enkelte menneske prøver at undersøge, hvordan den enkelte er i det aktive samvær med andre,

indfanger vi aldrig, hvem den enkelte er, idet dette også ligger i den enkeltes fremtidige "handlinger". (Arendt, 2006, s. 186ff & s. 197ff). Denne påstand tydeliggør, at Arendt arbejder med en vedvarende identitetsdannelse. Derfor er det første efter personens død, at vi kan ane konturerne af personens identitet (Arendt, 2005). Dog nytter det ikke at søge i personens efterladte værker, eller skrive en bibliografi om hvad den enkelte udrettede, da det igen kun bringer os nærmere, HVAD den enkelte var. Snarere mener Arendt, at det er i fortalte levende heltehistorier om den enkelte afdøde, at vi finder ud af, HVEM personen var.

Til begrebet "heltehistorie" skal der ikke kun søges efter heroiske heltegerninger, men efter episoder, hvor personen viste sin HVEM-hed. Det er også i situationer, hvor den enkelte af andre blev opfattet som kujon, at vi finder ud af, HVEM den enkelte person var. Argumentationen er, at den "handling" som gjorde, at den enkelte blev opfattet som kujon, ikke kun siger noget om, HVEM den enkelte var, men også noget om dennes medmennesker og deres måske uheldigt udviklede samværsform. (Arendt, 2005, s. 186ff). Den enkelte alene afgør ikke en "handlings" udfald og dermed hvad der lægges til egen identitetsdannelse. Det er i denne forbindelse at Arendt siger, at påbegyndte "handlinger" altid vil falde tilbage på et allerede eksisterende væv af menneskelige relationer. Arendt forklarer, at dette væv består af relationerne mellem personerne i samværet, og hvordan disse personer gennem deres livsoplevelser sammen med andre har forholdt sig til de hændelser de har været ude for i deres liv. (Arendt, 2005, s. 187).

Herved ligner Arendts tanker om det enkelte menneskes identitet de poststrukturalistiske teoridannelser, der hævder, at det enkelte menneskes identitet skabes i de diskurser, den enkelte deltager i. Swift (2009, s. 44) argumenterer for, at Arendts force er, at selvom Arendt mener, at det enkelte menneske er underkastet samværet med andre, understreger hun ved hjælp af "nataliteten" kraftigere end poststrukturalisterne, at det enkelte menneske også er en selvstændig unik aktør. Unikheden består i, at et hvert menneske fødes på et unikt sted, til et unikt tidspunkt, og at det enkelte menneske hver gang lægger et nyt lag til sin natalitet, når det træder i karakter i nye hændelser på dets unikke livsvej.

I dette afsnit ses, at det individuelle niveau står stærkt i en karakterisering af det enkelte menneske i samspil med andre i Arendts teoridannelser. Dette er pointeret ved at påvise Arendts antagelse om den enkeltes unikhed i forhold til sin unikke fødsel og sin forholden sig til oplevede hændelser. Dette afsnit på-

viser dog også, at det kun er muligt at øjne, udvikle og modificere det unikke ved det enkelte menneske i samværet med andre mennesker.

Derfor konkluderes ud fra de tre seneste afsnit, at en tankegang ud fra Arendts teoridannelser må tage udgangspunkt i menneskets grundvilkår, jorden, der angiver menneskers fælles platform, som udmøntes i fem andre eksistensvilkår gældende for alle mennesker. Altså er det almenmenneskelige niveau stærkt tilstede i Arendts teoridannelser. Det må understreges, at det almenmenneskelige vilkår kun udgør platformen, der gør det muligt for mennesker at relatere sig til hinanden gennem fælles "handlinger", hvilket fremprovokerer de deltagende personers unikheder. Derved står det individuelle niveau også stærkt i Arendts teoridannelser. Med hensyn til grupperingsniveauet konkluderes, at man ifølge Arendt må gøre alt for at undgå at gruppere mennesker ud fra fællestræk med andre mennesker.

Sammenligning af de to tankegange om samarbejde

Til en sammenligning af tankegangene om hvem det enkelte menneske er i et samspil med andre i henholdsvis personlighedstest-baserede tilgang og i Arendts teoridannelse, opsamles der sluttelig på, hvordan de forholder sig til de tre niveauer: 1.) Det almenmenneskelige niveau 2.) Grupperings-niveauet 3.) Det individuelle niveau.

Artiklen begyndte med en beskrivelse af, hvordan den enkelte medarbejder individuelt udfylder en række forudbestemte spørgsmål i den personlighedstest-baserede tilgang. Udfra svarene grupperes deltagerne efter enslydende personmæssige træk. Sidenhen repræsenteres alle medlemmer i hver gruppering ved hjælp af én personprofil. Derefter gives feedback til de testede medarbejdere i form af en personlig samtale. Til sidst undervises eller interveneres der om samarbejde ud fra, hvordan de enkelte personprofiler tænkes at interagere med hinanden. Jeg konstaterede ud fra denne beskrevne fremgangsmåde, at det kun er grupperingsniveauet, der står stærkt i den personlighedstest-baserede tilgang til samarbejde.

I henhold til Arendts teoridannelser demonstrerer denne artikel, at det individuelle niveau står i forgrunden med det almenmenneskelige niveau som grundlag. Ligeledes at Arendt i meget ringe

grad ønsker at anvende grupperings-niveauet til en karakteristik af det enkelte menneske i samspil med andre til brug for en konceptualisering af samarbejde.

Ovenstående sammenfattelse af henholdsvis den personligheds-testbaserede tilgang

	Den person-lighed-testsbaserede tilgang	Arendts teori-dannelser
Det almemmenne-skelige niveau		X
Grupperings-niveauet	X	
Det individuelle ni-veau		X

Figur 2. En sammenligning af karakteristikken af samarbejde i den per-son-lighedstestbaserede tilgang og Arendts teoridannelser.

og den arendtske tilgang til samarbejde er optegnet i figur 2. Denne figur tydeliggør, at en tankegang ud fra Arendts teoridannelser er diametralt modsat tankegangen i undervisning om samarbejde ud fra personlighedstest. Lidt ironisk er tankegangen i de adfærdsbeskrivende personlighedstest, at den enkelte bedst karakteriseres ud fra en idealtype den enkelte deler med andre, ved at den enkelte udfylder et spørgeskema i ensomhed. Modsat kan man ud fra en arendtsk tankegang opnå en begyndende karakteristik af den enkelte unikke medarbejder ved at se på, hvordan den enkelte handler i samvær med andre mennesker.

Selvom denne artikel, ved hjælp af Arendts teoridannelser, har synliggjort måske uheldige konsekvenser ved anvendelsen af personlighedstest, understreges det, at denne artikel ikke ønsker at negligere den svære opgave med at få et fuldt tilfredsstillende fungerende samarbejde som den personligheds-testsbaserede tilgang forsøger at bidrage til. Snarere er udgangspunktet for både den personlighedstest-baserede og den Arendt-inspirerede tilgang til samarbejde, at den enkelte har brug for at blive klogere på sig selv og andre, når det gode samarbejde skal udvikles.

Dahl & Lykkeberg (2005, s. 10) mener, at fordi Arendt har et samtidigt fokus på individet og fællesskabet, er Arendts hovedærinde til vores samtid tanker om, hvordan man realiserer det moderne selvstyrende og oplyste individ i et stadigt mere krævende fællesskab med andre. Da dette er selve udfordrin-

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gen for nutidens arbejdspladser, tror jeg, at der i Arendts teoridannelser ligger nogle svar til, hvordan det gode samarbejde optimeres, hvilket tjener en yderligere praktisk fremtidig forskning i forhold til denne artikels muligheder.

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12.2 English version:

Arendt's earth-bound differences

- an alternative to the restricting differences of the personality test-based approach to cooperation

Jóhannes Miðskarð

ABSTRACT:

This article draws on the demand in recent decades for knowledge about cooperation in the labour market. It then briefly describes how these needs are often met by various training and consulting companies which teach about "cooperation" primarily through the theory of different personality types. The article describes their usual approach, which consists of employees first being asked to fill out a personality test used to divide employees into groups according to some predetermined personal profiles. The employees are then taught how people with their particular personality type best work with people of other personality types.

Subsequently the main body of the article explores how human cooperation may be alternatively characterised on the basis of Hannah Arendt's ideas on the individual's current interaction with others. The study con-

cludes that, in contrast to the personality test-based approach to collaboration, Hannah Arendt prioritises how people demonstrate uniqueness in interacting with others.

Introduction

Recent decades have seen a trend within the private and public sectors towards many mergers of previously separate departments or even whole institutions or companies. These mergers give rise to an intensification of cooperation between staff from previously separate departments/ institutions/companies. Training in cooperation has therefore been in great demand and implemented on a large scale in the last few decades.

Judge, Klinger, Simon & Yang (2008) show that much of this instruction is carried out by training and consultancy companies which use employee responses on personality tests as a basis for their teaching and consulting about cooperation. Judge et al. (2008) also argue that personality tests are frequently used in recruitment to enable the new employees' personality types to fit in with those of the existing staff.

Morgeson, Campion, Dipboye, Hollenbeck, Murphy & Schmitt (2008) criticise this training and consulting in cooperation for too often providing an over-simplified description of each employee based on certain predetermined fixed characteristics rather than accommodating individuals' unique differences.

As a response to instruction in cooperation based on personality tests, this article presents a way of thinking about cooperation grounded in Hannah Arendt's theorisations, which precisely stresses the
uniqueness of each person in his or her joint interaction with other people. The final part of the article compares the two ways of thinking in relation to collaboration. To enable this comparison, the following three levels will be used in the article to describe the two approaches: 1) the common human level 2) the grouping level 3) the individual level. At the common human level we examine what the personality test approach and Arendt assume that all human beings have in common when they describe the individual. The grouping level is concerned with how people are grouped by some predetermined factors in order to say something about the individual employee's behaviour. The indi-

vidual level implies an examination of how much allowance is made for specific individual factors in a person.

Modern practice in training and consultancy on cooperation

In this section I present a characterisation of the teaching about cooperation that is based on personality testing. According to Sander (1999) the tests used for employees can be divided into two groups: Cognitive and skills tests make up one group, while the other consists of personality tests describing behaviour. The cognitive tests seek to identify an individual's maximum performance ability; skills tests reveal knowledge or competence in a particular area. The behaviour-based personality tests are by contrast concerned with a person's outward behaviour. According to Sander's classification of different tests, it is important to underline that the tests examined in this article belong to the category of behaviour descriptive personality tests.

As mentioned in the introduction, Morgeson et al. (2007) and Judge et al. (2008) have shown that such behaviour descriptive personality tests are currently often used for teaching about cooperation. It must however be emphasised that the above references are not based on research on the Danish labour market. But there is every indication that the situation is no different in Denmark. In December 2010, the TV magazine "DR Penge" told how a wave of testing in recent years has washed over the Danish public and private sectors (DR Penge, 2010).

In the following, our starting point is two Danish examples of personality test-based cooperation instruction in order to examine how the personality test-based approach to cooperation can be characterised according to the three levels mentioned above: 1) the common human level 2) the grouping level 3) the individual level.

The first example comes from a book about cooperation used in the context of the establishment of autonomous teacher teams in school. Rasmussen and Bak (2004, p. 43) argue that a team of teachers can perform optimally if its individual members understand more about themselves and their cooperation partners, by studying their own personal profiles and gaining an insight into

the profiles of the other team members. Rasmussen and Bak (2004) explain further that such profiles emerge on the basis of personality tests.

The next example is an advertisement for a seminar held in Copenhagen in 2010, aimed at educational institutions. The advertisement stated: "[Good teamwork] requires knowledge of the team members' personalities and their interactions, and methods to optimise cooperation. At the seminar you will get an insight into what good teamwork consists of, and how you can increase your energy and commitment - based on methods and strategies that have proven to be powerful in practice. We therefore go into depth with a personality type tool called X that will give you a better understanding of each other."[32]

Firstly, it is worth noting that the advertisement clearly suggests that that 'personality type tool', which is here called X for the sake of anonymity, is based on the same principles as the previously mentioned personality test. The name 'personality type tool' rather than 'personality test' signals however that this tool has not been developed in psychology but rather within in field of human resources. But since the underlying thinking behind personality type tools and personality tests is the same, this article will only henceforth only use the term personality test.

The two examples above argue for the need to identify the individual employees' personal profiles using personality tests, with the goal of optimising cooperation. The usual procedure in these personality tests is that individual employees, either on paper or via the Internet, answer a large number of questions (Sander, 1999).

The next step is to count up the answers and group individual employees according to whether the group members are similar with regard to certain selected person-related features. The members of such a grouping are thereafter referred to by using one name in the form of a specific personal profile which symbolises the prominent features of all group members. When the participants have been categorised according to such predetermined profiles using personality tests, individual employees are usually given the feedback on their personal profiles (Sander, 1999).

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[32] I do not reveal which training and consultancy firm is behind this advertisement so as not to direct my criticism towards any particular one of the rather small number of Danish consultancy companies operating in this field.

All employees are then taught about the benefits and problems which arise when different profiles meet in the context of collaboration. They are taught for example how the "entrepreneur" with his or her desire for constant innovation interacts with the "coordinator" who craves systematisation. It is shown how problems can arise if the two types of employees do not have knowledge of their own and the other's personal profile. (Sander, 1999).

It is not only in teaching about cooperation that such knowledge about behaviour from personality tests is applied; Jesper Tynell (2001) gives an example in his thesis of a large Danish company using employees' personal profiles to understand and intervene in conflicts which arise.

We shall now examine how the personality test-based approach to cooperation can be characterised in relation to the three levels: 1) the common human level 2) the grouping level 3) the individual level.

On the basis of the above description of the procedure in personality testing, we can affirm that the common human level is present when training and consultancy uses personality tests on the assumption that everyone can be tested and that the results from all people can be compared with one other. Apart from this, there do not appear to be other features of the use of personality tests that can be attributed to the common human level.

The above review of the implementation procedure of this type of training and consultancy reveals that it is rather the grouping level in personality testing which is primarily used to characterise how the individual should be considered in cooperative situations in relation to others.

One could be tempted to argue for the presence of the individual level in personality tests from the fact that the individual completes the test and is interviewed separately by the consultant involved. However, the responses from each participant are tallied and each person is grouped according to one overarching personal profile, and this procedure means that the individual's responses to the test are quickly abandoned in favour of a focus on the group's average personal profile. When the individual receives his test result, the personal profiles are the starting point for the conversation. It can therefore be concluded that the individual level has a weak position in the testing and feedback. It should however be mentioned that almost all suppliers of behaviour descriptive personality tests argue that there is something unique about each person which tests do not capture. In order to capture and develop this uniqueness, individual coaching may be purchased (Morgeson et al., 2007). The problem with this procedure is that the special uniqueness of the individ-

ual has a low priority compared to the primacy of the group level in personality testing.

