



# In Search of Regained Time? Autism and Organizational [A]temporality in the Light of Humanistic Management

Coralie Fiori-Khayat<sup>1,2,3</sup>

Received: 1 June 2021 / Accepted: 25 July 2023 / Published online: 16 August 2023  
© The Author(s), under exclusive licence to Springer Nature B.V. 2023

## Abstract

This paper investigates the relationship that people with high functioning autism have with organizational temporality by considering this operationalization within the framework of humanistic management. To do so, it proposes an analysis based on seven propositions. Autism is a disorder that is still poorly understood and often linked to social depictions that are as unfounded as they are repulsive. It remains an unexplored area of study in the field of management sciences. Existing scholarship has established that people with autism have great difficulty finding and retaining employment. While it is well known that they have weak social skills, their difficulties in relation to time have only been studied in medical research, even though organizational temporality substantially shapes the functioning of teams. The operationalization of autistic temporality as a particular temporality within humanistic management allows for the development of a new conceptual framework based on a consideration of neuro-atypia. This paper begins with a presentation of the theoretical background. It then develops the theoretical model. Implications, limitations and directions for further studies are discussed before concluding.

**Keywords** Conceptual paper · Temporality · Autism · Organizational behavior · Humanistic management

## Introduction

On May 8, 2021, Elon Musk, CEO of Tesla and SpaceX, revealed on a television show that he has a high-functioning type of autism, formerly referred to as “Asperger’s syndrome.”<sup>1</sup> (Pesce, 2021). He publicly declared, “*Look, I know I sometimes say or post strange things, but that’s just how my brain works [...] To anyone who’s been offended, I just want to say I reinvented electric cars, and I’m sending people to Mars in a rocket ship. Did you think I was also going to be a chill, normal dude?*”. High-functioning autism is a neurodevelopmental disorder of unknown origin, characterized by a major structural alteration of communication and social interactions, specific and restricted interests, and

stereotyped and repetitive behaviors (American Psychiatric Association, 2013). Its prevalence rate, about 1% of the population, is growing rapidly due to better access to diagnosis (Coetzer, 2016). It was long considered as a psychosis (Fletcher-Watson & Happé, 2019), attributed to the mother’s behavior. The creation of a caring educational environment required a complete break with the parents and the institutionalization of the child. It was not until the early 1980s that the psychoanalytic approach was replaced by more scientifically rigorous approaches (Fletcher-Watson & Happé, 2019). These neuroscientific analyses established a picture of cerebral diversity. For the majority of the human population, overall, the brain functions in a common way—neurotypical. A minority presents a different form of brain functioning or neurodevelopmental evolution—neurodiverse. Autism is now considered one of the major forms of neurodiversity (Krzeminska et al., 2019). The notion of the autism spectrum accounts for the multiple nuances that exist within it. Although the medical and psychoanalytical model of autism as a psychosis still persists in some countries, its scientific basis is increasingly being challenged. This paper is based

<sup>1</sup> As Baron-Cohen (2018) recalls, although Hans Asperger helped further understanding of high functioning autism, his involvement with and strong support of the Nazi regime make his name infamous nowadays.

✉ Coralie Fiori-Khayat  
cfk.recherche@gmail.com;  
coralie.fiori-khayat@icn-artem.com

<sup>1</sup> ICN Business School (Nancy France) & CEREFIGE Research Lab (Lorraine University France), Campus ARTEM - 86 Rue du Sergent Blandan, 54000 Nancy, France

<sup>2</sup> IHMA (Donahue Business School, Duquesne University), Pittsburgh, USA

<sup>3</sup> IHMA (Fordham University), New York City, USA

on the neurodiversity model, restricting my discussion to people with autism without intellectual disabilities.

Autism is still synonymous with presenting major difficulties to employment, even in the absence of mental retardation (Harmuth, et al., 2018). Some sectors, notably information technology (Annabi & Locke, 2019), higher education and research, have a considerably larger presence of people with high functioning autism than within the general population (Baron-Cohen et al., 2001). However, significant representation in a limited number of professions does not mask the precarious professional circumstances that many people with autism experience (Baldwin et al., 2014). The human, economic and social cost of this precarity is high and may not be sustainable in the event of an economic crisis—that is before we even consider whether it is right to confine people with autism to living on charity (Buescher et al., 2014).

It is now thought that damage to the frontal cortex (Stoner et al., 2014) impairs social functioning in people with autism. This social impairment complicates their organizational integration, but it is only one part of the problem. Indeed, among all the neuronal alterations linked to autism, it has been observed that the capacity to situate oneself in time is strongly diminished in people with autism compared with people outside of the spectrum (Allman, 2011; Allman & DeLeon, 2009; Jurek et al., 2019). Time is a structuring device for all people (Ancona et al., 2001). As such, it shapes an important part of organizational life, which is increasingly characterized by an acceleration of time, in other words by a temporality that is becoming shorter (Rosa, 2013). As an emerging area of study (Black et al., 2019), management science research on the organizational inclusion of people on the spectrum has focused on issues related to social interactions (Bury et al., 2021a, 2021b), setting aside many specific behaviors associated with autism. In particular, the only existing literature on the relationship between autism and temporality (Casassus et al., 2019) has been published by doctors in psychiatry, neurology and medical imaging journals. To my knowledge, no scholarship exists on the organizational consequences of the relationship between autism and temporality and this paper aims to address this gap. This relationship, as it interacts with organizational rhythm, is of theoretical and managerial interest. This paper takes autistic temporality as a particular way of functioning. Two temporalities coexist: organizational temporality (which we usually experience in the workplace) and autistic temporality, which manifests itself as an atemporality because of the specific relationship to time that people with autism experience. By proposing an analysis based on 7 propositions, I consider the ways in which humanistic management can contribute to promoting the dignity and wellbeing of employees with specific needs.

This paper proceeds as follows: first, I present the theoretical background by contextualizing the topic of temporality, autistic specificities and the primary features of humanistic management, which constitutes my operational framework. I proceed by outlining and developing the theoretical model. Implications, limitations and future directions for research are then discussed, before concluding.

