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**HRM, POWER
and possible spaces of becoming human**

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Subject (becoming) in Power

What has power to do with Human Resource Management (HRM)? Perusing HRM-textbooks one will find, that power as a concept, only seldom is approached explicitly. When the subject of power is addressed directly, it is primarily as a question of bargaining power between organisation and labour market institutions, the power of a leader or person in terms of the right to execute punishment and the duty to obedience or *empowerment*, as a countermove to the effects of bureaucratic workplace routines “...where initiative is stifled and workers become alienated”¹. Indirectly one can identify power as interesting in the HRM-literature, as a question of influence or status of HRM as a function in business. Does or does HRM not play a central role in business? Is HR part of top management? That is questions concerned with how power is distributed as a commodity in reality.

This paper is taking up the concept of power as a distributing force of reality, as opposed to a distribution of commodities in reality. In this way the position on power adopted is similar to the in Deleuzes words very simple definition of power by Foucault: “Power is a relation between forces, or rather every relation between forces is a ‘power relation.’” (Deleuze 1999: 70). This way of conceptualising power has as a consequence, that power always has several sides:

- Power is not essentially repressive
- Power is not unilateral, but requires both “masters and mastered”
- Power is practiced more than it is possessed.

The first point is serving as both the way in and the way out of this paper. The paper will pry at the workings of power in order to unfold power as a positive as well as repressing force using HRM as the practice where power is working. “The exercise of power is a “conduct of conducts” and a management of possibilities” (Foucault, 2000: 341) Consequently, the way to study power is not to try to “find it”, but to see, how it is practiced. (Deleuze, 1999: 71) Studying power in HRM therefore becomes a question on grasping the power relations and force fields emerging from HRM-practice. One could therefore ask the question: “What is HR about – and what is HR practice?”

Barbara Townley (1994, 1998, 1999) has done this extensively and demonstrates how a Foucauldian analysis focuses on practices, which structure social relations. (Townley, 1998: 194) Townley conceptualizes HRM as the medium through which the employment relationship may be organized or disciplined through technologies of the self.

Technologies of the self

Technologies of the self are a media through which human beings are made subjects in our culture. *“This form of power that applies itself to immediate everyday life categorizes the individual, marks him by his own individuality, attaches him to his own identity, imposes a law of truth on him that he must recognize and others have to recognize in him. It is a form of power that makes individuals subjects.”* (Foucault, 2000: 331) The term ‘subject’ is pointing towards a double domination: First being subject of others through control and dependency, and second being bound to one's own identity through consciousness or knowledge of self. Both connotations are suggesting a form of power; that subjugates and makes subject to. (Foucault, 2000) Technologies of the self are technologies individuals are invoking on their own body, thinking, being and self-control, hoping to obtain some sort of salvation in this life by fitting in. (Foucault, 1997a) Technologies are normative towards certain identities and prescribe how to control the self and awareness of self. (Foucault, 1997b)

This way of operating on the individual lies at the very heart of HRM, and can be seen at in HRM ideology as well as HRM practice. The following citation from a textbook on Strategic Human Resource Management is making the position perfectly clear: *“...One of the major roles of human resource management is to provide control. Such control may focus on behaviour such as through use of performance appraisals: outputs, such as accomplishment of goals; and inputs such as through the selection and training of employees. Because of the difficulty in measuring intellectual capital, organizations will be unable to use controls that require precise measures of organizational learning. It might be speculated that input controls would be appropriate because they avoid the necessity of having precise measures of learning. By*

selecting employees motivated toward learning and self-control, less emphasis on other controls may be required.” (Greer, 2001: 144) This way of conceptualising HRM is by no means singular.² A very interesting point is the way control is working as a breaking point or catalyst for organising as well as possible subject positions. But first will discuss, how HRM by pointing at the self-controlled, learning and motivated employee is creating technologies of self-creating a ever more forceful individualization.