The general conclusion is therefore that the grouping level is the only strong level in the personality test-based approach to cooperation. Taggar and Parkinson (2009) argue that these personality tests where participants are grouped according to personal profiles also lead to a static view of the individual employee. The consultants performing such tests will probably argue that it is precisely their idea that people can change and develop which implies that the test can make them more aware of their current behaviour and suggest areas for change. But it may at least be concluded that during the period of testing, responding and training the individual is considered as remaining static, and this period in a large company may easily extend over six months (Sander, 1999).

As an alternative to the personality test approach to cooperation, I present in the following a suggestion for a way of thinking about cooperation which rather considers people as changeable, unpredictable and unique, based on Hannah Arendt's theorisations (Deveaux, 1999, p. 7). But first I give a brief overview of Arendt's work methods and writings, where the purpose is to argue why and how this article places Arendt's theorisations in an existential phenomenological tradition in order to best benefit from her thoughts in relation to an alternative approach to collaboration.

Arendt and her works

This section presents four characteristics of Hannah Arendt's works and ways of working. Firstly, it is revealed which academic discipline Arendt can be said to belong to. Secondly, I examine which genre best encompasses her works. Thirdly, Arendt's methodological techniques are characterised. Fourthly, I consider on the basis of the first three characteristics whether there are any clear theoretical traditions into which Arendt's work may be placed. Based on this review, I will position myself within a certain theoretical approach suitable for the topic of this article.

Hannah Arendt originally studied philosophy, but she would prefer to be categorised as a political thinker ("political thinker" should not be confused with "political philosopher"). It must be stressed that Arendt's definition of politics is different from the politics which is understood as what goes on in

parliament and local government, i.e. an understanding of politics within a framework of representative democracy. Politics in Arendt's understanding is closer to the definition of participatory democracy, since Arendt claims that all "actions" have a built-in political element (Barber, 1984). Again, there must be reservations because the term "action" in Arendt can scarcely be compared to our everyday use of the term "action", which implies that people individually or collectively engage in some form of active behaviour. For Arendt, "actions" must always take place between people and are closely connected to conversations. We may thus conclude that Arendt with her label of "political thinker" suggests that her goal is to consider the actions of people in the form of their conversations with each other.

Having confirmed that Arendt would not regard herself as belonging to any traditional academic discipline, but unconventionally categorises herself as a "political thinker", we may investigate the characteristics of the genre of her works. If all of Hannah Arendt's works are considered together in order to gain an overview of her writings, we discover that the collection includes many different forms of literary expression. There are for example writings which can best be described as academic philosophical works, such as "The Life of the Mind" (1978), systematic studies such as "The Human Condition" (1958), historically and sociologically oriented works such as "The Origins of Totalitarianism" (1951), journalistic writings like "Eichmann in Jerusalem" (1963) and finally collections of literary essays such as "Between Past and Future" (1961). Thus it is concluded that Arendt's works spread across many different genres and that her subject-matter shows similar variation.

All interpreters of Arendt agree that she uses many different techniques in her works, including philosophical discussions, insights from literature, etymological analyses, her own quite distinctive forms of historical analysis, sociological analysis, philosophical-anthropological approaches, and existential-phenomenological and anthropological deliberations (Auden, 1959; Pahuus, 2006; Mortensen, 2007; Swift, 2009; Bernasconi, 2002; d'Entrèves, 1994; Schanz, 2003; Schanz, 2007). The majority however believes that Arendt's most consistent technique is her very concerted efforts to distinguish closely related concepts from each other, where she also often introduces new concepts. It is also a recurring feature that Arendt often attaches a different content to a concept than its usual current connotation (Ricouer, 1983; Knauer, 1980; Benhabib, 2003).

As the previous three characterisations show that Arendt's academic discipline, genres and methodological techniques are so distinctive that it is difficult to argue for the existence of one "Arendt theory", I recommend using the term "Arendt's theorisations", as this signals a looser structure.

In my desire to place Arendt's theorisations within one theoretical tradition, I find little help in the three characterisations presented in this section since they do not reveal one single coherent picture of her works. Therefore I examined where other researchers place Arendt in terms of academic-theoretical orientation. The result was that researchers use Arendt in a variety of theoretical traditions, e.g. a phenomenological tradition (Moran, 2000), an existential-phenomenological tradition (Hinchmann & Hinchmann, 1984; Pahuus, 2006), a critical theoretical tradition (Negt, 1985; Bowling, 2011) and a post-modernist tradition (Honig, 1992, 1993).

I will follow Hinchmann & Hinchmann (1984) and Pahuus (2006, 2010) in their use of Arendt's theorisations as existential-phenomenological, since my characterisation of the individual in cooperation with others is intended to highlight the constant formation of the individual's identity based on his or her experiences throughout life, including experiences at work. Arendt's existential-phenomenological element can be mainly attributed to how she in "The Human Condition" (1958) and "The Life of the Mind" (1978) makes use of phenomenological techniques, together with the existential insights she has inherited from Martin Heidegger and Karl Jaspers (Pahuus, 2006; Hinchmann & Hinchmann, 1984).

Although Arendt can be placed within an existential-phenomenological tradition, Pahuus (2006, p. 8 ff) emphasises that Arendt's originality in relation to other existential phenomenologists is her thoughts about the formation of the individual being not so much a matter of the individual but rather determined by interaction with others, because a person lives, acts and moves in plurality in the world. Arendt even claims that it is only in talking with others that the individual can perceive and ascribe meaning to his own experiences. Arendt (2005, p. 33) states: "Men in the plural, that is, men in so far as they live and move and act in this world, can experience meaningfulness only because they can talk with and make sense to each other and to themselves."

The general conclusion is that Arendt's theorisations are difficult to place within one theoretical tradition. As the purpose of this article is to examine how cooperation may be viewed from the perspective of Arendt's understanding of the individual's interaction with others, the existential-

phenomenological theoretical basis appears to be the most favourable starting point, as it emphasises the individual's identity as being constantly formed together with other people. The question concerns the basis for Arendt's assumption that an individual must of necessity engage in interaction with other people in order to develop as a person. This will be examined in the following section.

The Earth as our basic condition

One particular sentence appears repeatedly in different variants in Arendt's writings (here from *The Human Condition* p. 234): "No man can be sovereign because not one man, but men, inhabit the earth".
This quotation confirms Pahuus' point above that the individual according to Arendt must always be seen as part of a community with others. The quote also shows something rather strange about Arendt in that she highlights the planet EARTH as the basis for our community with others, which for most of us is so obvious that it is rarely articulated.

Arendt's emphasis on the Earth as our basic condition of existence can be seen as a parallel to Heidegger's concept of "being-in-the-world". However, it is important to note that Arendt to a greater degree than Heidegger considers community between people as interwoven with people's dependence on planet Earth. (Miðskarð, 2012; Benhabib, 2003, p. 104ff).

Arendt writes most about human community on Earth in "The Human Condition" from 1958 (in Danish in 2005). Arendt (2005, p. 35) argues that it is necessary to indicate that this "Earth" is humanity's basic condition, because of the tendency since the end of World War II for people to reject the Earth as their fundament. A concrete sign of escape is seen by Arendt (2005, p. 29ff) in the desire since the late 1950s to settle in space, as people were then starting to plan and try out satellites and space rockets. A further specific sign according to Arendt was the then-emerging genetic science, where experiments were being carried out with natural genes. Arendt claims that such activities reveal a desire to escape from the Earth into space and into oneself (Arendt, 2006, p. 30).

If we compare the situation in 2012 with that of 1958, I would argue that although people no longer clearly express such a desire to live in space, today they demonstrate a similar hostility to the Earth. One example is the digital

world, especially in the computer games industry, where opportunities are developed for people to escape from their surroundings and fellow human beings into a digital world where people take on a self-created digital identity in order to succeed in an artificial digital environment. Another example from 2010 is in genetic science, which succeeded in merging old organic genes into new artificial living genes (Gill, 2010).

Arendt explains that this escape from the Earth is caused by the separating out by philosophy and theology of "thoughts" as something higher and nobler than human "actions" in the earthly environment. Arendt believes that this undesirable development started already with Plato and has followed the history of Western civilisation until today. However, she points out that the late Middle Ages saw a development which resulted in an inverted hierarchy, where practical activities triumphed over thoughts. Arendt claims however that this has not led to our return to Earth in most recent times. Instead today we focus on the instruments to be used in activities on Earth instead of on the performance of human activity in its natural earthly environment (Arendt, 2006, p. 286ff).

Arendt's theorisations confirm the Earth as the basis for the forthcoming characterisation of the individual in interaction with other people. Since the goal of this article is thus to describe how the individual forms part of a cooperation with others, this cannot be done without the specific basic precondition that we all live on the same Earth and thus share fundamental experiences. This basic premise means that even if a random group of people do not immediately appear to have anything in common, they still share quite basic experiences. Therefore the Earth will form the basis for my description of human cooperation grounded in Arendt's theorisations. To enable a comparison of the Arendtian and the personality test-based approaches to cooperation I will use the three previously mentioned levels: 1) the common human level 2) the grouping level 3) the individual level.

The common human level

In describing the common human level in Arendt's theorisations, it is natural to begin with the conclusion of the previous section: The basic condition which unites all people is that they live on the same Earth. From this basic

condition Arendt derives the five other conditions of existence shared by all people: life, natality, mortality, worldliness and plurality (Arendt, 2006, p. 40).

These five basic conditions of existence are reviewed on the next page in an illustration of how they relate to each other.
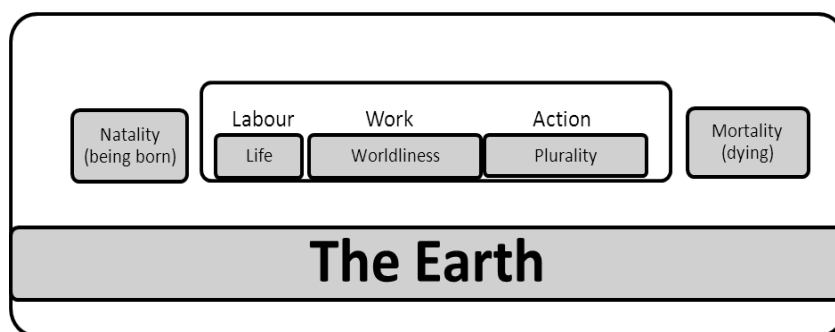
FIGURE 1: An illustration of the relations between Arendt's five conditions of existence, three typical human activities and the Earth.

According to Arendt, the two most general of these five conditions are that all people are born into this world (natality) and that all people die out of this world (mortality). Here I may briefly mention that her most influential mentor, Martin Heidegger, attributed the greatest importance to mortality alone, whereas Arendt introduces natality as more fundamental than mortality.

The other three Arendtian conditions (life, worldliness and plurality) manifest themselves within the framework of the two basic conditions: natality and mortality. Arendt (1978, p. 70) states that these three conditions are linked to the three typical human activities of labour, work and action. It should be noted that Arendt defines "work", "labour" and "action" in her own unique way, as I will discuss below. But first it must be stressed that Arendt's division into precisely these three activities is not   born of empirical analysis, but rather stems from the fact that Arendt in a phenomenological spirit has performed a historical investigation of the activities of humanity throughout world history (Hinchman & Hinchman, 1984).

Arendt's "labour" is the activity with the most direct connection to the Earth. Her concept of "labour" comprises the activities people have to do to stay alive. Arendt maintains that it is fundamentally necessary for people to obtain food from the Earth and its animals and to drink water to keep their

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own biological processes running. Since Arendt (2006, p. 98ff) claims that "labour" is connected to life as a basic condition, people constantly need to perform "labour". This constant demand for "labour" has meant that "labour" activities often evolve into fixed routines.

"Work" is by contrast concerned with non-biological material. Arendt (2006, p. 143ff) associates "work" with the condition of "worldliness"; this must not be understood as "secularisation", but rather reflects the fact that people are trying to carve out physical conditions that are more permanent than the intrinsic degradable biological cycle of the Earth. In connection with the condition of "worldliness", we may thus confirm that for Arendt it is not only the biological processes which govern our existence as human beings, but that we also need to create our own "worldly" world in order to be human. Although there is a difference between "labour" and "work", the boundary between these concepts is not quite clear. Arendt explains that in "work" one often invents tools to facilitate "labour", but as soon as these tools serve to perform "labour", they lose their "work" aspect and become part of "labour" (Arendt, 2005, p. 151).

"Action" is the only activity with no direct material connection to the Earth. However, Arendt (2006, p. 51) maintains that "action" must of necessity take place between people who live on the same Earth. Therefore, this activity also indirectly connected to the Earth as a basic condition. Arendt states that plurality is the condition connected to "action". "Plurality" suggests that although people show similarities in their common conditions on Earth, all are unique in relation to each other (Arendt, 2005, p. 37). It is in "actions" that people meet and enrich each other with unique perspectives, and this often results in setting up new joint initiatives in thought and/or deed. In the connection between "action" and starting new initiatives Arendt establishes a link to the concept of "natality" which means birth or "bornness". According to Arendt, something is born/created every time people "act" together. She also argues that natality plays a part in setting up "labour" and "work" activities, but emphasises that "natality" is most closely connected to "action" (Arendt, 2005, p. 38).

Although the condition of "natality" is linked to "action", the main connection of "action" is as mentioned to "plurality" (see Figure 1). As "plurality" suggests that all people are both similar and unique, it is through common "actions" that the uniqueness of the individual emerges. When a person's uniqueness appears as he or she participates in an "action", Arendt maintains

that this "action" is a complex issue, which is why it is never possible to predict the outcome of the "action". "Actions" disturb any laws which may govern unconscious human behaviour, since unique people can always begin new initiatives whose outcome cannot be predicted.

We may thus confirm that Arendt operates with six basic conditions, which may be characterised as belonging to the common human level in a description of humanity. It was further explained how these basic conditions are related to our three core activities of "labour", "work" and "action". Important in connection with the activity of "action" is the condition of existence called "plurality", which suggests that all people are not only equal but also unique. We thus already see in Arendt an initial link from the general human level to the individual level. Moving on from a description of the conditions which apply to all people in Arendt's understanding, I will now turn to how Arendt relates to describing people in groups.

The grouping level

The purpose of this section is not to explore Arendt's focus on individual human action in a group. The emphasis is rather on how people are described through the traits they share with other people, on which basis one may form groups of people who are similar. This implies that for each grouping one creates an ideal type which can be seen in all the group members, as is done in the personality test-based approach to collaboration. There is no doubt that Arendt's theorisations are critical of the approach used in personality tests, but it must be stressed that Arendt never made any direct comments on the use of such tests. In her second major work, "The Life of the Mind" (1978), Arendt has a brief remark that she has observed how we in our modern age often uncritically think in terms of ideal types: "…we construct 'ideal types' … out of the crowd of living beings … who seem to possess a representative significance" (Arendt, 1978A, p. 169). Arendt then goes on to describe how this approach in an unfortunate way downgrades people's individuality, which she considers to be the most important human trait.