## Literature Review

### Organizational Time, a Fleeting and Constraining Construct

Time is a structuring factor for everyone, especially within organizational life (Ancona et al., 2001). However, it is rarely analyzed by specialists in management sciences (Holt & Johnsen, 2019). Moreover, the influence of temporal perception on ethical issues is curiously absent from many debates (Bansal & Des Jardine, 2014). Time has two distinct meanings (Sztompka, 1993): an objective and a subjective understanding of time (Blue, 2019). In the objective concept of time, the term refers to a duration measurable in numerical units that has a universal value. Whether we are in Paris, New York or Beijing, an hour lasts sixty minutes. Time is measured by the chronometer, independent from the will of individuals (Bluedorn & Denhardt, 1988). It is the same form of time that medicine classifies in three categories (circadian time, interval time, and millisecond time) according to the type of function required (Jurek et al., 2019). This objective concept of time finds its opposite in a subjective understanding, which comes from an individual's perceptions, their interests, and their personal and subjective experience of a given moment. Passing time is thus no longer perceived as having the same duration (McGrath & Rotchford, 1983). Its operational and social value is central here. Time is considered as intrinsically linked to events and, more precisely, to the meaning of these events within the context of one's social life (Clark, 1985). An hour spent in the arms of one's lover is, subjectively, much shorter than an hour spent at the dentist's, despite having the same objective duration. When applied to the organizational context, this subjective conception of time represents a significant pitfall since it draws together the subjective dimensions (the way in which each person situates themselves in time and in relation to time) (Waller et al., 1999; Zimbardo & Boyd, 1999), the intersubjective dimensions (the differences in rhythm between members of the same team) (Waller et al., 2001), and cultural differences (differences in the relationship to time from one geographical area to another) (Ancona et al., 2001). In other words, time understood subjectively is a social construct (Huy, 2001), which can be used by the

organization in the context of a power struggle, especially in institutionalization processes (Lawrence et al., 2001).

Independent of such processes, the organizations and, more generally, the societies of the capitalist world are advancing at an ever-greater speed (Rosa et al., 2017) and thus temporality becomes ever briefer. This is not, according to Rosa et al (2017), an impression but an empirically observed and ontologically explicable reality. Dynamic stabilization<sup>2</sup> is, in fact, necessary for the maintenance of capitalist systems. Whether one considers this maintenance at the economic and social level, or at the political and institutional level, it relies on a form of innovation and growth that requires an ever-more rapidly changing temporality. This acceleration translates into a quantitative increase (of events, processes, products and services, movements of funds, etc.) within a given temporal unit (Rosa, 2013). Employees are entrusted with an increasing number of tasks to complete within a shorter time frame due to the influence of new technologies. Acceptable response times are decreasing: what was a few days in the age of letters is now only a few hours or even minutes in the age of emails and instant messages. This acceleration poses several problems: the apparent gratuity of email increases the volume of messages to be processed, which, in turn, induces stress because of the expected speed of response and it thus becomes difficult to prioritize. Despite policies concerning the right to disconnect, employees are expected to be available in the evenings, on weekends, and during vacations (Stich et al., 2018). In the workplace, this increases the pressure of deadlines (Waller et al., 2001), leading to hyperactivity among teams as the deadline approaches (Karau & Kelly, 1992; Lim & Murnighan, 1994). The result is a *perpetuum mobile* [Montaigne (de), 1595, rééd. 2019], which, contrary to its original sixteenth-century meaning, is not only movement but frenzy.

Such perpetual rush is fraught with consequences and risks. Beyond the fact that it is often built on the excessive exploitation of non-renewable natural resources and therefore jeopardizes any idea of sustainable development (Bansal & Des Jardine, 2014; Küpers, 2020), it carries with it major psychosocial risks. Reversible psychiatric pathologies (not resulting from neurodevelopmental disorders) linked to stress are on the rise (Rosa et al., 2017). This has major consequences for a country's health system, both in terms of organizing health care and the availability of social support services. The problem therefore lies in the modification of rhythm (Blue, 2019), giving the impression that

one is “running behind the times” (Karau & Kelly, 1992). Exhaustion and anxiety result not so much from time itself, but from the acceleration of sequences, i.e., the quantitative increase of what is done or produced in each temporal unit. Consequently, it modifies the subjective experience that one has of the event that takes place within the temporal unit.

Rhythmic modifications profoundly disrupt the repetitions of practices (which can be qualified as “routines”, without linking them to a social dimension). Routines imply a succession of actions carried out in the same order to reach a given objective (Blue, 2019; Huy, 2001). When the rhythm is modified, the time allocated to each of these actions is also modified. The subject's habits are then modified, the extent of which depends on their own adaptability to change. These types of rhythmic inflections can have harmful consequences, especially for people with high-functioning autism.

### High-Functioning Autism, a Neurodevelopmental Disorder That is Still Poorly Understood

Autism spectrum disorders (ASD) constitute a continuum (of varying intensity and severity) of neurodevelopmental dysfunction, characterized by major structural impairment of communication and social interaction, specific and restricted interests, and stereotyped and repetitive behaviors (American Psychiatric Association, 2013). A consensus is emerging in the medical literature around modifications to the functioning of the frontal cortex (Stoner et al., 2014), with other parts of the brain also seemingly affected to varying degrees (Mamashli et al., 2021). The incidence rate is growing rapidly in developed countries, due to improved diagnostic techniques and better access to professionals trained in autism screening (Coetzer, 2016; Markel & Elia, 2016). Approximately 40% of people with autism have no intellectual disability (Baio et al., 2018; Fombonne, 2003; Lai et al., 2014; Seitz & Smith, 2016). This group is referred to as having high functioning autism. Among people with high functioning autism, 85% of adults are unemployed (Griffiths et al., 2016) and depend on social assistance (where it exists) with a substantial cost on two levels. First, the medical care and support a person with high-functioning autism may receive can cost approximately 2 million dollars over their lifetime (Buescher et al., 2014). Second, even in developed countries, care for people with autism is difficult to obtain for minors and practically inaccessible for adults (Lay & Weiss, 2017). A significant number therefore falls into precariousness. Those who manage to enter the labor market are more likely to work part-time, experience longer periods of unemployment, take different career paths (Krieger et al., 2012; Nord et al., 2016), have a non-linear professional trajectory (Griffiths et al., 2016), be overqualified for their position (Baldwin et al., 2014) and regularly change

<sup>2</sup> For Rosa et al. (2017), modern societies aim at protecting a form of status quo at political, economic, and social levels, as well as replicating their very structures. To achieve these goals, they need cultural innovation, technological improvement, and economic growth. This paradox (growth and innovation nurturing a status quo) is named ‘dynamic stabilization’.

companies (Black et al., 2019). This results in significant health and human costs.