To ensure, that the ideology of self-control can be realised HRM is developing and applying tools and practices: The right form of motivation, learning and self-control is in the field of HRM determined by people’s competencies.³⁴ Competencies can be either: bought, build or borrowed. (Ulrich, 1997) But, as Spencer & Spencer (1993) notes, it is difficult and expensive to build (develop) competence, why the organization if possible should ensure the right competencies by testing when hiring people, and recruit the right kind of people.⁵ And here the right kind of people is people displaying the right kind of behaviour and attitude, necessary to obtain important HRM outcomes: Strategic integration, Flexibility/adaptability, Quality and Commitment. (Guest, 1987: 516)

These sought for outcomes of HRM are all pointing towards a strong normative and totalising base in the ideology and rhetoric’s of HRM, and are subjecting the individuals to quite precise prescriptions for self-control and self-awareness. In the words of well known critic of HRM Karen Legge: *“Commitment is portrayed as internalised belief, as generating constructive proactivity, of “going one step further” on part of employees. Compliance in contrast is seen as maintained by externally imposed bureaucratic control systems, as generating reactive rather than proactive behaviours, of working to contract of even “working to rule”. The development of commitment has been seen as intimately connected to that other major concern of HRM, the management of cultural change. “ (Legge, 1995: 174)* The individuals are not just expected to perform, they are expected to feel the right way, when performing. Dave Ulrich (1995), the author of the popular “Human Resource Champions” is exactly emphasising this need for alignment of internal culture and market identity though the process of “creating a shared mindset”. (Ulrich, 1997) Ulrich is stating that the ensuring of this creation happens

when the HR professionals themselves have obtained the right mindset: *“When HR professionals possess a shared mindset, the users of their services will absorb it as well” (Ulrich, 1997: 120)*

In Foucauldian terms this focus on harmony expressed in HRM can be said to be a pastoral form of power. Pastoral power is according to Foucault: Salvation oriented (not political); oblativistic (not sovereign); individualizing (not legal); coextensive and continuous with life; linked with a production of truth – the truth of the individual himself. (Foucault, 2000: 333) In this way that which is to be managed has in the field of HRM been transformed from a body to be directly disciplined and from a focus on external working processes towards a management of selves. HRM is giving a almost exclusive attention to the development of methods of measuring, controlling and developing the individual employee in terms of, how the individual employee can manage a inner spiritual and moral relation to self. (Mogensen, 1999, Andersen, 2003, Townley, 1995) The function of HR-professionals is one of education and salvation – a salvation that shall be ensured in this world and not the next. The power, which is practiced, is one of simultaneous individualization and totalisation. (Foucault, 2000: 336) And this kind of power operates on individuals in two ways: By making them objects of knowledge (totalisation) and by making them knowing subjects (individualization). On the one hand individuals are made manageable through examination and mapping, on the other hand individuals are presented images of identity, functioning as self-knowledge. (Foucault, 2000, Kristensen, 1987, Townley, 1998)

Townley is identifying two technologies of the self on the basis of the mentioned two ways in which power operates: The examination and the confession - both of which can be found in HRM, and most easily in the area of competence. The examination associates to the objectification of individuals, and is connected to a resource-based view of HRM.⁶ *“It locates individuals and their respective positions in populations and enables the calculation of “gaps” between individuals. By referring individual actions to the “population” it also allows “norms” to be established. It makes possible the calculation of averages and the formation of categories...(…)...The examination*

enables individuals to become compartmentalized, measured, reported, inscribed and calculated for the purpose of administrative decision making". (Townley, 1998: 200)

Where the examination is an objectification, the confession is a subjectivation and enables according to Townley the pastoral form of power. The confession calls for self-improvement and is judgemental, because faults always will be bound to bad intentions. In this way competence is an ongoing process of building and correcting the self. Not being able to see possibilities for development (=corrections and additives) is incompetence per se and the evil that has to be rooted out. A competent self is self-confessing to in-competence in acceptable terms of (self-)development. (Andersen, 2000)

Even though Townley is in the same article, where she is presenting the examination and the confession (Townley, 1998) is presenting a case against binarity (for example the dichotomisation in HRM between "hard" and "soft") and for depth in analysing HRM, the examination and the confession ends up being just that – a binarity. Where she wants to present the both positive and negative sides of power, the confession and examination ends up being a choice between Scylla and Charybdis, and the positive practices being shallow and commonsense seen in relation to the rich "ressentiment"-like analysis of the negative effects of individualisation. The result can be seen as a confirmation of the repressiveness of the totalisation, but not presenting a way out. I will therefore commit myself to trying to locate the possible spaces of humanity in Human Resource Management, and I think the road to be taken has to go over the positions of counterforce, which every force according to Foucault will call in to life. (Foucault, 2000)

Analysing the possible spaces of humanity in HRM-practice in terms of confession and examination

A counter position can be created from the point of ontology. It has been shown by Townley that the Foucauldian analysis of HRM is unfolding disciplining practices and the technologies of self of HRM is creating the individualized self. The human manifold has to be controlled through technologies of self or disciplining techniques. Order is the

normal and sought after, while disorder is pathologic – something to be cured. But this thinking-practice⁷ of HRM is pointing towards a specific ontology – a thinking of nature as undifferentiated – an unchangeable force, a commodity; an essence and it forces us to think difference as something human or culturally imposed on this inert nature (Colebrook, 2002: 39).