In her works Arendt writes about how we use this ideal type thinking in different areas. Below we present her examples in work organisation, with ideal type thinking about people's professions, and in education, with ideal type thinking about "the child".

Arendt (2005, p. 317) argues that in the organisation of work, which began during the industrial revolution, one frequently defines ideal type employees in relation to the various tasks to be performed. She further argues that in such work organisation the individual is asked to abandon his individuality to become an ideal type employee with specific behaviour. Arendt's conclusion in this regard is as follows: "The trouble with modern theories of behaviourism is not that they are wrong, but that they could become true."

Arendt resumed the theme of the ideal type employee in her 1975 speech on being awarded the University of Copenhagen's Sonning Prize, where she explains how professions typologise people as having certain behaviour. Arendt says: "We always appear in a world which is a stage and are recognised according to the roles which our professions assign us as physicians or lawyers, as authors or publishers, as teachers or students, and so on." Arendt then moves on in phenomenological style to talk about how interesting it is to observe how in spite of this people put aside the distinctive features of their professions when they come home from work and take part in the activities of everyday life, e.g. "when a hostess, whom socially we know as a physician, serves drinks instead of taking care of her patients". Arendt uses this to underline that professional behaviour reveals little about the identity of individual people. However, Arendt does not deny that people's professions reveal something about the differences between their possibilities for action. But Arendt argues strongly that we must remember that professional differences arise from how work routines have been organised and that we must not let these typical professional features become too prominent when we wish to characterise the identity of the individual (Arendt, 2005, p. 107ff).

Just as Arendt warns against primarily defining people on the basis of work organisational principles and professions, she points out (1961, p.181) the dangers of constructing the ideal type concept of "the child" compared to "the young person", "the adult" and "the old person". Arendt says of the construction "the child": "it takes into account only the group and not the individual child". Arendt wants children to be always referred to in the plural, as this draws attention to the diversity among the individual members of a group of children.

According to Hull (2002), Arendt repeatedly emphasises that it is important to remember that there are greater differences at play within each group than between groups. Arendt believes that this also applies to groups of ethnicity, gender and faith (Hull, 2002, p. 123ff)).

We may therefore conclude that Arendt is reluctant to describe people in groups, since this involves a lack of consideration for the group members' individual differences.

The individual level

Since Arendt is reluctant to identify and predict common features of groups of people, because each person's uniqueness will thereby be lost, we may be led to believe that Arendt advocates a strong individualism, where people are only perceived on the basis of who they are in themselves as biological and genetic beings. But Arendt stresses that we must not confirm the individual's uniqueness in his biological substance, even though she argues that every person's physical configuration is unique. Rather, Arendt wants us to try to define the individual's uniqueness in terms of its actions among others. So it is in community with others we find the key to a confirmation of the uniqueness of human beings (Pahuus, 2006).

Even though it is obvious to Arendt that the individual is unique in its behaviour among others, she believes that it is difficult to state clearly what the individual's uniqueness consists of, since we may easily apply some kind of ideal type thinking. When we want to describe WHO the individual is, we are easily caught in the trap of describing WHAT the individual is: "We get entangled in a description of qualities he necessarily shares with others like him; we begin to describe a type or 'character' in the old meaning of the word, with the result that his specific uniqueness escapes us" (Arendt, 2005, p. 186).

Rather than focusing on the common features, Arendt believes that the key to a successful description of the individual human being is to fix our attention firmly on the "actions" that a person participates in with others. Every time a certain person participates in an "action", a little of the unique character of this person is revealed. Individuals are not only revealed for others but also for themselves, since Arendt believes that who one is will also be hidden from oneself (Arendt, 2005, p. 180ff).

Arendt argues that even though we attempt through a characterisation of an individual to find out how the individual is in active interaction with others, we will never capture who the individual is, because this also lies in the individual's future "actions" (Arendt, 2006, p. 186ff & p. 197ff). This argument makes it clear that Arendt relates to a continuous formation of identity. It is

thus not until after the person's death that we can see the contours of a person's identity (Arendt, 2005). But there is no point in searching through any works which the person left behind, or in writing a bibliography on what the person achieved, as this again only brings us closer to WHAT the person was. Rather, Arendt believes that it is through vividly narrated hero's stories about the deceased that we find out WHO the person was.

In relation to the concept of "hero's story", we do not only search for heroic deeds, but for episodes where the person showed his WHO-ness. It is also in situations where the person was seen as a coward that we find out WHO the person was. The argument is that the "action" which led to the person being viewed as cowardly not only says something about WHO the person was, but also something about his fellow human beings and possibly their poorly developed form of social contact (Arendt, 2005, p. 186ff). The individual alone does not determine the outcome of an "action", and thus what contributes to the formation of his or her own identity. It is in this context that Arendt says that "actions" once started will always fall back on an already existing web of human relationships. Arendt explains that this web consists of relations between people in their interactions and how these people through their life experiences with others have dealt with the events that have happened to them in their lives (Arendt, 2005, p. 187).

In this way Arendt's thinking about the identity of the individual resembles post-structuralist theorisations, which claim that an individual's identity is created in the discourses in which he or she participates. Swift (2009, p. 44) argues that Arendt's strength is that, in spite of believing in the dependence of the individual on others, she emphasises through her use of "natality" more powerfully than the post-structuralists that the individual also is a unique independent actor. The uniqueness consists of the fact that every individual is born in a unique place at a unique time and that the individual adds a new layer to its natality every time it reacts to new events along its unique life path.

This section demonstrates the strength of the individual level in the characterisation of individuals in interaction with others in Arendt's theorisations. This is underlined by pointing to Arendt's assumption about the individual's uniqueness in relation to its unique birth and relationship to experienced events. This section also shows, however, that we can only see, develop and modify the uniqueness of the individual in community with other people.

We may thus conclude from the last three paragraphs that a way of thinking based on Arendt's theorisations must be grounded in humanity's basic condi-

tion, the Earth, which represents people's common platform and is manifested in five other conditions of existence which apply to all people. Therefore, the common human level has a strong presence in Arendt's theorisations. It must be emphasised that the common human condition is only the platform that enables people to relate to each other through common "actions", which again instigate the uniqueness of the participants. In this way the individual level is also important in Arendt's theorisations. With regard to the grouping level, the conclusion must be that Arendt exhorts us to do everything to avoid grouping people based on their common features with other people.

A comparison of the two approaches to cooperation

A comparison of the two ways of thinking about who the individual is in interaction with others in respectively the personality test-based approach and in Arendt's theorisations may be reduced to how they ultimately relate to the three levels: 1) the common human level 2) the grouping level 3) the individual level.

The article began with a description of how each employee individually filled out the answers to a series of predetermined questions in the personality test-based approach. Based on their responses, the participants were grouped according to similar personality-related features. The next stage was to represent all the members of each group by a single personal profile. After this, feedback was provided to the employees in the form of a personal interview. The final stage consists of instruction or interventions in cooperation based on how the individual profiles are thought to interact with each other. I established on the basis of this method that only the group level features strongly in the personality test-based approach to cooperation.

With reference to Arendt's theorisations, this article demonstrates the primacy of the individual level, with the common human level as its foundation. We also see that Arendt only to a very limited extent wishes to use the grouping level to characterise individuals in interaction with others for a conceptualisation of cooperation.

The above summary of the personality test-based and Arendtian approaches to cooperation is represented in Figure 2. This figure illustrates clearly that a

way of thinking based on Arendt's theorisations is diametrically opposed to the way of thinking in teaching about cooperation on the basis of personality tests. Somewhat ironically, the idea behind the behaviour descriptive personality tests is that the individual is best characterised on the basis of <u>an ideal type the individual shares with others,</u> through the individual filling out a question naire <u>alone</u>. Conversely, based on an Arendtian approach one can form an initial characterisation of <u>the unique individual employee</u> by seeing how the individual <u>acts together with other people</u>.

   Although this article with the help of Arendt's theorisations has revealed possible unfortunate consequences of the use of personality tests, it is to be emphasised that the article does not wish to minimise the difficult task of

	The personality test-based approach	**Arendt's theorisations**
The common human level		X
The grouping level	X	
The indiviudal level		X

Figure 1. A comparison of the characterisations of cooperation in the approaches of personality testing and Arendt's theorisations.

achieving entirely satisfactory cooperation, to which the personality test-based approach attempts to contribute. Rather, the starting point for both the personality test-based and the Arendt-inspired approaches to cooperation should be that individuals need to learn more about themselves and others in order to develop sound cooperation.

   Dahl & Lykkeberg (2005, p. 10) believe that because Arendt focuses simultaneously on individual and community, her main goal for our contemporary society is to instil ideas about how the modern autonomous and enlightened individual may be realised in an increasingly demanding community with others. Since this is in fact the challenge for today's work environment, I believe that Arendt's theorisations provide some answers as to how to optimise good cooperation, which will aid further practical research in the future on the basis of the possibilities presented in this article.

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Appendices

Appendix 1: Summary of the thesis

In my PhD thesis I investigate the recently enhanced interprofessional work with vulnerable children between Danish social workers {*'socialrådgivere'*} and school professionals (teachers {*'lærere'*} & reception class teachers {*'børnehaveklasse-ledere'*}).

I have collected empirical data for the thesis in connection with "consulting sessions" between social workers and school professionals. In these sessions the social workers give the school professionals advice on how to understand and deal with issues in vulnerable children's lifeworlds following a prevention and early intervention line of thinking.

In the beginning of the thesis I present a new literature review of previous research on interprofessional work with vulnerable children in Denmark. In relation to my research on the consulting sessions I conclude in the literature review that the limited previous Danish research demonstrates that on an overall level interprofessional work conversations are highly complex in nature.

The focus of my research is to investigate extensively what insights the complicated dynamics of the conversations in the sessions bring to the school professionals' intentions with their further pedagogical work with vulnerable children in accordance with the following research question: **How do consulting sessions with social workers influence school professionals' further perspectives on how to deal with issues in vulnerable children's lifeworlds?**

The theoretical framework is mainly based on Hannah Arendt's political theorisations, which I have placed in an existential phenomenological tradition. This implies that individuals' perspectives are viewed in an ongoing changeable configuration as a result of how they participate in interactions with their fellow human beings.

With my Arendtian approach I start my investigations of the consulting sessions by focusing on how the school professionals spoke in the sessions about the vulnerable children's issues on the basis of their daily interactions with the children. Next I investigate how the consulting sessions with the social workers have influenced the school professionals in their line of thinking on how they intend to continue their work with the vulnerable children. This implies that my research focuses on how school professionals are getting new ideas from the fact that their interactions with the vulnerable children were conceived differently by the social workers in the consulting sessions.

In the thesis I conclude that the consulting sessions seem to influence the school professionals by enlarging their perspectives on their future work with vulnerable children, but I also conclude that the influence is limited compared to the potential of the sessions. In my research I demonstrate that the limited influence is due to the great complexity in the interpersonal dynamics in the consulting sessions creating disturbances in the parties' sharing of their perspectives with one another. I identify six reasons for these disturbances:

> 1. The school professionals' lack of crucial information about: referrals, Section 50 investigations, and social workers' work routines.
>
> 2. Incidents where the social workers are not sufficiently aware that they are using concepts unfamiliar to the school professionals (furthermore I argue that this probably also applies the other way round).
>
> 3. Simplified discourses about each others' professions and institutions.
>
> 4. The professionals' high sensitivity to each others' personal approaches as the issues and the stress in the vulnerable children's strained lifeworlds evoke deep personal feelings.
>
> 5. Difficulties in encompassing all the different aspects of the issues in the vulnerable children's lifeworlds in a consulting session lasting only 45 minutes (in particular for school professionals who receive a consulting session for the first time).
>
> 6. A situation where a school professional is asked by someone else to send in a referral on a vulnerable child.

From an English contrast with a scenario from my Danish fieldwork I con-

clude that the Danish consulting sessions do not seem to be excessively steered by standardised procedures and methods compared to the English setting of interprofessional work initiatives for dealing with school professionals' concerns on vulnerable children. In England there are many standardised procedures and methods which probably help in serious cases but according to my Arendtian framework such standardised procedures and methods also tend to limit the influence of interpersonal activities on less serious cases. Hence following Arendt's argumentation the identified six reasons for disturbances in the Danish consulting sessions cannot be remedied by imposing standardised procedures and methods. Rather the disturbances can be reduced by training the professionals to navigate in complex conversations on complex issues concerning vulnerable children. Thus following this line of thinking I make some recommendations for municipalities that wish to embark on giving school professionals the opportunity to receive consulting sessions from social workers on their concerns for vulnerable children.

I have arranged my recommendations in three phases: An introduction for school professionals to consulting sessions with social workers, training in interprofessional work and how to conduct the consulting sessions.

<u>An introduction for school professionals to consulting sessions with social workers</u>
It is crucial that school professionals are given a proper introduction to the purpose of having a social worker regularly visit their school. In this introduction it is important to inform the school professionals of their obligation to notify if they have a concern on a child's well-being, and also enlighten them on confidentiality rules, referrals, Section 50 investigations and social workers' work routines. This introduction needs to be based on the acknowledgement that social workers and school professionals have very different lines of thinking and work procedures for dealing with issues in vulnerable children's lifeworlds.

Furthermore, school professionals need to be introduced to the prevention and early intervention line of thinking which often is referred to as the foundation for such consulting sessions on vulnerable children. The school professionals need to be informed about the strength of this approach in dealing with vulnerable children's issues at an early stage so that the issues do not hinder the children's future social and psychological development. However, they also need to be informed about the weaknesses of the approach in its tenden-

cy not to include the children and the parents themselves at the early stage and in that it often identifies small issues as large problems which preferably should solve themselves over time without any intervention.

Training in interprofessional work

It is important that school professionals and social workers in a common setting receive training in how to carry out sound interprofessional work. It is also advisable to include school nurses, educational psychologists, speech therapists and other interprofessional workers in the training.

In the training the professionals need to be informed that research has consistently demonstrated that interprofessional work is often more complicated than legislators and they themselves initially anticipate and hence for interprofessional work conversations they need to be solidly trained to navigate within complex dynamics.

Furthermore it is crucial that the professionals must be brought to acknowledge that interprofessional work alone cannot completely solve all problems in all vulnerable children's lifeworlds as these problems will often be deeply entrenched, e.g. a parent's drinking issue may reach back several generations or a parent may have deep-seated psychiatric problems. However they must also be educated about the fact that research has demonstrated that interprofessional work compared to mono-professional work can improve the quality of the efforts for vulnerable children and their families.

How to conduct the consulting sessions

In order to conduct the consulting sessions effectively the social workers and the school professionals need to be trained to speak carefully and listen properly to each other.