The traditional explanation for this situation (Heslin et al., 2012) is that social difficulties make people with autism reluctant to integrate into an organization (McIntosh, 2016). Autism impairs social faculties, with a major deficit of theory of mind (understood as the capacity to represent unconsciously the feelings and the intentions of others) (Brewer et al., 2017). Since people with autism cannot detect implicit communication and anticipate accordingly, they are more likely to be harassed in the workplace (Pence & Svyantek, 2016). However, in a supportive organizational environment (Waisman-Nitzan et al., 2019), they are very valuable employees (Markel & Elia, 2016) because of their hard work, attention to detail and ability to achieve remarkable levels of productivity (Hendricks, 2010). The gap between people with high functioning autism and neurotypicals is a result of more than just social interactions, which complicate—but do not make impossible—their organizational integration (Black et al., 2019). Although social and sensory dysfunctions are known, medical literature has developed a large body of work on the specific relationship that high functioning autistic people have with time (Allman, 2011), which can present difficulties for organizational integration.

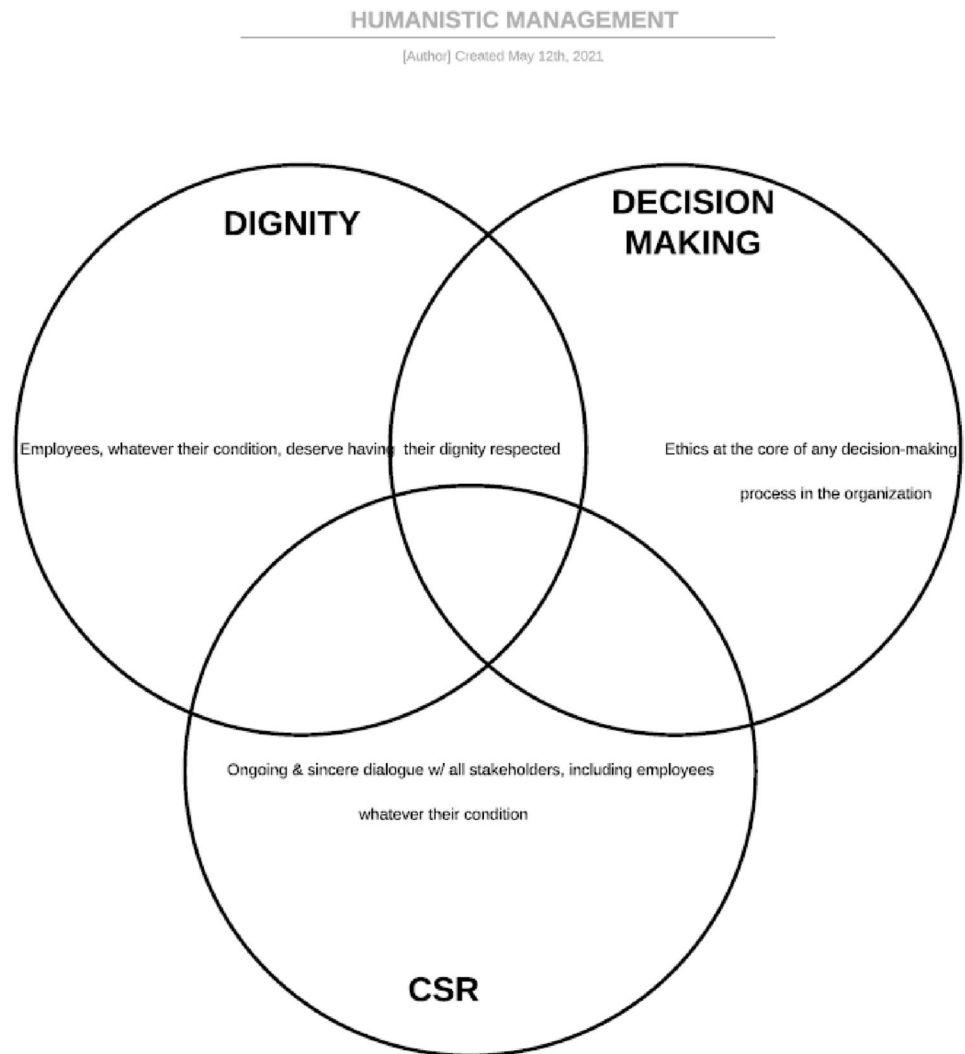
Medical research identifies three types of time (Jurek et al., 2019). The first is circadian time, which develops on a 24-h basis and allows for the control of sleep/wake alternation (Panda et al., 2002). Second, interval time, which is based on a temporal spectrum going from a few seconds to a few minutes, refers to conscious temporal estimation, and is used for decision-making (Buhusi & Meck, 2005). Third, millisecond time is measured using intervals of less than a second and is used in basic functions, such as speech processing (Nourski & Brugge, 2011) or control of motricity (De Zeeuw et al., 2011). A recent meta-analysis suggests that a modification of cerebral faculties means the perception of time, temporality and time management are significantly different in high functioning autistic people compared with neurotypicals (Allman & Mareschal, 2016). People with high-functioning autism have a generally close-to-normal management of millisecond time but the management of interval time and circadian time is often erratic. Some research advises certain remediation techniques for people with autism, allowing them to limit the negative effects of altered time perception (Jurek et al., 2019) through the use of specially designed timers (Grey et al., 2009), visual planning tools (Koyama & Wang, 2011) or software (Campillo et al., 2014). While this research is still in its infancy, it is of obvious organizational interest as its implementation would require almost no financial investment and could be done with only a moderate human cost (Landsiedel & Williams, 2020). All cell phones, tablets, desktop computers and laptops have a clock app with a timer, so that any employee (not