One might then with the thinking of Deleuze state that difference – or disorder – is positive “... *because there is not an undifferentiated life that then needs to be structured by difference.*” (Colebrook, 2002: 28) When a difference first is perceived, it is reduced – and thereby no longer a difference. The “essence” of difference is precisely its *imperceptibility!* Therefore, when Foucault states, that power only is exercised over free subjects it means that the subjects have a whole field of possible modes of behaviour, reactions and conducts. (Foucault, 2000: 342) One may ask, what kind of possible reactions, conducts and behavior can be available in the totalizing discourse of competence, where behaviors are put forwards as positive regardless of context.⁸ And the answer lies right in front – “They have almost any unthinkable possibility”, because the totalizing discourses of competence also are severe reductions of what competence can be. It presents itself as totalizing, and it might be difficult to see, that the models of competence are not contingent. That does not mean they are not – it only means that it is difficult to break a habit of thinking. As Foucault states the solution of a problem lies not in the answering of the question, but in stating the question differently. (Foucault, 2001: 103) The differently stated question could be asking how and where there are cracks in the rhetoric’s and practices of HRM, which can be torn open. Looking at HRM-ideology as an argument it springs into mind, that it is somewhat circular:

There is a postulated need for motivated, self-controlled and self-developing individuals because there is need for control, to make sure the goals of strategic integration; flexibility; quality and commitment are reached. We need in other words to manipulate people to self-control, because we cannot measure and control human capital directly. Unfortunately the self-control is only visible as confessionary tales, so we create not only pictures of the desired employees but categories by which to measure, whether or not the “tales are true tales” (but remember this was the starting point – no reliable

measurement). And in this way HRM is playing two horses simultaneously (so to speak): The human capital-horse, where competence is conceptualized as a commodity to be mapped and objectivized,⁹ and the relational-horse of subjectivity, where the subject is given to it self. Where the subject has to subject itself to confessions of incompetence to be perceived competence. *“The duty to development has manifested itself as the moral of our time, which has as a consequence, that leaders has the right and duty to interfere vis a vis those who are rebelling against the order, sense and rationality ruling.”* (Mogensen, 2000: 16)

What is important to note is, that it is not a question of either or. The horses are running the same race. It is not a question of some organizations having the one rhetoric and others the other. The employee is at the same time and in the same space subjected to both. It is not either “the humanistic perspective” or “the rationalistic” perspective.¹⁰¹¹ It is not a question of the duality in either “hard” or “soft” HRM, but a question of HRM as both – as both planes exist equally but without ever being reduced to one another. It is either a neither or a both – which essentially is the same thing. We are talking both examination and confession. A kind of HRM-schizophrenia, where trying to find out which HRM-personality is the “true” one, is deemed a failure from the start, because it is all and none, which are creating the becoming of HRM and the possibilities. This is the way out created by a becoming ontology. It is not a question of “seeking one self” or finding oneself, but a question of creating oneself from a becoming perspective, without a phenomenological quest for the true nature. And here the rhetoric’s of the transactional, human capital or the relational, humanistic create different and equally legitimate and forceful points against which to create self.

Human Capital¹²¹³

Let us try by a reading of a human capital perspective to locate the inner ways out: the possible counter positions. An exponent of this perspective is Nordhaug (1993a) who argues that human resources – and thereby competences – is seen to be the most important prerequisite for business development, competitiveness and hereby its economical success. This is why organisations need to manage competence. It is his focus to identify and classify the different types of human resources, which are of

unique importance in regard to performance. Nordhaug wishes to move focus from the means, generating human capital, to the substance of human capital itself.¹⁴ In his quest for the substance of human capital Nordhaug uses the concept of competence synonymous with human capital.¹⁵

The typology of competence by Nordhaug conceptualises competence as an individual resource, and on the “inner market” of the organisation the employees are the suppliers of competence. Because the employees presumably will display opportunistic behaviour¹⁶ the organisations have the problem, that competence development with a low degree of firm specificity is making the external labour market attractive to employees (external employability). On the other hand if the firm invests in competence development with a high degree of firm specificity (internal employability) the firm risks that competences suddenly are obsolete, because of technological development or shifts in supplier, customers and/or networking partners.