In their speech they need to be keen on speaking from their own point of view but also to be aware that the professional concepts they use may be unfamiliar to their interlocutor. Furthermore they always need to be fervent about focusing on the children's issues when they speak, based on how these issues are playing out in the lifeworlds of the specific vulnerable children. This will prevent a smothering of the children's issues under an over-focusing on other issues like professional group interests, organisational structures and legal frameworks. These latter issues however need to be addressed in other arenas.

With regard to their listening they need to be attentive to how their interlocutor uniquely chooses to speak about the issues in the vulnerable children's lifeworlds. Their listening should also involve an awareness of how their perception of the interlocutor's remarks is being shaped by their own past experiences, feelings and possibly simplified discourses about the others' profession and institutional setting.

After the consulting sessions the school professionals need to be given some time to perform some Arendtian *thinking*. Following Arendt's definition the school professionals must in their *thinking* try from their own point of view to represent the perspectives demonstrated by the social workers during the sessions to enable them to carry out on-going conversations with themselves during their further pedagogical work with the specific vulnerable children.

My final recommendation is that the first time a school professional is given a consulting session it will often need more time than a typical Danish school lesson slot of 45 minutes in order to extract the maximum benefit.

Appendix 2: Explanation of the Most Important Danish Professions and Institutions

<u>Professions</u>

Reception class teacher

Reception class teachers are trained as pedagogues. Since 2001, pedagogues qualify by obtaining a 3½ year professional bachelor degree from a university college. The course is divided between learning in placements and in the university college. Major subjects are psychology and pedagogy. Likewise there is a fair amount of education in sports, nature and arts and crafts. The students usually specialise in either social pedagogy, special pedagogy or early childhood pedagogy. Pedagogues are qualified to undertake professional employment in Danish public and private state-authorised institutions, e.g. kindergartens, schools and afterschool, sport and play activities. They are also qualified for professional employment in special therapeutic institutions and in social community work.

Teacher

Since 2001, teachers qualify by obtaining a 4 year professional bachelor degree from a university college. There is also a possibility to upgrade from another degree to become a teacher through a two year course, but this is much less common in Denmark than in England. Danish teachers have traditionally taught all classes from year 1 till year 9, although a recent educational reform aims to see the new student teachers specialising in two of the following three year ranges: years 1-3, years 4-6 and years 7-9. Teachers specialise in two to four main subjects and also receive education in psychology, pedagogy and methodology.

Social

Since 2001, social workers qualify by obtaining a 3½ year pro-

worker fessional bachelor degree from a university college. The course is divided between learning in placements and in the university college. Major subject areas are social work (including social counselling), psychology, psychiatry, law and social science. Social workers are qualified to undertake professional employment in Danish public and private state-authorised social institutions, e.g. in municipal social service departments, job centres, street work with homeless people and work in drug rehabilitation programmes.

AKT-teacher Danish teachers who have received specialised training in helping children with emotional, social and behavioural difficulties ("*Adfærds, Kontakts og Trivsels-problemer*"). These teachers usually both work with such children themselves and advise other teachers on how to work with children with these difficulties.

Institutions and agencies

The Danish school system

The Danish "*grundskole*" is roughly the equivalent of a combined English primary and lower secondary school. Children enter these schools at the age of 5 or 6 and leave at 15 or 16. The first year the children are in a "*børnehaveklasse*" which in many aspects is comparable to an English "reception class" except that all children are obliged to start at the same time in the Danish "*børnehaveklasse*". The reception class in Denmark in sometimes referred to as year 0. After the reception class the children will enter year 1 through to year 9. A year 9 diploma from a Danish "*grundskole*" resembles an English GCSE certificate.

After the year 9 diploma young people can enter a "*gymnasie*" education which leads to a diploma that resembles the English A-levels. The professionals working in year 1 through year 9 are trained as teachers, while the professionals working in the reception class year are trained as pedagogues.

Servicestyrelsen

Servicestyrelsen is the National Board of Social Services. It is an independent subdivision of the Ministry of Social Affairs and Integration.

Appendix 3: Informed consent

Informeret samtykke

Den primære interesse i dette PhD forskningsprojekt er at undersøge hvordan lærers/børnehaveklasse-ledereres intentioner påvirkes af at de modtager en rådgivningssamtale fra en social worker omkring et udsat barn i deres klasse.

Anonymisering og betingelser:
* ❖ I henhold til retningslinjer fra Datatilsynet vil alle deltagere (medarbejdere) blive sikret fuld anonymitet. Dertil får de omtalte børn udvidet anonymitet (dvs. at foruden at navne og steder anonymiseres ændres også på andre ikke afgørende faktorer, f.eks. antal søskende og klassetrin). Om nødvendigt får medarbejderne ligeledes denne udvidede anonymitet.
* ❖ Navnene på de involverede skoler samt deres samarbejdspartnere bliver ikke offentliggjort.
* ❖ Interviewet bliver transskriberet og analyseret, hvorefter evt. udvalgte brudstykker indgår i min PhD afhandling, artikler, undervisning og bøger om tværprofessionelt samarbejde.
* ❖ Det er frivilligt at deltage, og samtykket kan til enhver tid trækkes tilbage. Dette kan gøres endda længe efter at interviewet er afsluttet ved at skrive til midskard@hotmail.com.

I henhold til forskningsprojektet er der opnået enighed om formål og brug af data.

København _____

_____   _____

Den interviewede   Interviewer

Informed consent

regarding participation in the PhD research
of Jóhannes Miðskarð, Roskilde University, Denmark.

The focal point of my PhD research is inter-professional work for vulnerable children. I am investigating how professionals' different perspectives interact in relation to specific issues which come up during an interprofessional work conversation.

Empirically I have carried out observations and interviews in Denmark, on which I am undertaking an in depth analysis at the moment. Further I want to examine if there are any specific features within a Danish context by contrasting data from my Danish fieldwork with reflections from English professionals.

All interviews in my project are conducted according to the technical and ethical code of "Datatilsynet" (The Danish Data Protection Agency).

Part of the research project may be publicly disseminated. Therefore some of your statements may be included in my further publications and/or in my teaching. However, I will give you and the other professionals' full anonymity by changing your names. Similarly, I will not reveal which specific local service the professionals are working at. If you refer to examples from your everyday working life, which I would like to make public, I will ensure they cannot be recognised by any third party.

Participation in the interview is entirely voluntary and you can refuse to answer any question and/or withdraw at any time. Even after the interview is finished you can choose to withdraw your statements by writing an email to midskard@hotmail.com.

I have read and understood this information and I hereby give my consent:

....
   Date   Signature

Appendix 4: The consulting session's influence on how Rie wants to conduct the parental meeting with Jette's parents

4.A Rie's representation of her perspective at the consulting session

In the interview Rie explains the following about her perspective at the consulting session on how to conduct the coming parental meeting:

Vi [ville] organisere et nyt forældremøde. Som jeg fortalte om under rådgivningen. Hvor jeg jo understregede … Jamen - Jeg ville gerne have at begge forældre kommer samtidigt. Fordi så kan man sådan lige fortælle hvordan vi oplever Jette herover, "hvordan synes I selv at hun har det derhjemme?" og "hvordan fungerer jeres forskellige måder at tackle situationerne på?". Fordi det er sådan noget med sengetider – ik'?! -som åbenbart er meget forskellige. Jeg har snakket lidt med faren om det –ik'?!. Det kan måske også.. altså… Man ved jo ikke hvad der foregår derhjemme –ik'?!. Så faren har sagt, at det måske var en god ide, at vi fik snakket sammen. Og som vi snakker om, jamen hvor det er… Så tænkte jeg "vi prøver at lave et andet møde" hvor vi har bedre tid og så må vi lave en køreplan.

We [wanted] to arrange a new meeting with the parents. As I said at the consulting session. Where I emphasised ... Well - I would like to have both parents come together. Because then you can kind of just tell them how we experience Jette here - "how do you yourselves think she's getting on at home?" and "how do your different ways of tackling the situations work for you?" Because it has something to do with bedtimes – doesn't it?! -which obviously vary a lot. I've talked a bit with her father about it - you see?! It may also .. I mean ... You never know what's going on at home, - do you?! So the father said that maybe it was a good idea that we got to talk together. And as we're talking about, well, how ... Then I thought, "let's try to set up another meeting" where we have more time and then we'll have to make a plan.

In my meaning condensation of this quote I am emphasising that at the coming parental meeting Rie wanted to get the two parents to coordinate Jette's everyday life. At the meeting Rie also wanted together with the parents to create a plan on how to help Jette in the best way.

In the interview Rie says that at the consulting session she implied that she and her colleague wanted to conduct the meeting with the parents similarly to how they had conducted a previous meeting with Jette's mother. Therefore, I will now investigate how Rie and her colleague conducted the first meeting and thereafter I will draw out some general principles, which I will argue Rie was probably also using in her approach at the consulting session on how to conduct this second parental meeting.

Regarding the way they conducted the first meeting Rie explains:

…[moren] har det her problem med sit drikkeri. Og så indkalder vi moren -min kollega og jeg- til en samtale. Vi lægger så kortene på bordet og siger "vi er klar over at der eventuelt er et problem [med hendes drikkeri]" og spurgte hvad siger hun til det og så videre.
.

...[her mother] has this drinking problem. So we invited her mother – my colleague and I – to a meeting. We put the cards on the table and said "we are aware that there may be a problem [with her drinking]" and asked what she had to say about that, and so on.

In this quote Rie states that Jette's mother acknowledged that she had had a problem with drinking, but that it was a thing of the past; Rie and her colleague thought that her explanation about giving it up seemed reasonable.

Further Rie says:

Hun går så til bekendelse og siger "Jamen, det er rigtigt. Jeg har haft et problem. Jeg har drukket. Men jeg er holdt op. (…) Hun havde en rimelig fornuftig forklaring på at hun er holdt op.

She then admits it and says "Well yes, that's true. I have had a problem. I used to drink. But I've stopped. (...) She had a reasonable explanation for the fact that she'd stopped.

In this quote Rie explains that they confronted Jette's mother with their suspicion and gave Jette's mother an opportunity to tell her side of the story. Rie continues:

Vores samtale sluttede af med at vi siger: Der er kommet en super god socialrådgiver på skolen. Hende kan du henvende dig til. Anonymt. Hun kender nogle muligheder,

Our meeting ended with us saying: There's a really super social worker come to the school. You can contact her. Anonymously. She knows some

for det ene og det andet. Hun er god til at hjælpe. Inden vi sagde farvel så siger hun "jamen, jeg vil godt have nummeret på hende der socialrådgiveren".

possibilities, for this and that. She's a real help. Before we said goodbye, she said: "Actually, I'd like to have the number of that social worker". .

In this quote Rie remarks that the first meeting ended with Jette's mother showing an interest in contacting the social worker.

This investigation of how Rie and her colleague conducted the first meeting demonstrates to me that they were pretty blunt in presenting their suspicion of the drinking problem to the mother at the first meeting; they stressed that this was their suspicion and that they wanted to hear her side of the story. I have also shown that they wanted to meet Jette's mother in a sincere and open way. I base this conclusion on the fact that they chose to believe Jette's mother when she told them about her success in giving up drinking and also on the fact that they thought it was good that Jette's mother demonstrated a wish to contact the social worker.

From this I will draw out some general principles which indicate Rie's perspective on how to conduct a second meeting with Jette's parents: Rie wants to meet her pupil's parents in a sincere way by listening to their point of view. Rie wants to signal that they would like to cooperate on how to improve Jette's well-being. However, Rie also wants to confront the parents with her concerns and not hold back on mentioning difficult issues (as with Jette's mother's drinking issue at the first meeting). However at the same time they also wanted to listen to what the parents had to say in reply.

Finally, I will present a summary of Rie's perspective on how to conduct the meeting which she demonstrated at the consulting session. I will merge the meaning condensation from the first quote in this section with the general principles I drew out from how they organised their first meeting with the mother.

I had planned that the goal of the upcoming parental meeting was to talk about Jette's well-being in school and at home with the two parents, which should lead to the making of a plan for how to help Jette in the best way. In a sincere way we wanted to try to understand their two points of view in relation to the issues in Jette's lifeworld. Likewise we wanted to confront the parents with our concern on the difficult things in Jette's lifeworld (just as we did at our earlier meeting with Jette's mother). However at the same time we

wanted to listen to their reactions to our statements about our concerns.

4.B   Rie's perspective at the interview – the day after the consulting session

In this section I will investigate how Rie in the interview demonstrates her further perspective on how to conduct the coming parental meeting.

In relation to the parental meeting Rie says several times:

ud fra det Sara sagde så vil jeg være mere - lidt mere – opmærksom, end jeg tidligere havde tænkt, på det der med at være anerkendende (…)I forbindelse med forældre mødet.	Based on what Sara said I will be more - a little bit more - attentive than I had previously thought, about the idea of being appreciative (…) In connection with the parental meeting.

In this quote Rie implies that after the consulting session she has become more aware of being appreciative in her approach to Jette's parents. Later on she gives the following example of her appreciative approach:

i forbindelse med [det kommende] forældre møde (…) [så skal vi] komme væk fra "at Jette har det der opgivende en engang i mellem" (…) til "at hun vil komme til at fungere mere sådan alment bedre".	in connection with [the upcoming] meeting with the parents (...) [we must] get away from "Jette sometimes is despairing" (...) to "her functioning will get better on an overall level"

Rie here demonstrates that, using a more appreciative approach, she wants to focus on a positive change for Jette at the coming parental meeting. Further on Rie says:

Så vi ikke bare kommer til at sidde og sige at "du gør" og "hug" "hug" "hug". Så trækker de jo følehornene til sig med det samme. Men dog jeg synes at man dog skal sige de svære ting.	So we're not just going to sit there and say that "do this, do that" and "snap" "snap" "snap". Because then they'll just creep back into their shells straightaway. But still I think we have to say the difficult things.

This quote illustrates that although Rie wants to be appreciative towards Jette's parents, she still wants to talk about the difficult issues at the coming parental meeting.

Rie further explains how she now after the consulting session thinks about how to conduct the meeting with Jette's parents:

Det er vigtigt på mødet at være konkret også for at skabe en god atmosfære.

It's important to be specific at the meeting, also in order to create a positive atmosphere.

Rie emphasises that now she thinks it is crucial to be specific. Later on she mentions some examples of specific goals:

At [Jette] bliver mere glad generelt; at hun kontakter os; og vil være mere med i det som sker; mere lyst til at lære.

That [Jette] becomes happier in general; that she makes contact with us, and joins in more what's going on; a greater desire to learn.

The goals Rie mentions are that Jette becomes happier in general; that she makes contact with them, is more involved in what happens in the classroom and has a greater desire to learn.

Later in the interview Rie says:

Så skal vi sige til forældrene at vi gerne vil hjælpe til med en sådan positiv udvikling, men også at I to forældre også hjælper til. Skal I have nogle fælles ting f.eks. med sengetider for at vi kan nå en bedre udvikling? Men ja spørge dem om de har ideer. Og så kan vi også komme med vores forslag til hvad de kan gøre hvis de har lyst til det.