necessarily on the spectrum) could use it at no extra charge to the organization. Should the person prefer using specific timers, they usually bring their own (which may have been chosen after several trials based on a variety of parameters). These items can be bought for 15–20 USD. Hence, even if the organization had to pay for them, it would likely remain an affordable expense. Visual planning tools, as they normally match a person's activities and sensorial specificities, are usually created by individuals themselves. The major investment lies in training managers and colleagues in a few practices that greatly improve how their colleagues with autism manage temporality without causing any inconvenience to their peers or the organization. These measures would not, of course, solve all the problems that people with high-functioning autism face at work. However, reducing sources of difficulty would contribute both to reducing the risk of marginalization within the organization and facilitating relationships between employees with autism and other members of the organization. I will next consider how the integration of neurodivergent people (in this case, people with autism) can be operationalized through addressing temporal difficulties within the theoretical framework of managerial ethics and, more specifically, humanistic management.

### **Humanistic Management and Dignity: An Operational Framework of the Tension Between Autism and Temporality**

The issue of integrating people with autism into organizations can be considered within the broader spectrum of organizational integration of people with disabilities. People with disabilities are structurally marginalized and oppressed due to an implicit bias towards the able-bodied and neurotypical (Campbell, 2009; Goodley, 2010). People with mental or neuropsychiatric disabilities are the most stigmatized (Barclay & Markel, 2009). For a long time, autism was considered a psychosis (Fletcher-Watson & Happé, 2019). This stigmatization is therefore understandable, though based on a mistaken belief (Waisman-Nitzan et al., 2019). However, the integrating people with high-functioning autism into the workforce is an economic issue, because they, and society, have more to gain than to lose by including them in the workforce. There are three reasons for this. First, a form of economic realism, because maintaining people with autism in welfare is expensive, while they would remain too poor to consume. Second, in the right environment, people with autism are excellent employees: they are fast, productive, efficient, conscientious and do not get involved in power struggles. Third, work facilitates social integration (Strauser, 2013), and is a place to practice and even learn social relations. In a supportive environment, the social skills of people with autism may improve dramatically. It is also a managerial issue insofar as people with autism have a strong work

**Fig. 1** The three pillars of humanistic management

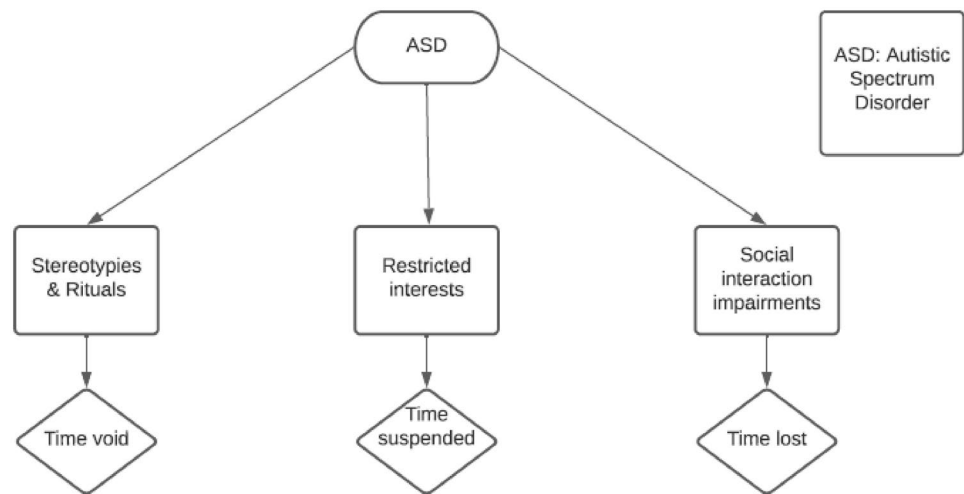


ethic and can attain extremely high levels of productivity (Waisman-Nitzan et al., 2019). Finally, it is a major ethical issue regarding the human dignity to which people with autism, like all human beings, are entitled. Since humanistic management places the protection and promotion of human dignity at the heart of its theoretical system, we can learn from considering how it can respond to the challenges of integrating people with autism into the workplace.

"Humanistic Management [...] regards concern for persons and human aspects in managing organizations. It is oriented not only to obtaining results through people, but also, and above all, toward people themselves, showing care for their flourishing and well-being" (Melé, Understanding Humanistic Management, 2016, p. 1). Humanistic management is based on three main principles: an unconditional right to see the human dignity of the interlocutor recognized; the recognition of ethics as a founding and indispensable element in all organizational decision-making; and the admission that the social responsibility of organizations

can only be conceived within the framework of a permanent and sincere dialogue with all stakeholders, including employees (Fig. 1). Humanistic management is a theoretical framework that has been expanding over the past two decades (Koon, 2021). Rooted in philosophical humanism (Melé, 2003) with an eye to moral imperatives (Mejia, 2020), it seeks to treat individuals in a way that ensures there are humanistic motives behind profits. It is thus conceived as a response to the economic paradigm (Laszlo, 2019). Instead of maximizing profits, humanistic companies are expected to align their needs with moral values by prioritizing priceless values, including dignity (Pirson et al., 2019). These values refer to "all that is intrinsically valuable, such as freedom, love and care, which cannot be priced. Beyond the dignity threshold, the goal of humanistic management is the promotion of wellbeing" (Laszlo, 2019, p. 87). Humanistic management differs from diversity management insofar as it offers another grounding paradigm. Humanity and wellbeing are conditions of personhood, and

**Fig. 2** Markers of the temporal relationship according to the autistic triptych



it thus does not differentiate between minorities and majority. Conversely, diversity management seeks at reinstating a balance to correct a preexisting injustice (Campbell, 2009; Goodley, 2010). A given person is thus first assigned to a given minority (William & Mavin, 2012), which is not the case in humanistic management.