Competence is something the employees possess, which is useful to the firm and hereby the status as resources stands forth: Resources are in the resource-based view, sources to competitive advantages, not just because the firm has a certain form of “good resources”, but because the firm has distinctive competences making the firm able to use there resources effectively.¹⁷ Competence must in the perspective of Nordhaug be seen as a resource in itself, which can be used more or less effectively/competent. Further it must be assumed, that competence hereby also is a way of using resources in the organization – which means that the way of using becomes a competence in it self. The concept of competence is hereby both tied up to a resource level (competence as a commodity) and an operative level (competence is a way of handling resources). Nordhaug does not specify this last part of the competence concept. When labeling competence resources the concept is reified. Competence is seen, as something the employee has in him- or her-self and which through the theoretical conceptualization has to be reduced to manageable units to be planned, managed, developed and used like the other resources the firm possess. The analytical concept is made independent of the individual and leaves only the resource. The individual is carrying the resources, the

competence is made from resources, and the result is an objectivised, reified understanding of competence, which can be managed rationally.

The resulting definition of competence is: “*Work-related competences are ...defined as the composite of human knowledge, skills and aptitudes that may serve productive purposes in organization.*” (Nordhaug, 1993a: 50) As Nordhaug is working towards a analytically useful concept of competence he is operationalizing the three elements of competence (knowledge, skills and aptitudes) in relation to each other. Knowledge is understood as different forms of more or less organized information. Aptitudes are capacities to act in certain ways, Skills are inborn, potential capacities to develop knowledge or aptitudes. ¹⁸ Further Nordhaug is differentiating between formal competence (education, documented experience) and real competence. Real competence is defined as knowledge, skills and aptitudes that can be used in the work situation¹⁹, which must mean, that the formal competence not necessarily is part of the real competence. To have an education or documented experience is not the same as this education or experience can be operationalized in the work-situation. Last Nordhaug is arguing that skills and knowledge has to be mediated through aptitudes to become manifest competence. Are they not mediated, they stay latent competence. In the table below the relations between the separate parts of the competence concept has been visualized.

Table 2: The concept of competence by Nordhaug

Competence			
Knowledge, Skills and Aptitudes			
Formal		Real	
<i>Education and documented experience</i>		<i>Competence, which can be used in the work</i>	
Latent	Manifest	Latent	Manifest

Source: Bramming, 2001:48

This differentiation in formal, real, latent and manifest competence are basically a premise for all competences and makes a possible point of departure for the assessment

of the competence in relation to the actual work. On this background Nordhaug is developing a typology of competence that is tied to firm specificity and task specificity, inspired by transaction-cost- theory.²⁰ Nordhaug wishes to remove the “dependency between the transformation of input (Knowledge, Skills, Aptitudes) into (effective) output, and arrive at a decontextualized typology of competence. The resource as input is in focus here an exactly not the transformation of the resource to effective behavior. It is a radical resource-based thinking, where the individual is reduced into context for the manageable resources.

The differentiation into firm- and task-specificity is creating the organization as an inner market, where competences are the resources with which to bargain. Nordhaug is using firm- and task-specificity to divide competences into for types with high/low firm- and/or task-specificity, whereby competence development, which is tied to the strategy of the firm, is made possible. Firm-specificity shows the degree to which the competence is unique to the actual firm. Low firm-specific competence can be used in more firms on the labor market. Task-specificity shows the degree to which the competence is related to a narrow set of tasks. Low task-specific competencies competence usable in more different tasks. The terms used are: Meta-Competences, Intraorganizational Competences, Standard Technical Competences and Unique Competences.