Then we'll tell the parents that we want to help in this kind of positive development, but also that both of you parents also need to help. Should you agree upon some things about e.g. bedtimes so that we can get a better development? But yes, ask them if they have ideas. And then we can also make our suggestions about what they can do if they want to.

In this quote Rie emphasises that they want to involve Jette's parents in achieving a positive change for Jette. The focus in the collaboration will be on concrete common initiatives for Jette's divorced mother and father.

Finally I will demonstrate one last aspect of how Rie talks about how she and her colleague will conduct the second parental meeting with a greater awareness on what Sara explained to her about drinking issues.

Jóhannes:

Som jeg observede jer så syntes jeg at…Sara snakkede sådan generelt om børn som har det svært med forældres drikkeri og du snakkede meget ud fra det med Karen. Synes du at der var disse forskellige indgangsvinkler til jeres snak? Og hvis ja hvad fik du ud af at høre hende?

Rie:(…)Hvordan forældre der drikker kan reagere. Ikke sådan at det var helt nyt for mig, men det var godt at høre hendes præcise ord på det.

Jóhannes:

The way I observed you I thought... Sara talked in a general way about children with problems with their parents' drinking and you talked a lot about it in relation to Karen. Do you think there were these different approaches to your talk? And if so, what did you get out of listening to her?

Rie: (...)How parents who drink can react. Not that it was completely new to me but it was good to hear her exact words about it.

Rie here reveals that they will be aware of the possible effects of Jette's mother's drinking. She underlines that at the consulting Sara described this very clearly.

I will now make a summary of Rie's perspective on how to conduct the meeting on the day of my interview with her.

I want us to strive to be highly appreciative in our approach to Jette's parents. However, I still want us to say the difficult things, but with a focus on a positive change for Jette. I want us to be concrete about how Jette can improve her overall well-being by our setting some specific goals. This will be done in collaboration with the parents. I want us to be more aware of the possible effects of Jette's mother's drinking problem.

4.C   Rie's representation of Sara's perspective at the consulting session

In this section I will investigate how Rie is able to represent the perspective Sara demonstrated at the consulting session. For this, I will first present Rie's answer to one of my questions:

Jóhannes: Og der havde Sara mere viden og erfaring om vanskelige samtaler med forældre som du fik noget ud af?
Rie: Jamen, jeg mærkede at hun havde lidt mere erfaring. Det kommer jo vel fra hendes job.

Jóhannes: And there Sara had more knowledge and experience of difficult conversations with parents and you got something out of this?
Rie: Yes, I realised she had a bit more experience. Well, I suppose it stems from her job.

In this passage Rie replies that she could sense that Sara was more experienced than her in how to conduct conversations about difficult issues with the parents of vulnerable children.

Further on in Interview 1, Rie says:

Og så fortalte Sara noget om, hvordan forældre der drikker kan reagere. Ikke sådan at det var helt nyt for mig, men var godt at høres hendes præcise ord på det.

And then Sara told me something about how parents who drink can react. Not that it was completely new to me but it was good to hear her exact words about it.

In this quote Rie states that she benefited from the fact that at the consulting session Sara had shared some knowledge of the reactions of parents who have a drinking problem.

Later in the interview this passage can be found:

Jóhannes:
Kunne du mærke at du og Sara havde forskellig indgangsvinker til nogen ting?
Rie:
Det er svært at sige.
Jeg vil sige at sådan noget som anerkendelse i forhold til det kommende møde. Det var noget hun lagde vægt på at være anerkendende over for forældrene. At alene det at de møder op og lægger nogle ting frem som ikke er så rare at snakke om. Det er ikke alle forældre der gør det.
Men de kan til enhver tid afvise og sige "jamen det passer ikke" og være negative.
(…)
ud fra det Sara sagde så vil jeg være mere - lidt mere – opmærksom, end jeg tidligere havde tænkt, på det der med at være aner-

Jóhannes:
Did you notice that you and Sara had different approaches to anything?
Rie:
It's difficult to say.
I'd say something like appreciation in connection with the upcoming meeting. That was something she stressed about being appreciative towards the parents. That they just come along and start to talk about unpleasant things. It's not every parent who'd do that.
But they can always refuse and say "that's not right" and be negative.
(...)
based on what Sara said I will be more - a little bit more - attentive

kendende. Men jeg fik ud af det at det er   than I had previously thought, about
vigtigt på mødet at være konkret også.   the idea of being appreciative. But I
For at skabe en god atmosfære.   also learnt that it's important to be
concrete at the meeting as well.
To create a positive atmosphere.

In this quote Rie says that she regarded Sara as being appreciative in her approach towards Jette's parents. Furthermore she emphasises two examples Sara had given. The first was that they should appreciate that the parents did turn up at the meeting. The second was that the parents were willing to talk about difficult issues. The last quote implies that Rie thought that Sara wanted to be more specific then she did herself.

   I will now summarise how Rie represents Sara's perspective on how to conduct the meeting.

> At the consulting session Sara drew upon experiences with difficult meetings from her career as a social worker. Sara had a precise explanation of how things are for children who have parents with a drinking problem. Sara talked about how to approach Jette's parents in an appreciative way and underlined that it was important to talk in a concrete way about how to improve Jette's well-being.

4.D   Sara's account of her perspective at the consulting session

In this section I will investigate how Sara herself characterises her perspective on how to conduct the meeting with Jette's parents.

Sara says this about how at the consulting session she presented her perspective on how to conduct the meeting with Jette's parents:

Jóhannes: Jóhannes:
Hvad sagde du så i går til Rie i forhold til   So what did you tell Rie yesterday
deres forældremøde?   about your meeting with the parents?
Sara   Sara:
Jeg signallerede at der er rigtigt mange svære   I signalled that there really are a lot of
ting omkring det der forældremøde. Det er et   difficult things in relation to that pa-
svært møde. Der kommer til at være mange   rental meeting. It's a difficult meeting.
ting i det rum. Et er morens drikkeri. Der   There will be many issues involved.
er også en mor og far der er skilt.   One is the mother's drinking. There
is also a mother and father who are
divorced.

In this quote Sara reveals that at the consulting session she signalled that it was important to be aware of how difficult the meeting would be to conduct

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because there are two difficult issues which will be present simultaneously: Jette's mother's drinking issue and a possible issue with the parents' divorce.

Sara continues:

(...) jeg viste hende at det er vigtigt at forbe-rede samtalen med forældrene lidt, og at tænke sig om hvad man vil nå med foræl-dremødet? Altså hvad er realistisk! Er det realtiskt at fra at se "en ked af det pige" om fire uger så ser vi en "sprudlende pige"? (...) Er det realistisk at forandre det helt på kort tid eller kan delmålet være at det er godt nok at om fire uger at de vil se en pige som deltager så og så meget. Altså at gøre det mere målbart. Så kan man også være mere klar over for forældrene og moren kan blive klar på hvad hun skal gøre.

(...) I showed her that it's important to prepare the conversation with the parents a bit and think about what you want to achieve with the meeting – I mean what is realistic! Is it realistic that from seeing a "fed up little girl" we'll see in four weeks "a joyful little girl"? (...)Is it realistic to change it completely in a short time or might a partial goal be that it's good enough that they see in four weeks a girl who joins in to this or that extent. I mean making it more measurable. Then you can also be clearer towards the parents and the mother can be clearer about what to do.

Here Sara states that at the consulting session she demonstrated that it is important to prepare the conversation. The quote illustrates that Sara demonstrated that one important preparation is to set up some goals for the outcome of the meeting. Sara underlines that it is important that the goals are realistic and measurable.

Sara continues by saying that she signalled that:

Fordi hvis de får gjort det godt så vil de have to forældre som rigtigt rigtigt gerne vil sam-arbejde (...)det bliver et godt møde hvor du føler "at her vil vi gerne hjælpe" altså "her har vi ikke em løftet pegefinger"

Because if they do it well then they will have two parents who really really want to cooperate. (...) that it's a good meeting where you feel: "here we'd like to help you" in other words "here we're not going to tell you off".

The last quote demonstrates that in her perspective on how to conduct the meeting Sara included that it is important that the meeting is conducted in a positive atmosphere and that the parents are viewed as collaborative partners.

I will now move on to summarise how Sara characterises her perspective on how to conduct the meeting with Jette's parents.

I signalled that it was important to be aware of how difficult the meeting would be to conduct, because there will be two difficult issues present: Jette's mother's drinking issue and their divorce. Because of the difficult agenda I signalled that it is important to prepare the meeting properly. *It is important to prepare yourself so that you are able to set up some realistic and measureable goals as the outcome of the meeting.* Similarly, I implied that it is important that the meeting needs to be carried out in a positive atmosphere where Jette's mother and father are viewed as collaborative partners.

Appendix 5: The consulting session's influence on how Tine views Amarjit's quietness

5.A Tine's representation of her perspective at the consulting session

In order to characterise the perspective Tine demonstrated on Amarjit's quietness at the consulting session, I will first present how Tine describes how she at the session presented her concern for Amarjit's quietness. Tine says that she pictured the usual scenario in the class in this way:

De andre kommer og fortæller vidt og bredt hvad de har lavet og alt muligt. [Amarjit] er ikke den som kommer farende mandag morgen og fortæller hvad hun har lavet i weekenden.

The others come and tell me at great length what they did and all kinds of things. [Amarjit] is not the one who comes rushing to me Monday morning and tells me what she did at the weekend.

In another place in the interview Tine says that Amarjit never tells anything about her father.

[Amarjit] taler aldrig om sin [far].

[Amarjit] never talks about her [father].

At another point in the interview, Tine says she never tells any stories about her brother

hun fortæller aldrig nogen historier om [bro-ren].

she never tells any stories about her [brother].

Just before this last quote in the interview, Tine reveals that she is aware that Amarjit's brother is in prison and that of course it is not easy to talk about that, but Tine says that even though he is in prison

han kan godt være en god bror og en sød fyr. Men hun fortæller aldrig nogen historier om ham.

he may be a good brother and a nice boy. But she never tells any stories about him.

Regarding how Tine approached Amarjit's quietness at the beginning of the consulting, Tine says:

Jeg ville bare have hende til at fungere oppe i klasseværelset, have hende til at åbne mere og være mere på.

I just wanted her to function up there in the classroom, be more open and more self-assertive.

We see in this last quote that Tine's goal was to get Amarjit to open up more and talk more and hence be more a part of the social activities of the class.

I will now sum up Tine's perspective on Amarjit's quietness about her family at the consulting.

> I characterised Amarjit as different from the other children in my class who always want to tell about what they have been up to during the weekends with their family members. My goal was to get Amarjit to open up more and talk more and hence be more a part of the social activities of the class.

5.B Tine's perspective at the interview – the day after the consulting session

I will now describe how Tine's perspective on Amarjit's quiet behaviour after the consulting may be characterised.

In the interview Tine tells me what she now thinks of Amarjit's quietness:

Nu kan jeg bedre forstå hvorfor hun er som hun er. Altså hvorfor hun ikke er den som kommer farende mandag morgen og fortæller hvad hun har lavet i weekenden og altså er så åben. For hun er vant til hjemmefra at holde kortene tæt ind til kroppen – ik`?

Now I can better understand why she is the way she is. I mean why she's not the one who comes rushing to me Monday morning and tells me what she did at the weekend and is open like that. Because from home she's used to keeping her cards close to her chest, isn't she?

In this quote Tine reveals that she now knows the reason for Amarjit's quietness about her family. The reason is that Amarjit has learnt at home that it is best to keep your cards close to your chest.

Tine mentions in another place about an issue which they do not talk about:

Jeg er ret sikker på at de [i familien] hver især har spørgsmål til [brorens fængsling] og godt kunne tænke sig måske at få snakket om det. Men der er ikke sådan rigtig nogen der tør tage hul på det. Så det ligger sådan og ulmer hele tiden. Men der bliver ikke rigtigt gjort noget ved det.

I'm quite sure that [in the family] each one of them has questions about [her brother's imprisonment] and would probably have liked to talk about it. But there's not really anyone who dares to bring up the subject. So it's smouldering there all the time. But nothing's really being done about it.

In the last part of this quote Tine states that their silence implies that something unfortunate is constantly brewing and getting larger, without anyone doing anything about it.

Tine goes on to explain how she after the consulting views the issue of Amarjit's quietness about her family:

…jeg har indset at det handler ikke bare om det oppe i min klasse. Det handler også om det vi ser nede i skolegården og specielt det der hjemme.

…I've realised that it's not just about what goes on up in my class. It's also about what we see down in the playground and especially at home.

In this quote Tine says that she now sees that the issue of Amarjit's quietness in relation to her family is not only relevant in her classroom but is also a more overall issue in Amarjit's lifeworld.

Later Tine demonstrates that she has taken the consequence of her new perspective on Amarjit's quietness about her family. Tine says that during the coming talks in the class about what the pupils have experienced after school and at weekends she intends to ask Amarjit to talk about something else than her family. Tine says:

Så der er måske nogle lidt andre historier man skal be hende om at fortælle end bare hvad for nogle spændende ting hun har lavet i weekenden... så jeg er da blevet lidt klogere'.

So maybe there are some slightly different stories we can ask her to tell us rather than the exciting things she did at the weekend... so now I've learnt a bit'

In this quote Tine stresses that she would rather ask Amarjit about other isses than her family when they talk in class about the pupils' weekends and what they are doing after school.

I will now make a summary of Tine's new perspective on Amarjit's quietness about her family:

I see that Amarjit's quietness about her family is not only an issue in my classroom, it is also a more overall issue in Amarjit's general lifeworld. I think that the explanation for Amarjit's quietness is grounded in the fact that Amarjit has learnt in her family that it is best to keep your cards close to your chest, specifically things about her brother being in prison. Such an approach implies that something unfortunate is constantly brewing and getting larger, without anyone doing anything about it. Becasue this is a sensitive issue for Amarjit I would rather ask Amarjit about other isses then what she has been up to with her family members during the weekends.

5.C Tine's representation of Sara's perspective at the consulting session

In the following I will investigate how Tine in the interview represents Sara's perspective on Amarjit's quiet behaviour.

In the interview, Tine says this about how Sara approached the issue of Amarjit's quietness:

...når Sara faktisk sagde ret meget om "den store hemmelighed" I familien så tænkte jeg...	...when Sara actually said a whole lot about the "big secret" in the family, I thought...

We see here that Tine refers to Sara at the consulting explaining something about "the big family secret" when they talked about Amarjit's quietness in relation to her family. Tine continues by saying that she thought Sara's concept of "the big secret in the family" implied that:

…mor er jo nærmest lidt flov over at han er der inde. Det tror jeg også at Amarjit er. Så jeg tror at [den store hemmelighed] er sådan lidt et tabu. At have en bror eller en søn der sidder i fængsel.	...the mother's almost a bit embarrassed that he's in there. I think Amarjit is too. So I think [the big secret] is a bit of a taboo. Having a brother or a son in prison.