Human dignity, which is the first pillar of humanistic management, necessitates universal protection (Pirson, 2019), whether this protection is based on a fundamental vulnerability and fragility (Pirson et al., 2015) or on freedom being central to the human condition, a notion that is inherited from Sartre existentialism (Dierksmeier, 2011; Pirson et al., 2016). However, a more interdependent notion of dignity has been applied in managerial sciences, which is based on the *relative* value of individuals, and founded on their aptitudes and personal merits. This second concept may bring to mind philosophers such as Plato (Dierksmeier, 2011), Aristotle (Nussbaum, 1998) or Kant (Pirson et al., 2016). Applied *de plano* to the situation of people with autism, as it is often the case nowadays, it results in putting abilities (necessarily limited in some respects, given the neurological specificities already mentioned) before merits (adaptation faculties, willpower, or even productivity) in order to dismiss them. In humanistic management, dignity is a sufficient condition for the creation of wellbeing (Sen, 2001) and protection and promotion are the basis of humanist management (Pirson, 2019). A common framework to analyze the work situation of people with autism is the Person-Environment-Occupation model (Waisman-Nitzan et al., 2020). Based on this framework's definitions, humanistic management may play a critical role in providing social support, an understanding environment, and explicit recognition of their personhood. Indeed, as "*the opportunity to work and be productive in a structured environment helps individuals to find purposes, and contributes positively to physical and psychological wellbeing and quality of life*"

(Johnson et al., 2020), the critical role humanistic management plays in integrating people with autism into the workplace is obvious. Humanistic management therefore aims to promote the human being as an end in itself and not as a means to an end (in this respect, it comes close to Kantian ethics) and views the organization (workplace) as a place of both professional and personal fulfillment (Melé, 2016). In this sense, humanistic management promotes the professional self-determination of the members of the organization (Arnaud & Wasieleski, 2014). It follows that humanistic management requires that employees be treated with respect and considers their wellbeing. If neurodivergent people (with autism or not) are human beings and, as such, deserve to be treated with dignity, then the principle of dignity that drives humanistic management requires that their difficulties with temporality be dealt with in a caring and sincere manner by the organization. These difficulties can be linked to the autism triptych, as follows (Fig. 2):

Autism is characterized by three features: stereotyped behaviors, restricted interests, and social interactions impairments. These features translate into a relationship to time as follows. When time is "void", the person with autism unwillingly confronts themselves to temporal voidness, leading to major anxiety. To protect themselves, the person spontaneously develops stereotypes and rituals. When time is "suspended", the person enters their inner-world and becomes in tune with it. This is the only place where they belong and can reveal their true self. Time does not exist because interval-time makes no sense for a person with autism. Lastly, time is "lost" when the person must carry out an activity whose aim is meaningless and whose codes are outside of their understanding.

This article makes an original contribution to scholarship in several ways. First, it develops analyses on the inclusion of neurodiversity in the workplace. This topic is rarely studied even though the areas it encompasses are likely to develop

as core issues in the field of HRM in the coming years. Secondly, by developing theories of humanistic management to apply to neurodiversity, I demonstrate their universal application. My hypothesis is that people with autism are difficult to integrate, because the organization, most often out of ignorance but sometimes out of malice, creates toxic working conditions from elements that are easy to control. People with autism can focus on social relations only if they are not exhausted with temporal and sensory constraints.<sup>3</sup> I can therefore question how organizational support to ameliorate the temporal difficulties that people with autism face can be operationalized in humanistic management with the aim of protecting and promoting their dignity.

### High-Functioning Autism: The Test of Organizational Time

Combining evidence from scholarship on time and temporality and high-functioning autism with analyses rooted in humanistic management theory, I have developed a model with dignity as a cornerstone for people with autism's right to have their specific needs met, particularly in terms of their relationship to temporality. My analyses of humanistic management and the specificities of autistic temporality suggest that neurotypical individuals may reject people with autism primarily out of ignorance and fear (Solomon, 2020). I consider my model and related propositions through three discussion points. First, I focus on how people with autism understand and cope with temporality through routines. Any interruption to these routines may have detrimental effects. Second, I study the way in which people with autism suspend the flow of time by absorbing themselves in their specific interests. Such interests may be time-consuming and potentially lead to difficulties with colleagues if they are separate from the professional sphere. But when they overlap with organizational function, they constitute an incomparable factor for professional motivation. Third, I outline how people with high functioning autism relate to social time (small talk among colleagues), which is a problematic facet of temporality, as it is physically and emotionally exhausting and the codes of this activity remain not purposeful.

<sup>3</sup> Sensory constraints refer to intense overreactions to sensorial stimuli, which are part of neural specificities of people with autism. These overreactions manifest themselves with moderate to intense physical discomfort, leading to physical and social withdrawals.