The area of appliance of the typology is closely connected to the point of departure in transaction-cost theory²¹ and can according to Nordhaug be used to decide what kind of developmental activities the organization should proceed with. Nordhaug argues, that there are different areas of appliance, but the most central must be, that the firm with the typology can figure out, what kind of competence it wishes as output.²²

The typology is resulting in many possible classifications of competence, as every type (meta, standard, intraorganizational and unique) must be seen as a competence, which could be a skill, knowledge or an aptitude. There can be either latent or manifest. This gives 24 theoretical possible classifications, which has to be captured empirically.

Table 3: Teoretical possible classifications of competence

Meta-Competences	Skills	Latent
		Manifest
	Knowledge	Latent
		Manifest
	Aptitudes	Latent
		Manifest
Standard Technical Competences	Skills	Latent
		Manifest
	Knowledge	Latent
		Manifest
	Aptitudes	Latent
		Manifest
Intraorganizational Competences r	Skills	Latent
		Manifest
	Knowledge	Latent
		Manifest
	Aptitudes	Latent
		Manifest
Unique Competences	Skills	Latent
		Manifest
	Knowledge	Latent
		Manifest
	Aptitudes	Latent
		Manifest

Source: Bramming, 2001: 51-

The thought with Nordhaugs way of working with individual competences is, that competences can be mapped and fabricated as resources, which – if unique – can generate a competitive advantage for the firm. Through the differentiation in firm- and task-specificity Nordhaug is tying the competences directly to the functions of the firm and is hereby presenting the types of competence as the base for competence development.

In the case of making competence a question of human capital the object of control is reduced to aptitudes, skills and knowledge. Superimposed to this picture of the firm as an inner market is a picture of the context of HRM as a dynamic and turbulent marked determining what is necessary development, and thereby what competence should be developed. In this way we have on the one hand a rational and essentialist definition of competence and a figure of the marked as predetermining the contents of the

competences. Which leaves competence totally open to any convincing rhetoric from the marked (inner or outer?). Competence is simultaneously open and closed. Closed as an individual – or nearly intra-individual commodity – and open vis a vis the construction of the “ingredients”.

The inner way out

At first glance the reading of the human capital perspective on competence leaves no cracks. The individual is left no room for humanity by this totalising and maddening story of rational and functional management, making examination depersonalised, as the individual is taken out of the equation. But this exactly makes this kind of technology arbitrary. Everyone can use it as an otherwise neutral weapon in the

The possibilities for classification are so overwhelming and it is impossible to determine with any authority whether a competence is definitely in one category or another. There fore the typology can always be used to point to the fact of something not being in it – some competence or other. On the one hand the typology will manage the fields of possibility for the subjects of HRM, but in doing so it raises demands of precision, equality and reduced flexibility. Because the way of conceptualising reality as well as humans is essentialist; development will always be towards something predefined and therefore also something obsolete or reduced. The typology is able to function as a shield against dynamics and turbulence, as any employee can justify his or her conduct by referring to the typology as a conduct of conducts. The counter move of HRM would then be to invoke the gospels of the desirability of “mutuality” and “reciprocal dependence” between employer and employee in order for the employer to obtain “commitment to organisational objectives” that is needed for organisational success. Where the typology shows how to place the “right” people (or resources, as if they could be detached) into the “right” jobs as an important means of integrating HRM practice, the harmonious humming of HRM points at another sphere of feelings and states of mind.

The employee can chose to invoke the rhetoric’s of development and inner alignment with the organisation through confession, and hereby create a position of competence

and hereby of invincibility (or a state of “un-firability”, anyway) In doing so, the employee can invoke the rhetoric’s of change, learning, strategy and dynamics.

With Foucault we can say, that what is happening are strategies in motion: *“Thus one can interpret the mechanisms brought into play in power relations in terms of strategies.” (Foucault, 2000:346).*

The way of creating the individual, as a carrier of goods on a market place, creates the obvious counter position, where the individual is no longer a committed member of an organization. This invokes what Legge calls the rhetoric’s of “tough love” on part of the organisation: *“The rhetoric of “tough love” then glosses the potential tensions between “external fit” and commitment to “soft” HRM values. Development, flexibility and adaptability are defined by the organisation and its own interests. The company’s interests and those of its employees are equated. If an individual’s abilities and performance are defined as inappropriate by the company, given the identification of employee and organisational interests, that person must inevitably be redefined as no longer an employee, and a tough decision may have to be made in loving concern for the employees the company wishes to retain, who depend on its survival and growth.” (Legge, 1995: 90)*

Ironically, as Legge put it, HRM is itself facilitating the development for this rhetoric, where the wanted commitment and loyalty is turned to individuality and egocentrism. If everything is measured by the individual (or inside the individual possible or not...) and is summed up in a judgement of competence or in-competence encompassed in a craving for commitment, self-control and alignment with arbitrary and shifting strategies, why should the individual connect to the rhetoric’s of love and harmony other than to further self-interest.