In this quote Tine states that she thinks that Sara meant by this concept that it is a taboo in the family that Amarjit's brother is in prison. Further on Tine repeats what Sara meant by this concept of "the big family secret", where Tine demonstrates that it means:

Jeg tror bare at vi tier det i hjel. Altså. Det bliver der ikke talt om.	I just think that we're silencing it to death. Like that. It's not talked about.

I will now summarise how Tine represents the approach Sara took to Amarjit's quietness at the consulting.

Sara used the phrase "the big family secret" to explain the reason for Amarjit's quietness. The concept "the big family secret" implies that it is best to pretend that Amarjit's brother's imprisonment does not exist and therefore the issue must not be talked about. Therefore Amarjit's brother's imprisonment has become a taboo in Amarjit's family. Having such a family secret has resulted in Amarjit's quietness about her family during the "free" talks in the class.

5.D Sara's account of her perspective at the consulting session

I will now characterise how Sara makes an account of her own perspective on how she approached Amarjit's quietness at the session.

In relation to Sara's perspective on Amarjit's quietness, Sara first says in the interview:

I starten tænkte jeg det var da dejligt med sådan en rolig pige.

In the beginning I thought how nice it was to have such a quiet girl.

But then she implies that later on she got a suspicion about Amarjit's quietness, in particular in relation to her family.

In the interview I went on to ask Sara how she handled Tine's concern about Amarjit's quietness in the classroom. Sara answered that at the session she immediately thought and expressed something about the stress that must be present in Amarjit's everyday life:

Når man har en bror eller en søster som fylder, på den ene eller på den anden måde, så kan det være rigtigt hårdt at være den søster eller bror der skal være den nemme og bare fungere. Altså..Der er f.eks. lavet rigtig mange undersøgelser om hvordan det er at være bror eller søster til et handicappet barn. Men også et barn der ikke er der. Altså...Et dødt barn eller et barn der er i fængsel. Et barn der er der men ikke er der. Og netop det der med: hvordan får vi talt om det i familien, hvordan håndterer vi det. [Tine] vidste ikke hvor meget denne her søster vidste om at bror sad i fængsel. [Tine] vidste godt at [Amarjit] havde en bror. Men hvad er historien der hjemme?

When you have a brother or sister who needs attention in one way or another, it can be really tough to be the sister or brother who's the easy one, the one who just functions. I mean... there have been for example many studies of what it's like to be the brother or sister of a handicapped child. But also a child who's not there. I mean...A dead child or one in prison. A child who's there but isn't there. And precisely the matter of: How can we talk about it in the family, how do we deal with it? [Tine] didn't know how much this sister knew about her brother being in prison. [Tine] knew very well that [Amarjit] had a brother. But what's the story in that home?

In this quote Sara explains that when she heard that Amarjit had a brother in prison she immediately activated some of her previously acquired knowledge; if there is a sibling who has serious problems and even worse is also absent, research has revealed serious difficulties for the siblings remaining at home. Sara mentioned that in the case of Amarjit she was wondering how they as a

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family are talking about this and she was also pondering on how many secrets they have at home.

Further, I asked Sara about the concept of "the big family secret" which she both at the consulting and in my interview with her had implied could be an explanation of Amarjit's quietness about her family when they had "free" talks in the class. Here is a passage from the interview where Sara explains what the concept means:

Sara: Når der er en hemmelighed i en familie, så kan det være rigtigt svært for et barn at agere i det. Og børnene er utroligt samarbejdsvillige. Derfor vil de gøre alt for mor og far med den hemmelighed de har. Det er det rigtige. Når de så kommer over i skolen og det er noget andet der er det rigtige så bliver deres verden forstyrret, det er svært at være i.
Jóhannes: Er det det samme som en fortrængning? et tabu?... noget andet?
Sara: Jamen. Det er noget der ikke må siges. Der er noget endnu værre. En ting er at der er noget man ikke må sige, det er ikke så godt. Endnu værre er hvis der er noget man ikke ved. Børns fantasi kan jo vokse sig kæmpe enorm.

Sara: When there is a secret in a family, it can be really difficult for a child to operate in it. And children are incredibly cooperative. So they'll do anything for Mum and Dad with the secret they have. That's the right thing. When they get to school and something else is the right thing, then their world is disturbed, it's difficult to be in it.
Jóhannes: Is it the same as suppression? Taboo? ... Something else?
Sara: Well. It's something that cannot be said. It's something even worse. One thing is that it's something you mustn't say; that's not such a good thing. It's even worse if it's something you don't know much about. Children's imagination can grow enormously.

I find it of central importance that Sara explains in this passage that the term "the big family secret" refers to the possibility for a family to pretend that something which has happened does not exist. However the consequences of what has happened will still remain. This scenario makes it difficult for the children to find a way of behaving in such a family setting. But because children are always loyal to their parents they will probably find a way to behave. However, this way of behaving in a family with secrets is likely to be challenged when they enter another place such as the school.

Later in the interview Sara further unfolds her thoughts about "the big family secret" which she used as one explanation in her reflection on Amarjit's strained lifeworld which probably caused Amarjit to be so quiet:

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"Familiens hemmelighed" er et fagudtryk. Og det er nok ikke i virkeligheden et sådant socialrådgiver udtryk. Det er nok et mere fagudtryk fra min behandler tid, hvor at man tit...Det er sådan lidt et begreb "Familier med hemmeligheder". Fordi at man i nogle sammenhænge arbejder ud fra at hvis der er store familie hemmeligheder så kan det være rigtigt svært for et barn at trives der. Og det kan være svært at finde ud af hvad der er ret og vrang, fordi "jeg føler noget" og "der er noget der er mærkeligt", men vi lader alle sammen som om "det er fint"". Så kan man som barn i ens indre blive helt forrykket. Man kan godt egentligt mærke det. Mærke sig selv. Og det man synes er mærkeligt. Men man bliver trænet – opdraget - til at sige noget andet. Og det betyder at hvis man vokser op en hel barndom og en hel ungdom på den måde så kan man blive voksen og blive sådan en voksen som slet ikke kan mærke sig selv "Hvad er klokken?" "Hvad synes du?" Man kan slet ikke…Man er aldrig blevet bekræftet i det du oplever, den følelse du har er rigtigt nok.

"The Family Secret" is a professional term. nd And it's probably not really a social worker expression. It is probably more a technical term from my time as a consellor where one often... It's a kind of concept like "Families with secrets". Because in some contexts you work from the assumption that if there are big family secrets, it can be really difficult for a child to feel ok there. And it can be hard to figure out what is right and wrong, because "I feel something" and "there's something strange", but we all pretend that "it's fine". Then you can as a child in your inner being be totally disturbed. You can in fact sense it. Sense yourself. And what you think is strange. But you are trained – brought up - to say something else. And that means that if you grow up this way through your childhood and youth, then you may become the kind of adult who can't sense himself, "What time is it?" "What do you think?" You just can't… You've never had it confirmed that what you're experiencing or feeling is actually real.

An important point in this quote is that Sara explains that her concept of "the big family secret" derives from her work experience in family counselling rather than from social work settings. I find it possible to condense the meaning of the concept as "it is difficult for children to sense and explore their feelings because it is not allowed to discuss certain matters in the family".

I will now summarise how Sara characterises her approach to Tine's concern over Amarjit's quiet behaviour at school.

I signalled that because Amarjit's quietness was particularly marked in relation to her family it can be linked to the way they behave in Amarjit's family. Further I reflected on whether Amarjit's quietness can be caused by the family's way of behaving in relation to Amarjit's brother's imprisonment which might be dealt with as "a big family secret". It implies that even though it is apparent to all in the family that Amarjit's brother is in prison, they do not share their thoughts and feelings about it which implies that Amarjit is being taught to restrict herself and not talk freely.

Appendix 6: The consulting session's influence on how Tine views the meaning of the letter

6.A Tine's representation of her perspective at the consulting session

When I asked Tine to represent the perspective she demonstrated on the meaning of the letter at the consulting session, she said:

Jamen...Jeg tænkte at brevet havde noget at gøre med at Amarjits bror er i fængsel. Og så vil kommunen-eller socialforvaltningen er det måske - gerne undersøge eller lige tjekke op på om hun var på vej det samme sted: altså den gale vej.

Well...I thought that the letter had something to do with Amarjit's brother being in prison. And then the Council - or maybe it's the social service department - wanted to investigate or just check up on whether she was heading the same way: i.e. the wrong way.

The first part of my meaning condensation of this quote will be 'the letter came from somewhere like the social services department'; "somewhere like" indicates Tine's imprecise understanding of the sender of the letter because she says 'the Council - or maybe it's the social service department'. The second part of the meaning condensation will be 'The letter was sent because they wanted to investigate if Amarjit is on the way to becoming a criminal like her brother in prison'.

Tine continues later on by saying:

Min fortolkning af brevet var ud fra de ting jeg skulle svare på i det der skema i brevet. Det var noget med "Hvordan fungerer hun socialt?" og uden for skolen: "Ses hun med danske kammerater eller kun tosprogede?". Det var de der spørgsmål. Man kunne ligesom blive drejet ind på hvad det handlede om. Det handlede meget om fritidsinteresser: "Hvad bruger hun sin fritid på?". Altså – der tænkte jeg med det samme, at det er fordi de vil vide om hun render og laver ulyk-

My understanding of the letter was based on the things I had to answer in that form in the letter. It was something like "How does she function socially?" and outside school: "Do you see her with Danish friends or just bilingual ones?". It was those questions. You could kind of get the message as to what it was all about. There was a lot about leisure interests: "How does she spend her spare

ker eller om hun har nogle sunde interesser'. time?". So then I thought straightaway that it's because they want to know if she's messing about or whether she's got any healthy interests'

In relation to the meaning of the letter this quote implies that Tine based her understanding of the meaning of the letter on the questions she had to answer. Tine thinks that the meaning of the letter is to investigate if Amarjit is behaving badly in her leisure time or if she has any healthy leisure time activities. This fits with Tine's earlier statement that they want to investigate if Tine is on the way to becoming a criminal like her brother in prison.

In the interview, I further asked Tine if she had other reasons for her interpretation of the intention behind the letter. Tine answered:

Det har jeg fået at vide fra de andre kollega-er, at [brevet] sender de ud for at mærke om der er grund til at være bekymrede på [Amarjit's] vegne. Det er derfor. Det siger de andre. I hvert fald de som har været her i 1000 år – ik?

It's what I've been told from my colleagues, that they send [the letter] out to get an impression of whether there is cause for concern on [Amarjit's] behalf. That's why. That's what the others say. Certainly those who have been here for 1000 years, don't you think?

This statement reveals that Tine's interpretation of the intention of the letter was also based on her colleagues' explanation.

Now I will summarise my meaning condensations of Tine's interview statements about the perspective she demonstrated at the consulting session on the meaning of the letter.

> I assumed that the letter came from "somewhere like the social services". The intention behind sending the letter was to find out if Amarjit was about to go down the wrong path like her brother in prison. I based my understanding of the meaning of the letter on the nature of the questions and from my colleagues' remarks on the intention behind the letter.

6.B Tine's perspective at the interview – the day after the consulting

In this sub-section, I will investigate how Tine in the interview says that the letter currently appears to her.

Tine says:

Jeg var ikke klar over at brevet kom åbenbart fra samme sted - der fra hvor [Sara] arbejder. Det var dem som ligesom havde sendt det fordi de var i gang med at se på Amarjit's situation

I didn't realise that the letter clearly came from the same place – where [Sara] works. They were the ones who'd sent it because they were looking into Amarjit's situation.

This quote reveals that now Tine knows that the letter comes from the place where Sara is employed and they have sent it to her because they are investigating Amarjit's situation.

Later on Tine describes further her understanding of the investigation:

Det som jeg forstod det er jo at brorens sag er ude i..."Den har vi helt styr på" – ik?! Og nu har jeg fået den her...Hvad kan man sige..Den her..Ja det der skema på Amarjit og hendes familie..som skal udfyldes.

What I understood is that the brother's case is out in... "We've got that sorted out, haven't we?" And now I've got this... What can one say... This thing... Yes, the form about Amarjit and her family... which has to be filled out.

Tine expresses in this quote that she no longer links the questions in the letter directly with Amarjit's brother's imprisonment. Then Tine mentions something about Amarjit's family which is unclear in this quote. However previously in the interview Tine has said it more clearly:

Men hvor jeg tidligere sad med brevet og kiggede på det og tænkte på Amarjit og ville besvare det kun ud fra det jeg tænker om Amarjit. Hvor Sara også mere tænker på familien -altså ligesom den samlede pakke – ik?!

But whereas I previously I sat with the letter and looked at it and thought of Amarjit and wanted to answer it only based on what I think about Amarjit. Whereas Sara also thinks more about the family – sort of the whole package, isn't it?!

Now Tine thinks the letter indicates that they are investigating Amarjit in relation to her family context.

I know that the letter comes from the place where Sara is employed. The investigation is not directly linked to Amarjit's brother's imprisonment; its goal is rather to investigate the situation of Amarjit and her family as one complete package.

6.C Tine's representation of Sara's perspective at the consulting session

In the interview with Tine, I asked Tine to depict the perspective Sara demonstrated on the meaning of the letter at the consulting. Tine answers by telling me how Sara reacted when she showed the letter to Sara during the session:

[Sara] sagde: "Hvis det er et SÅDANT et" og så satte det lige nogen ting på plads. Så vidste hun lige hvad det handlede om og så var hun godt klar over, at der var nogen i hendes afdeling der var i gang med at se på Amarjit's situation.

[Sarah] said: "If it's THAT kind of a letter" and then things fell into place. Then she knew exactly what it was about and she was quite clear that there was someone in her department looking into Amarjit's situation.

Tine expresses in this quote that Sara signalled that she completely knew what the meaning of the letter was and that someone in her department was investigating Amarjit's case.

When I then asked Tine how she perceived more precisely the perspective Sara demonstrated on the letter, Tine replies briefly:

Sara forklarede at brevet handlede lige så meget om familien. Altså hele familien og ikke bare Amarjit. Det er ligesom en samlet pakke - ik´?!

Sara explained that the letter was just as much about the family. So the whole family and not just Amarjit. It's like a complete package, isn't it?!

In this quote Tine says that Sara explained that the letter focused on Amarjit and her family as one complete package.

In the interview I further asked Tine if there was anything else which she could think of that Sara said about the letter but Tine could not think of anything. I will now make a short summary of Tine's representation of Sara's perspective.

Sara signalled that the letter came from her department and that she knew the exact meaning of the letter. Sara demonstrated that the letter concerned Amarjit and her family as one complete package.

6.D Sara's account of her perspective at the consulting session

I will now characterise how Sara makes an account of her own perspective at the session on the meaning of the letter.

Sara answered me first that she implied to Tine that the letter indicated:

...at der er en section 50 undersøgelse i gang.

...that there's a Section 50 investigation underway.