### High-Functioning Autism and Routine: Performance and Interruptions

Among the dysfunctions that characterize autism spectrum disorders, issues affecting time perception are a recent discovery (Casassus et al., 2019). However, they are now considered a feature of both the cognitive and behavioral difficulties faced by all individuals with autism, including high functioning (Allman & DeLeon, 2009). The exact neurological causes are still poorly understood, but the scientific literature tends to recognize a general alteration of time perception for people with autism (Casassus et al., 2019). This alteration manifests itself as a difficulty in evaluating the passage of time during the performance of tasks that have a certain duration, even when the individual has developed unconscious neuronal compensation strategies (Lambrechts et al., 2018). Since being confronted with a poorly controlled temporality creates anxiety (Fletcher-Watson & Happé, 2019), people with high-functioning autism unconsciously develop stereotyped behaviors that establish a constitutive element of autism (American Psychiatric Association, 2013). The arrangement of stereotypies, according to an immutable order and in specific occasions, is called routine (Allman & DeLeon, 2009; Attwood, 2007) and serves two purposes. First, routine has a substantial anxiolytic effect, especially during particularly anxiety-provoking moments such as time spent waiting. In this sense, suspending routine is extremely harmful and directly challenges the dignity of the person. These routines can easily be interrupted by innocent phone calls for non-urgent reasons, by a colleague showing up, or by unexpected meetings. From the perspective of humanistic management, if we consider that the organization must protect and promote dignity (Pirson, 2019), then we must also agree that by getting a job and becoming part of an organization, a person with autism accomplishes the substantial task of adapting to a neurotypical world whose meanings and codes they cannot understand. If we consider the relational dimension of their dignity (Haslam, 2006), their interpersonal skills are no doubt less developed than those of their neurotypical peers, but if we take into account their underlying neuronal differences, their merits are perhaps superior. People with autism cannot detect implicit or process non-verbal information. Only cognitive remediation, based on the same paradigm as post-stroke rehabilitation, sometimes allows partial improvement in the medium to long term. Creating links and interacting with colleagues therefore requires intense physical and mental effort. Considering these merits and efforts (Pirson, 2019) enables others to value a behavior otherwise perceived as normal. Second, routine allows the subject to structure their actions by following a conscious process that is sufficiently rigorous to limit the risks of forgetting a step in the process to be followed (Simone, 2010). Employees with autism are appreciated for their rigor and

meticulousness precisely because of their scrupulously followed routines (Scott et al., 2017). Where organizational processes require a high level of precision, rigor and thoroughness, organizations could benefit from autistic routines if they were made compatible with their operations.

**Proposition 1** *Humanistic management may help avoid interruptions to autistic routines; thus, the employee could offer the organization a high degree of thoroughness and rigor and comply with organizational processes.*

The main difficulty within the workplace lies in the untimely interruption of routines by third parties who do not understand their importance. For a person on the autism spectrum, routines are a structuring behavior within their relationship to time (Johnson et al., 2020). These routines become increasingly complex and time-consuming toward the top of the spectrum (Boucher, 2001). This can be explained by the greater anxiety that people with high-functioning autism experience when faced with a confusing temporality (Allman & DeLeon, 2009). In this sense, routine would allow the subject to be in tune (Rosa, 2019) with their inner world, the only possible world in which they can properly function. However, the accelerating rhythm (Blue, 2019) and temporality of post-modern societies (Rosa, 2013) generally translates into an acceleration of organizational temporality (Huy, 2001). Interruptions frequently occur in the workplace. If they can cause an understandable annoyance for neurotypicals, these interruptions have an overtly harmful effect on people with autism. One routine that a PowerPoint presenter with autism may have is (in an immutable order): plugging in the HDMI cable in the laptop then in the wall socket; plugging in the power cable in the wall socket then in the laptop; aligning whiteboard pens horizontally, in an immutable color arrangement (e.g.: from left to right, red, green, blue, black); turning on the laptop; checking the microphone; sharing the screen; starting to talk. Interrupting the routine sometimes results in forgetting a step and more frequently in a blockage that requires them to start over. When the interruption comes from a third party, the temporal flow that the subject gains through routine is interrupted (Vogel, et al., 2019), which leads to a reactionary reinforcement of routines to limit the risk of further interruptions. Existing scholarship has established that for most interruptions, the routine must be restarted from the beginning (Vogel, et al., 2019), which inevitably leads to a loss of time and therefore a desynchronization between the employee, their colleagues and their supervisor. From a managerial perspective, not interrupting routines may sometimes be difficult. Writing messages (by email or internal instant messaging) is an effective strategy as it can be read and processed at the end of a routine sequence. It preserves the institutional rhythm (Blue, 2019)

even when it accelerates (Rosa, 2013), while accounting for the employee's condition and acknowledging their dignity and wellbeing as crucial (Melé, 2016).

**Proposition 2** *To interrupt a routine, written communication is likely to reduce anxiety. This method respects the specific needs of the autistic employee and therefore their dignity.*

### High Functioning Autism: Specific and Restricted Interests

Specific and restricted interests are one of three components of the clinical profile of autism spectrum disorders (American Psychiatric Association, 2013). They can be understood as a deficiency since highly restricted interests are abnormal in intensity or specificity; or viewed positively as passions that occupy the autistic individual's mind, heart and attention, and through which they view the world (Winter-Messiers, 2007). Restricted interests are commonly seen as a crucial factor in the person with autism's involvement in the organization (Waisman-Nitzan et al., 2020). There is a tendency to think that if the person is working in a field that is directly related to one of their restricted interests, their integration in the workplace will be enhanced (Johnson et al., 2020; Waisman-Nitzan et al., 2020). As such, the employee will work enthusiastically and strive for the best possible performance, achieving exceptional levels of productivity.

When a person with autism is engaged in one of their restricted interests, time is suspended. Engaging in a restricted interest places the person with autism out of time, in a state of timelessness where basic physiological needs no longer register on their consciousness (Attwood, 2007). Acceleration (Rosa, 2013) or a change of rhythm (Blue, 2019) no longer has any effect. The person with autism is in *their* world, running at a speed that is incredibly faster than anyone can imagine. The person can therefore devote their days and nights to it, hardly eating or sleeping (Allman, 2011). If the restricted interest is socially and economically considered a leisure activity, social pressures and the need to pay bills will lead the person to limit their engagement. However, when the restricted interest intersects with their profession, limitation becomes highly problematic (Waisman-Nitzan et al., 2020). The organization may benefit in the short term as the employee with autism works hard and usually achieves outstanding results (Scott et al., 2017). The organization can therefore legitimately consider this type of profile to be particularly profitable. However, this amounts to treating the individual as a means instead of as an end in of themselves (Melé, 2016; Pirson et al., 2015). The employee's lack of limits can lead to major (even life-threatening) risks. Letting them indulge in specific interests



without limitations in the workplace thus infringes on their dignity and contributes to their dehumanization (Haslam, 2006).