The statement of the imperceptibility of the true difference is pointing towards the very interesting thinking of Deleuze: That of difference in kind and difference in degree. Deleuze reading Bergson states: *“The Absolute is difference, but difference has two facets, difference in degree and difference in kind. (Deleuze, 2002: 35)* The differences in degree we can easily find in the shifting, co-existing ways of connecting to HRM.

The difference in kind can only, states Deleuze, be found when looking through temporality and suspending any idea of space (and hereby HRM-practices??). Is what is necessary to offer a real difference to the area of HRM and create spaces for humanity, to suspend analysing the space-bound practices and look for, what our duration in time – the suspension of HR-thinking into time – might reveal.

Are the unintended consequences of HRM shown in this paper in the shifting strategies of those subjected and subjecting others practices a beginning of such a suspension?

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¹ Redman & Wilkinson (2001), p. 336.

² Se Legge (1995) for a through discussion of HRM.

³ There has been and is still a lot of debate and disagreement whether the correct term is competence, competences or competencies. Using competencies in this paper should not be taken as a matter of principle, but as a choice of convenience.

⁴ The subject of competence will be elaborated in the following paragraphs.

⁵ See also Nordhaug, 1993a, Boyatzis, 1982

⁶ See Nordhaug, 1993a.

⁷ Thinking-practice or practice of thought is a concept developed by Ph.D. Christine Mølgaard Frandsen in her Ph.D.-thesis. Forthcoming in 2003.

⁸ See Townleys brilliant analysis of Boyatzis's competence thinking. (Townley, 1999)

⁹ See Bramming, 2001 and Bramming & Frandsen 2003 for a discussion of this.

¹⁰ See Bramming & Larsen, 2000, Sandberg, 1994

¹¹ See Legge (1995) for an elaboration on these dualities.

¹² This paragraph is building on chapter 3 in Bramming (2001).

¹³ The reading of Nordhaug is primarily based on Nordhaug, 1993a

¹⁴ Nordhaug, 1993a: 19

¹⁵ Nordhaug, 1993a: 20

¹⁶ Nordhaug is referring to Williamson (1985), who in transaction cost theory argues that individuals presumably will behave opportunistic. Therefore the firm must regulate transactions through contracts, if high task specificity investments – the market mechanism is therefore not useful as a regulating structure. Nordhaug is not making a detailed discussion of Willamsons argument vis a vis the competence typology, but is recognizing, that the presumably opportunistic behaviour will place the firm in a dilemma.

¹⁷ Nordhaug & Grønhaug, 1994: 90-91. Nordhaug follows the argument from the resource-based theory, and states that unique resources create competitive advantages. Barney (1991), Wernerfeldt (1984)

¹⁸ Nordhaug (1996), side 24

¹⁹ Nordhaug (1998), side 56

²⁰ Nordhaug is referring to Williamson (1985) and is pointing to idiosyncracies as the main point of departure for his conceptualisation of work related, individual competences. Ideosyncracy can be understood as competences, that only can be used in a limited context and thereby competence ideosyncracy is defined as combinations of task-specificity and firm-specificity. If a competence only is usable for one concrete task, in one concrete organisation, this competence is on the one side giving a comparative competitive advantage; on the other side the employee cannot sell his competence to other organisations. In relation to the definition of competence ideosyncracy must mean that knowledge, skills and aptitudes can be separated further into task- and firm-specificity.

²¹ There is one difference in the way Nordhaug and Williamson (1985) are treating task- and firm-specificity (Nordhaug) and active-specificity (Williamson). Nordhaug is seeing the specificities in relation to the inner context of the firm (which makes the firm a inner market for competence), Williamson is using active-specificity in relation to external partners investment in active-specific resources, production facilities etc. Task- and firm-specificity is not a demand the firm is posing towards external partners before a formal contract is signed, but alone a way in which the firm can assess the type of competence, which the employee possess.

²² Nordhaug 1993a: 69