Sara first says that she indicated that a Section 50 investigation was currently being undertaken.

In another place in the interview Sara explains:

Jóhannes: Og hvordan var det perspektiv du signallerede til brevet?

Sara: Jeg signalerede at [brevet] betyder at børne og familie teamet ad en eller anden vej har fået information om Amarjits situation og nu har de opstartet en section 50 undersøgelse. Om det er via at storebror sidder i fængsel eller om det kan være fra Amarjit's fritidshjem eller hvad - det kan vi ikke vide.

Jóhannes: And what was the perspective you demonstrated on the letter?

Sara: I signalled that [the letter] means that the child and family team somehow or other has heard about Amarjit's situation and has now started a Section 50 investigation. Whether it's via the imprisonment of her brother or from Amarjit's after-school centre or something else – we can't tell.

In this quote Sara states that at the consulting session she signalled that the letter came from the child and family team, who had instigated a Section 50 investigation on Amarjit. She also signalled that it is not possible to know why the Section 50 investigation had been started.

Sara says later:

[Mht. brevet] reagerede jeg sådan "jamen, så skal jeg i princippet slet ikke ind igen her"

I reacted [to the letter] like this: "But in principle I'm not supposed to be involved here".

Sara expresses that she signalled that she was not supposed to dwell further on Amarjit's case because there was a Section 50 investigation. The reason for this is that Sara as a social worker only works at the preventive stage of work with vulnerable children.

I will now summarise Sara's characterisation of her own perspective on the meaning of the letter at the consulting session.

I signalled that the letter meant that a Section 50 investigation was initiated on Amarjit's situation by the child and family team. I further signalled that it was not possible to know the reason behind the Section 50 investigation and that I could not make any intervention in relation to Amarjit.

Appendix 7: The consulting session's influence on Tanja's perspective on the importance of Zhou's Chinese background

7.A Tanja's perspective at the consulting session

When I asked Tanja to represent her perspective on Zhou's Chinese background she replied by comparing her own approach to Sigbritt's approach:

Hun snakkede sådan om det generelle ved kineiske familer. Det gjorde jeg ikke. Sikkert fordi jeg er så ny og har ikke mødt flere kinesiske familier.

She talked about general things in Chinese families. I didn't do that. Obviously because I'm so new and haven't met any other Chinese families.

In this quote I find it important to highlight that Tanja says that she did not talk in general terms about Zhou's Chinese background, implying that at the consulting session she rather spoke of how Zhou appeared to her as an individual.

When I asked Tanja to further describe her perspective, she says:

Mit perspektiv på Zhou's etnicitet var sådan …øhh…Faktiskt allerede da vi lige var startede i denne her klasse så kom en far til mig og spurgte, hvor mange tosprogede der var i klassen, og jeg havde svært ved at svare, fordi jeg ser ikke forskel. Og jeg havde samme holdning på mødet. Og da jeg hørte Sigbritt tale om Zhou's kinesikse baggrund tænkte jeg: "Hvorfor har jeg ikke lagt mærke til det?!". Jeg så ikke Zhou som "tosproget" som sådan- det gjorde jeg ikke. Jeg gør det heller ikke med de andre tosprogede elever. De snakker jo alle flydende dansk i mine timer.

My perspective on Zhou's ethnicity was like this... er... In fact right when we started this class, a father came up to me and asked how many in the class were bilingual, and I had trouble answering, as I can't see the difference. And I had the same attitude at the session. And when I heard Sigbritt talking about Zhou's Chinese background, I thought: "Why haven't I noticed that?!" I didn't look upon Zhou as "bilingual" as such – no, I didn't. I don't with the other bilingual kids either. They all speak fluent Danish in my lessons.

In this quote we see that Tanja says that at the consulting session she had an approach to Zhou where she did not notice that he was bilingual. Tanja bases her lack of awareness of this on the fact that Zhou and the other bilingual pu-

pils are totally fluent in spoken Danish in her classroom. It can be seen in the interview that when I got the above answer in the interview I then checked if Tanja was blind to Zhou's Chinese descent:

Jóhannes: *Var det sådan at på mødet at du ligesom lagde væk fra dig at Zhou faktisk afstammer fra kinesiske forældre?*

Jóhannes: Was it the case that you sort of put to one side the fact that Zhou actually has Chinese parents?

Tanja: *Nej, nej. Det gjorde jeg ikke. Det stod helt klart for mig -som det også gør når jeg har snakket om ham i dag. Jeg nævnte jo også på mødet at tidligere i vinter var faren tilbage på en lang rejse i Kina og moren var alene med børnene.*

Tanja: No, no. I didn't do that. It was quite obvious to me – just as it is when I talked about him today. I also mentioned at the session that earlier in the winter his father was away again on a long trip to China and his mother was alone with the children.

We see in the quote that Tanja describes how, even though she did not conceive Zhou as being bilingual, she had not closed her eyes to his Chinese descent. She gives as an example the fact that she at the consulting session mentioned that Zhou's father had been in China earlier this winter. Furthermore, she also said earlier in the interview that she had been aware of his Chinese descent. This can be seen on page 3 of the interview transcript where Tanja says:

Og så var jeg til tosprogsmøde. Der er to tosprogslærere oppe i min klasse som så kommer ind over. Og så skulle vi holde møde hvor vi snakker om hvert barn med ikke dansk ethnicitet. Og der tog vi så også ham her Zhou op.

And then I went to a bilingual meeting. There are two bilingual teachers up in my class who come over. And then the meeting was to discuss every child with non-Danish ethnicity. And there we discussed Zhou as well.

I will now make a summary of Tanja's perspective on how she viewed Zhou's Chinese background at the consulting session.

> I did not include anything in relation to his Chinese background in my perspective on Zhou. I did not even conceive of Zhou as bilingual, because he speaks Danish fluently. However, I was aware that Zhou was of Chinese descent.

7.B Tanja's perspectives after the consulting session

When I asked how Tanja conceives Zhou now, she mentions how it influenced her when Sigbritt used Zhou's Chinese descent as her starting point in talking about him.

Tanja says:

Efter mødet har jeg tænkt på at det [Sigbritt] fortalte kan være rigtigt. Fordi jeg har også en somalisk elev. For et års tid siden fik jeg at vide at somaliske fædre boede tit i London og jeg tænkte: "Hvad er det for noget?!". Men så var der en dag hvor min elev sagde, at hans far boede i London og så spurgte jeg en kollega om hendes somaliske elev og den far boede også i London. Så der er nok nogle mønstre og der er nok også en måde hvorpå kulturen og alt det her det spiller ind.

After the session, I've been thinking that what [Sigbritt] said may be right. Because I've also got a pupil from Somalia. A year ago I learnt that Somali fathers often live in London and I thought "What on earth?!" But one day my pupil said his father lived in London and then I asked a colleague about her Somali pupil, and that one's father lived in London too. So there are obviously some patterns and also a way culture and all that plays a part.

We see in this quote that Tanja has been thinking about what Sigbritt said at the consulting session about the effect of the Chinese culture and she has thus concluded that it plays a role in Zhou's lifeworld. Tanja has come to this conclusion because she has drawn a parallel to her earlier experience about some fathers of Somali children living in London.

Tanja continues:

Sigbritt åbnede mine øjne. Det der med at hun fortalte om hvordan hun mente, at mange kinesere har det i hendes forståelse. Men det var virkeligt rimeligt. Jeg har ikke tænkt at der var noget der var helt galt som hun sagde om kineserne. Så jeg har efterfølgende fået øjnene åbnet op for "ja måske de griber det anderledes an".

Sigbritt opened my eyes. When she told me how she thinks things are for many Chinese in her understanding. But that was quite reasonable. I haven't thought there was anything wrong in what she said about the Chinese. So afterwards I've realised that "maybe they do things differently".

Tanja reveals in this quote that Sigbritt opened her eyes to the fact that people with Chinese descent tackle certain matters in a distinctive way. Tanja does not say that the Chinese way is distinct from the Danish way but I do interpret that she is implying this because later in the interview Tanja talks about how Chinese culture differs from Danish culture.

At another point in the interview Tanja said the following:

Jóhannes: Så du havde et perspektiv på drengen, hvor du så ham som han var i sig selv men Sigbritt hun var mere at hun lagde vægt på det kinesiske i ham og sagde "jamen kinesere de er ofte sådan"?
Tanja: Ja, det er rigtigt. Det gjorde hun.

Jóhannes: So you had a perspective on the boy, where you saw him as he was himself, but Sigbritt more stressed the Chinese aspect of him and said "Well, the Chinese, they're often like that"?

Men ikke sådan at jeg nu har taget alt til mig ukritisk. Der var noget hun sagde som jeg bagefter har tænkt at det kunne gøre sig gældende med Zhou og hans mor - ud fra det samspil jeg har haft med moren. Så der har jeg sagt det kan der være noget i. Men det andet, det har jeg ikke bare sat ind i mig og så er det bare sådan.

Tanja: Yes, that's right. She did. But it's not like I've taken in everything uncritically. There was something she said that I afterwards thought might apply to Zhou and his mother – based on the interaction I've had with his mother. So in that case I said there may be something in it. But the other things, I haven't just taken them on board as if that's just the way things are.

Tanja's quote here reveals that she now is using some of the things Sigbritt said about Chinese people, but there are also some of Sigbritt's comments which she does not make use of in her thinking about Zhou. As I closed the subject of Zhou's Chinese background, Tanja said that what she has just learnt about the Chinese background has burdened her:

Tanja: (…) Men det er også en byrde for mig at skulle tænke på hvordan deres etnicitet spiller ind. Ikke så meget i forhold til Zhou, det tror jeg er nemt nok. Men mere til mødet med mor og det vi sammen skal sætte i gang. Pludselig skal jeg også sætte mig ind i hvordan… Hun er meget sådan at hun bare sidder og smiler - og det var også det Sigbritt sagde om kinesiske kvinder..og moren snakker også lidt gebrokkent.

Jóhannes: Så det som du mener er at det er svært at du nu også skal rumme moren med hendes kineskiske kultur?!

Tanja: Ja det virker meget svært at skulle rumme og forklare…Altså hvordan forklarer jeg de her mennesker i forhold til at de er kinesiske og i forhold til at de nu bor i det danske samfund i denne her kultur. Altså hele den der socialrådgiverrolle - det skal jeg jo ikke! Men det er sådan et socialarbejde på en eller anden måde med det møde – ik'?! Hvis det bliver svært, så må jeg bruge meget tid på det og så må jeg nok forsømme andre

Tanja: (...) But it's also a burden for me to have to think about the role their ethnicity plays. Not so much regarding Zhou, I think that's easy enough. But more for the meeting with his mother and what we're going to do together. Suddenly I have to get an insight into how... She tends very much to just sit there and smile – and that's also what Sigbritt said about Chinese women... and his mother also speaks rather broken Danish.

Jóhannes: So what you mean is that it's hard that you now also have to take into account the mother with her Chinese culture?!

Tanja: Yes, it seems very difficult to take account of that and explain... I mean how do I explain to these people considering that they're Chinese and considering that they now live in Danish society and this culture. That

dele af mit arbejde -i stor dur.

> would be like taking over the role of a social worker – I'm not going to do that! But it is kind of social work in a way, the session, isn't it? If it's difficult, I'll have to spend lots of time on it and then I'll have to leave other work undone – loads of other work.

Tanja reveals in this quote that it has become a burden to her that she now also includes in her thinking the implications of Zhou's Chinese background. She does not think that it is particularly hard to use this in her pedagogical work with Zhou but finds it harder to apply in the meeting she must have with Zhou's mother.

I will now make a summary of how Tanja presently views the importance of Zhou's Chinese background.

> Now I think that the Chinese culture is important in relation to Zhou's family. Because my eyes have been opened to the fact that Chinese people tackle certain matters in a different way than Danish people normally do. It has become a burden for me to now include in my thinking the importance of Zhou's Chinese background – not so much in my pedagogical work with Zhou but in relation to the coming parental meeting with Zhou's mother and our possible subsequent common initiatives.

7.C Tanja's representation of Sigbritt's perspective at the consulting session

In the interview when I asked Tanja to represent Sigbritt's perspective she replied:

Vi havde forskellige perspektiver på børnene. Hun står ikke over og underviser mine elever hver dag. Hun ser mine elever og andre børn mere som enkeltsager. Jeg er sammen med dem hver dag - så jeg skal se på dem hele tiden –ik'?! Hendes tilgang var sådan mere kold eller sådan mere lidt kunstig tilgang.

We had different perspectives on the children. She doesn't stand there teaching my pupils every day. She sees my pupils and other children more as individual cases. I'm with them every day – so I have to look at them all the time, don't I? Her approach was more kind of cold or kind of an artificial approach.

In this quote Tanja says that Sigbritt had a cold approach to Zhou and other children; Tanja also labels Sigbritt's approach as artifical. I will draw these two statements together with the overall line of thinking in the whole quote and argue that Tanja represents Sigbritt's approach as withdrawn from Zhou him-

self.

Further, Tanja says:

Jeg hørte Sigbritt tale meget om Zhou's kinesiske baggrund

I heard Sigbritt talk a lot about Zhou's Chinese background.

Tanja goes on to say about Sigbritt's perspective on the Chinese background:

[Sigbritt] fortalte om hvordan hun mente, at mange kinesere har det i hendes forståelse. Men det var virkeligt rimeligt.

[Sigbritt] talked about how she thinks things are for many Chinese in her understanding. But that was quite reasonable.

In these quotes Tanja represents Sigbritt's perspective as marked by her focus on Zhou's Chinese background. Sigbritt also talked about Chinese people's approach from her point of view. Tanja underlines that what Sigbritt said was reasonable.

After this reply, I continued as follows in the interview:

Jóhannes: Så du havde et perspektiv på drengen, hvor du så ham som han var i sig selv men Sigbritt hun var mere at hun lagde vægt på det kinesiske i ham og sagde "jamen kinesere de er ofte sådan"?

Jóhannes: So you had a perspective on the boy, where you saw him as he was himself, but Sigbritt more stressed the Chinese aspect of him and said "Well, the Chinese, they're often like that"?

Tanja: Ja, det er rigtigt. Det gjorde hun. Men sådan at jeg nu ikke taget alt til mig ukritisk. Der var noget hun sagde som jeg bagefter har tænkt at det kunne gøre sig gældende med Zhou og hans mor - ud fra det samspil jeg har haft samspil med moren. Så der har jeg sagt det kan der være noget i. Men det andet, det har jeg ikke bare sat ind i mig og så er det bare sådan.

Tanja: Yes, that's right. She did. But it's not like I've taken in everything uncritically. There was something she said that I afterwards thought might apply to Zhou and his mother – based on the interaction I've had with his mother. So in that case I said there may be something in it. But the other things, I haven't just taken them on board as if that's just the way things are.

Jóhannes: Kan du nævne noget konkret hun sagde som du er lidt mistænksom over?

Jóhannes: Can you mention anything specific you're a bit sceptical about?