**Proposition 3** *The coincidence of restricted interests and professional practice positively influences the involvement, quantity and quality of work provided by the person with autism, as temporality is suspended in favor of indulging in a passion for the benefit of the organization.*

In the longer term, the consequences of excessive engagement in restricted interests can be harmful. Individuals with autism experience major disruptions in their circadian cycles to the extent that their sleep is structurally disrupted (Casasus et al., 2019; Jurek et al., 2019). Hyposomnia can lead to a range of disorders and result in serious medical conditions. If the individual spends all their time on a restricted interest without feeling like they are working, they have no need for rest or leisure outside of that interest, so it takes over their life (Grove et al., 2018). When such a passion coincides with their professional life, it can also exacerbate difficulties in social interactions. For example, it may spark jealousy among their peers who, ignorant of autistic functioning, may see their colleague as an upstart without great scruples (Bury et al., 2021a, 2021b). This impression is reinforced by another feature of the autistic profile: the restricted interest is always on the mind of a person with autism. It thus dominates all their interactions and all their time. It then follows that, if the job overlaps with their restricted interest, they may believe they can contact their teammates at any time—without considering that their colleagues may not be available (Attwood, 2007; Simone, 2010). This may impact on the colleagues' wellbeing (Pirson, 2021) and may need to be addressed by the organization to ensure everybody's dignity and wellbeing (Mejia, 2020; Pirson et al., 2019).

**Proposition 4** *The overlap of restricted interests and professional practice may negatively affect the quality of social interactions between the person with autism and their peers for whom temporality is not suspended.*

Professional engagement with restricted interests needs to be limited in some way. The physiological and psychosocial risks are too high to do otherwise. However, limiting restricted interests raises questions about the dignity of the person with autism regardless of the purely managerial consequences for the organization. It might be tempting to think that, since the individual is unable to limit themselves, it is up to others (other members of the organization) to set the limits for them. The impossibility of limiting oneself also links to the notion of hubris (Bruni & Santori, 2021) and thus to the dangers of excess. However, assigning the status of incompetence to a person who is not actually incompetent

is an ableist position (Campbell, 2009; Goodley, 2010). The organization, at this stage, may therefore find itself caught in the crossfire. On the one hand, it has a moral and even legal obligation to limit the professional practice of this restricted interest to mitigate the psychosocial risks for the employee with autism. On the other hand, imposing this limitation amounts to treating the person concerned as irresponsible and, in essence, assigning them a purely autistic identity (Goodley, 2010). Autism thus takes precedence over any other consideration, any other facet and any other quality of the person. To reduce an individual to their autism, considered at best as a disability and at worst as a shameful disease (Fletcher-Watson & Happé, 2019), is to deprive them of the dignity that is at the heart of humanistic management. Contrary to most employees, who need to distinguish professional life and personal life (Stich et al., 2018), people with autism tend to lock themselves in their restricted interests. Taking a break can be painful and learning to do so may require professional counselling, especially if the person is not aware of their limits. For a humanist organization to do this would be to deny its values. However, there is a middle way. It is a matter of supporting the person concerned in the management of their suspended time, notably with the help of specialists in the behavioral management of people with autism (Lai & Weiss, 2017). This support requires multi-party involvement (Black et al., 2019): general management (Seitz & Smith, 2016), human resources (Markel & Elia, 2016), the employee's line manager and teammates (Griffiths et al., 2016). In addition, the individual must actively participate on a wholly voluntary basis, which is fairly easy to achieve as most people with high-functioning autism aspire to work (McIntosh, 2016). Involving multiple parties may be challenging (Solomon, 2020), but it can greatly enhance the humanistic dimension of the organization and preserve the health and dignity of its members (Pirson, 2021).

**Proposition 5** *To preserve the dignity of the person with autism, the organization could support the person to reasonably limit the professional practice of a restricted interest.*

### High-Functioning Autism and Lost Time

Difficulties in social interactions is a core component of the autistic profile (American Psychiatric Association, 2013). It is the most commonly known autistic trait among the general population (Bury et al., 2021a, 2021b; Chiang et al., 2013; Fletcher-Watson & Happé, 2019; Harmuth, et al., 2018; Hedley, et al., 2018; Hillier, et al., 2007; Lorenz et al., 2016; Mawhood & Howlin, 1999; Müller et al., 2003). The neural functioning of a person with autism is such that they cannot understand the implicit, nor perceive the intentions or feelings (such as annoyance or surprise) of an interlocutor

until these intentions or feelings are made explicitly clear (Fletcher-Watson & Happé, 2019). This results in misunderstandings, which can make professional relationships complex. For example, an expression such “as soon as possible” has absolutely no meaning to a person with autism. They do not understand the level of importance and urgency it conveys, so their manager may think they are not taking the request seriously enough (Baldwin et al., 2014). This difficulty in understanding the implicit is coupled with a behavioral difficulty in dealing with others. Without understanding the implicit need to relax the frameworks and rules that allow them to structure the stereotypes at certain times, people with autism experience structural difficulties in naturally establishing productive relationships with their colleagues. People with autism are more frequently bullied during adolescence than their neurotypical peers (Forrest et al., 2020), so they may not have acquired the social codes that allow them to decipher non-verbal messages from others, and they may have developed a strong reactive distrust of others, making it more difficult to establish flexible relationships with their colleagues. In addition, relationships with others require considerable energy from the person with autism in exchange for benefits that they do not understand (Baldwin et al., 2014; Bury et al., 2021a, 2021b; Fletcher-Watson & Happé, 2019). For a person with autism, conversation has a purely informative function. In other words, since it has no implicit function, social chatter lacks any meaning or interest. This type of discussion is viewed as a waste of time because it serves no purpose to them. This is also true for employees who do not have autism and are not interested in gossip, but this behavior appears to be less common (Farley et al., 2010). This alone cannot justify differential treatment for employees with autism alone, and no member who withdraws from gossip should be stigmatized or singled out.