Tanja: Ahhh…buhh..Nej - ikke sådan rigtigt. Jeg kan ikke komme i tanker om noget konkret.

Tanja: Ahhh... hmm... No – not really. I can't think of anything specific.

In this quote we see that Tanja reveals that Sigbritt said some things she could use and some things she could not use. We can see that when I asked Tine to be specific about what Sigbritt said which was not so useful she is unable to

think of any specific thing. However, elsewhere in the interview Tanja reveals one of the things she makes use of:

Hun er meget sådan at hun bare sidder og smiler - og det var også det Sigbritt sagde om kinesiske kvinder..og moren snakker også lidt gebrokkent.	She tends very much to just sit there and smile – and that's also what Sigbritt said about Chinese women… and his mother also speaks rather broken Danish.

Now I will summarise how Tanja represents Sigbritt's perspective at the consulting session.

Sigbritt's approach was withdrawn from Zhou himself and instead Sigbritt focused on Zhou's Chinese background. Sigbritt gave information about Chinese families' approaches to some things which seemed relevant to my work with Zhou. Everything Sigbritt said was reasonable, however it was not all applicable to Zhou's present lifeworld.

7.D Sigbritt's account of her perspective at the consulting session

Now I will investigate how Sigbritt makes an account of her own perspective at the consulting session.

Sigbritt: Jeg tillagde etniciteten en stor betydning, fordi jeg har jo en del erfaringer med kinesiske familier.	Sigbritt: I considered the ethnicity very important, as I have a good bit of experience with Chinese families.
Jóhannes: Og der var nogen træk i det som Tanja sagde om Zhou som ligesom passede sammen med nogle af dine tidligere sager?	Jóhannes: And there were some aspects of what Tanja said about Zhou that kind of fitted in with some of your previous cases?
Sigbritt: Ja, det synes jeg. Når jeg bragte det på banen så er det for mig også noget med at have en helhedsforståelse. Fordi Tanja var meget i det der med at tage børnene hjem og passe på dem.	Sigbritt: Yes, I think there were. When I brought it up, it was also for me kind of about having a holisitic view. Because Tanja was very much into the idea of taking the children home and looking after them.

First I want to point out that here Sigbritt states that she considered Zhou's Chinese ethnicity important in her perspective on Zhou at the consulting session. In Sigbritt's first statement and in her answer to my question, she explains that she focused on Zhou's ethnicity because she has accumulated some knowledge about working with Chinese families and when she heard about Zhou she was reminded of some of her previously acquired knowledge on

working with Chinese families.

Sigbritt goes on to say how she signalled that Tanja should focus on Zhou's Chinese background:

"Jamen, de kommer fra kulturer med for-skellige normer" og "Med udgangspunkt i de normer vil jeg gerne vil behjælpelig med at vi får det tilrettet til -selvfølgeligt så at vi kan være her alle sammen men jeg har re-spekt for jeres normer". Jeg har respekt for at … -og det sagde jeg også til Tanja- …jamen kinesere det er noget meget stolte mennesker og de beder først om hjælp når de er helt ude. Det sagde jeg fra min erfaring, hvor jeg har mødt andre etniske familier som tager hjælpen for givet. Det synes jeg var vigtigt. En vigtig forståelse at give vide-re.

"But they come from cultures with different norms" and "Based on those norms I'd like to help us to arrange things – so that we can all be here to-gether, but I respect your norms". I have respect for... – and I said this to Tanja – ...you know the Chinese are a very proud people and they won't ask for help unless they're really desper-ate. I spoke from my experience, where I've met other ethnic families who take assistance for granted. I thought that was important. An im-portant understanding to pass on.

This quote demonstrates that Sigbritt signalled that first of all you have to re-spect that such families come from cultures with distinctive norms. However I do interpret that Sigbritt implies that even though their norms and culture may have certain characteristics, they as Danish professionals still have to in-tervene if neccesary. I argue in this way because Sigbritt says in the quote 'at vi får det tilrettet til'/'that we'll arrange things'.

Sigbritt continues to characterise her perspective as the following quote il-lustrates:

Jamen jeg lagde som grund i mit perspektiv at det kan være nogle meget svære familier at arbejde med alt efter hvad de kommer med. Jamen jeg har mødt familier der sidder - der er hamrende traumatiske og prøver…og de har et familie mønster hvor sådan noget som vrede fylder meget i denne her familie og vre-de kan være tema vi som danskere kigger på og siger "jamen det må der ligge et eller an-det alvorligt i" men deres vrede kan ligge dels i deres kultur, deres måde at udtrykke sig på eller så kan det ligge i det de har op-levet inden de nåede herop – i deres trauma-tiske oplevelser. Så der er mange ting der

Well, I based my perspective on the fact that they can be very difficult families to work with depending on their baggage. Well, I've met families who sit – who are terribly traumatic and try... and they have a family pat-tern where something like anger is very prominent, and anger can be a topic where we Danes look and say "but there must be something serious there" but their anger may be part of their culture, their way of expressing themselves, or it may come from what they experienced before they

kan være på spil.   arrived here – from their traumatic
                                   experiences. So there are many things
                                   involved.

In this quote Sigbritt says that she implied in her perspective that it is challenging working with immigrant families because their way of behaving may differ from the Danish way.

   I will now make a summary of how in the interview Sigbritt gave an account of her perspective at the consulting session.

In my perspective I gave importance to Zhou's Chinese ethnicity. I presented to Tanja that it was important to take into account that Zhou's Chinese family could have norms that were different from the norms in Danish families. I implied that it is necessary to be able to describe and respect a Chinese family's way of behaving without letting go of the professional duties Tanja has as a school professional.

Appendix 8: The consulting session's influence on how Tanja views Zhou's waiting at the restaurant

8.A Tanja's perspective at the consulting session

In the interview with Tanja I asked:

Jóhannes:

You and Sigbritt had different perspectives on what you said about Zhou sitting and waiting for his mother in the evening where she worked at the restaurant.

Tanja:

Yes – after I'd mentioned something about Zhou often waiting for his mother, Sigbritt immediately said to me: "That's serious. You haven't written that in your referral." And then I thought and touched on what I can allow myself to write. Like that. Because it's actually part of everyday life.

Jóhannes:

Du og Sigbritt havde forskellige perspektiver på det du fortalte at Zhou sidder og venter på sin mor om aftenen på hendes arbejdsplads i restauranten.

Tanja:

Ja - efter jeg havde nævnt noget om at Zhou tit venter på sin mor, så sagde Sigbritt straks til mig:

"Det er alvorligt, det har du ikke skrevet!". Hvor jeg tænkte og hentydede hvad kan jeg tillade mig at skrive. Altså. Fordi det er jo netop en del af hverdagen.

Tanja's answer indicates that at the consulting session Tanja had a conception that it is probably necessary for the family's finances for Zhou's mother to work in the evenings.

In the interview Tanja also says the following about her approach to Zhou's mother working in the evening which implied that Zhou had to wait for her until late:

Moren får jo ikke bare en barnepige eller råd til at gå derhjemme, fordi vi ønsker det, det gør hun jo ikke.

The mother won't get a babysitter or be able to afford to stay at home because we want it, no way.

This quote underlines my indication in the earlier paragraph that Tanja sees the mother's evening work as a necessity for them to be able to afford food in order to live a decent life. Hence Tanja implied that the inevitable consequence was that some evenings Zhou must wait for his mother to finish her work in the restaurant.

Since Tanja had not written this in the draft I conclude that she did not regard this as a clear sign that Zhou was neglected at the time of the consulting session. However, it is important to underline that at the session Tanja did consider Zhou neglected but this was based on other signs she had identified.

I will now summarise Tanja's perspective at the consulting session:

> I saw Zhou's waiting for his mother at the restaurant as unavoidable because Zhou's mother has to work in the evenings in order for them to live a decent life.

8.B   Tanja's perspectives after the consulting session

In the interview I went on to ask what Tanja presently thought about Zhou waiting at the restaurant. Tanja says:

Jeg kan godt se at det er en stor ting. Det kan jeg godt se nu.

I can easily see it's a big thing. I can easily see it now.

In this quote, Tanja states that it is a "big" thing that Zhou is waiting at the restaurant. Later in the interview Tanja further describes what she implies by saying that she now sees it as a "big" thing:

<u>*Jóhannes: hvordan er dit perspektiv udviklet efter mødet?*</u>

<u>Jóhannes:</u> How has your perspective developed after the session?

<u>*Tanja: Jamen jeg ser det som om at det er alvorligt*</u>

<u>Tanja:</u> Well, I look upon it as being serious.

Tanja states that now she views Zhou's waiting as a serious issue. However, Tanja continues:

Men jeg tænker også "Det er deres hverdag. Det er sådan de får det til at løbe rundt". Men ja jeg er påvirket af at hun synes at det var alvorligt.

But I also think "It's their everyday life. That's how they get by." But yes, I have been influenced by her opinion that it was serious.

Tanja states here that she has been influenced by Sigbritt's opinion that Zhou's waiting is serious but she still thinks that this is basically the situation in the family and that's how things are. Later on Tanja expresses this even more forcefully:

Men jeg tænker også "Det er deres hverdag. Det er sådan de får det til at løbe rundt Men så har jeg også tænkt 'Hvad kan jeg gøre med [Zhou's venten]?' Og det havde [Sigbritt] ikke svar på".

But I also think "It's their everyday life. That's how they get by. But I also thought: 'what can I do about [Zhou's waiting]?' And [Sigbritt] didn't have an answer to that."

My conclusion from this quote is that even though Tanja now sees Zhou's waiting as serious she cannot see how it can be resolved.

Here is a summary of her perspective after the consulting session:

Now I see that it is a serious issue that sometimes Zhou is waiting at the restaurant for his mother in the evenings. However, it seems to be an unsolvable issue because the mother must work in the restaurant in order for them to live a decent life.

8.C Tanja's representation of Sigbritt's perspective at the consulting session

Tanja represents Sigbritt's perspective at two points in the interview.
First she says:

Efter jeg havde nævnt noget om at Zhou venter tit på sin mor så sagde Sigrbitt straks til mig: "Det er alvorligt. Det har du ikke skrevet I din underretning."

After I'd mentioned something about Zhou often waiting for his mother, Sigbritt immediately said to me: "That's serious. You haven't written that in your referral."

This quote reveals that Tanja has noted that at the consulting session Sigbritt thought that Zhou's waiting was very serious; indeed the waiting was so serious that she should have mentioned it in her draft referral.

Later on, Tanja says:

Hun sagde, at det må vi prøve at undersøge nærmere og se om vi kan forandre. Men så har jeg også tænkt, hvad kan jeg gøre med det og det havde hun ikke svar på.

She said we must try to look into it more and see if we can change it. But I also thought, what can I do about it and she didn't have an answer to that.

In this quote Tanja states that Sigbritt thought that there was a need to investigate Zhou's waiting further. She also conceived that Sigbritt implied that Zhou's waiting must be investigated to see if it can be changed, but she also says that Sigbritt had no suggestions as to how to change it.

I will now make a summary of Tanja's representation of Sigbritt's perspective on Zhou's waiting at the restaurant while his mother is finishing her work.

Sigbritt signalled that Zhou's waiting was a serious issue and that it should have been written in my draft for a referral. Sigbritt thought that there was a need to investigate further Zhou's waiting and how it can be changed. However, Sigbritt did not have any suggestions on how to change it.

8.D Sigbritt's account of her perspective at the consulting session

Now I will investigate how Sigbritt herself gives an account of her own perspective at the session on Zhou's waiting.

In the interview Sigbritt talks about the signs of neglect that Tanja had written in the draft referral. Regarding these signs Sigbritt said that she thought that all in all it was:

lærerens opgave at justere.   the teacher's job to make adjustments.

Sigbritt continues by saying that at the consulting session she

præciserede at hvor jeg var allermest bekymret (…) det var det der med at [moren] arbejder om aftenen og [Zhou] sidder og venter. Det er ikke ok'   made it clear that where I was most worried (...) was the fact that [his mother] works in the evenings and [Zhou] sits and waits. That's not okay'.

These quotes reveal that Sigbritt says that at the consulting session she signalled clearly to Tanja that Zhou's waiting was not ok.

Sigbritt says later that at the consulting session she said that

der er noget i det der, som man er nødt til at undersøge.   there's something there that has to be looked into.

Sigbritt says that she signalled at the consulting session that the waiting needed to be investigated. Sigbritt continues:

Jeg sagde at så må vi måske forsøge at hjælpe hende med at løse det på en anden måde.   I said that then maybe we should help her to solve it in another way.

Here Sigbritt says that she talked about the need to try to help Zhou's mother to solve the problem, so that Zhou did not have to wait for his mother at the restaurant.

Sigbritt continues:

Jeg sagde at man kunne sige "Ok hvis det er rigtigt svært for dig at passe dit arbejde og have et barn på otte år - Hvordan kan vi så hjælpe dig med at løse det og gøre tingene på en anden måde?" Fordi folk har jo det arbejde som de har og mange af de forældre vi har arbejder på rigtigt mange tidspunkter af døgnet. Så jeg inkluderede i det jeg sagde til Tanja at man jo prøve at se hvordan man kan give og tage i forskellige ender. Jeg nævnte at måske er det i orden at de er alene hjemme tre aftener om ugen – Zhou og hans storebror?   I said that we could say "Okay, if it's really difficult for you to do your work with an eight-year-old child – How can we help you to solve it and do things differently?" Because people have the jobs they have and many of the parents we have work at all hours of the day and night. So I included in what I told Tanja that we have to try to see how one can give and take at both ends. I said that maybe it's possible for them to be alone at home three evenings a week - Zhou and his older brother?

In this quote we see that Sigbritt in her account of her perspective at the consulting session says that she included as an example of a possible solution that Zhou was home with his elder brother three evenings per week. But Sigbritt underlines that she did not say that this was the best solution to go for but one example of how to avoid the waiting.

At the end of the passage about the waiting Sigbritt says:

Men jeg var rigtigt tilfreds med den aftale vi lavede, at de har den her samtale i næste uge hvor de foruroligende ting bliver undersøgt nærmere. At der bliver lavet nogle klare målbare mål og så samler op på dem inden sommerferien. Det synes jeg var en rigtig rigtig god måde at arbejde på.

But I was really pleased with that agreement we made that they have this parental meeting next week, where the worrying things are looked at more closely. Where some clear measurable goals are set and we put this all together before the summer holiday. I thought that was a really really good way to work.

Sara says that she signalled that it was a good step forward in looking into the issue of Zhou's neglect that Tanja would conduct a meeting the following week.

I will now summarise Sigbritt's account of her own perspective at the consulting session.

I signalled clearly that Zhou's waiting was not ok. I also signalled that Zhou's waiting and other things needed to be investigated further. I implied that we needed to try to help Zhou's mother to solve the problems. I thought it was a good step forward to investigate the worrying things further at the coming parental meeting.