**Proposition 6** *To preserve the dignity and wellbeing of a person with autism, the organization should allow them to withdraw from time dedicated to social chatter, without stigmatization, because the social meaning of this time escapes them.*

Social conversation plays an important role in the organizational context. We can identify two types of social chatter (Foster, 2004). First, innocuous social chatter (Farley et al., 2010) corresponds to the exchange of banal information, which is often of little interest, but has the function of creating and maintaining social links within the organization. People with autism are usually unable to instinctively detect that this function exists. Importantly, such an understanding can only be achieved as a result of a conscious cognitive process (Baldwin et al., 2014). Even when the social function of chatting is understood by the

subject, it remains that the time devoted to it does not correspond to their stereotypes or restricted interests. Trying to decipher an unobtainable implicit meaning expends a lot of energy (Fletcher-Watson & Happé, 2019; Ponnet et al., 2005). Individuals with autism therefore tend to avoid social chatter as much as possible: it is a waste of time for them. The aim of these social practices is generally to relax and have fun (Farley et al., 2010; Foster, 2004). People with autism generally relax by indulging in their specific interests (Allman, 2011; Attwood, 2007) or stereotypes (Fletcher-Watson & Happé, 2019; Lambrechts et al. 2018). Whilst this may be surprising, this behavior is necessary. A humanistic approach would accept and welcome this behavior, as it relates to the employee’s wellbeing (Dierksmeier, 2011; Pirson, 2019).

Second, judgmental social chatter lies in proximity to exercising organizational power and counter-power (Foster, 2004), which serves several functions (Wu et al., 2018). It facilitates informal organizational control over outsiders by stigmatizing them (Dunbar, 2004). It has thus a valuable subjective temporality (Clark, 1985; Waller et al., 2001) for those who take part in power struggles. Indeed, engaging in gossip allows employees to adopt expected social behaviors in an organizational setting, while denouncing the behavior of the target by presenting it as outside the sphere of organizational acceptability (Baumeister et al., 2004; Dunbar, 2004), which includes conformity to the (implicit or explicit) norms of the group. The behavior of a person with autism does not correspond to social expectations in the organizational sphere, because they cannot navigate the necessarily implicit part of power struggles. The person can only conform to explicit norms, but implicit norms (especially when it comes to relaxing or circumventing explicit norms) remain closed off to them. As people with autism generally do not get involved in power struggles, these discussions only represent effort and risk for them—thus, they see it as lost time. Moreover, the experiences of bullying during their youth (Forrest et al., 2020) may now continue as part of intra-organizational power struggles. The time a person with autism spends as a witness or interlocutor in judgmental chats is lost in two ways. First, the person with autism cannot grasp the implicit and multi-faceted games that are pervasive in power struggles, so there is nothing to be gained from getting involved. Second, the person with autism is likely to quickly become a target of gossip (especially if they are doing well in their job) given they are easily isolated, so they have everything to lose.

**Proposition 7** *To preserve the dignity and wellbeing of the person with autism, the organization could pay particular attention to judgmental gossip, as this type of employee is at high risk of being stigmatized and as people with autism stay away from power struggles, where they have nothing to gain.*

## Implications, Limitations, Future Research

Although it is beginning to attract scholarly interest, the topic of neurodivergence in general and autism spectrum disorder in particular, remains underexplored in the managerial sciences (Baldwin et al., 2014). Neither the stakes of humanistic management, whose touchstone is human dignity, nor the influence of the relationship to temporality as an explanatory framework had, until now, been the subject of a conceptual study. The major contribution of this article is to show that an employee with autism has a fundamentally different relationship to time (Allman, 2011). This atemporality (Allman & DeLeon, 2009; Allman & Mareschal, 2016) manifests itself in unusual behaviors (Casassus et al., 2019) and risks stigmatization, isolation and ruptures in their career trajectory (Bury et al., 2021a, 2021b). My framework also explains why these unusual ritualistic and stereotyped behaviors are necessary to the employee with autism and how they can benefit the organization (Scott, et al., 2017) while preserving the dignity (Pirson, 2019) of the individual. Furthermore, my analyses establish that restricted interests (Grove et al., 2018), if they overlap with professional activity, can allow the subject to reach remarkable levels of productivity. This proposition comes with the caveat that the organization must take care to support the employee in reasonably limiting their passion. I therefore contribute to existing scholarship by showing how and why humanistic management (Melé, 2016) is a particularly promising operational framework for the organizational inclusion of people with autism (Arnaud & Wasieleski, 2014). For this approach to work, one must put aside the power struggles that develop from gossip (Foster, 2004), which can target people with autism. Their reactions to variations in temporality (interruptions, acceleration, slowing down) (Blue, 2019; Rosa, 2013, 2019) are mediated through their peer relationships (Vogel, et al., 2019). I have therefore integrated the findings of previous studies by psychiatrists, psychologists and neurologists into a framework of managerial studies, specifically the theoretical system of humanistic management (Dierksmeier, 2011) in which the employee with autism's atypical relationship to time is operationalized (Allman & DeLeon, 2009) while working alongside people without autism. The autistic conception of time is closer to atemporality than to temporality. The autistic triptych (Attwood, 2007; Fletcher-Watson & Happé, 2019), consisting of ritualized stereotypies, restricted interests, and difficulties with social interactions, translates temporality into temporal vacuity, temporal suspension, and time loss, respectively. Given the difficulties that people with autism face in obtaining and maintaining employment (Baldwin et al., 2014), these altered perceptions of temporality are

important to acknowledge. If management scientists better understood autistic mechanisms, it would ultimately facilitate the integration and retention of people with autism in the workplace (Krzeminska et al., 2019). By showing the interactional dynamics between temporality, autism and humanistic management, I offer a useful tool for future research.

Why do people with autism have such difficulty integrating into the organization, even when their positions match their restricted interests? I have established that a significant part of these difficulties stem from a general lack of understanding of autism and the specific relationship to time that people with autism have (Jurek et al., 2019). Humanistic management, insofar as it places the dignity of people at the forefront of its concerns (Pirson et al., 2015) seems to provide a useable framework for promoting the wellbeing of people with autism, not least in terms of respecting their specific relationship with time.

As with any theoretical model, my framework needs to be tested in empirical studies. For example, a possible area to study would be the impact of remote working among individuals with autism, as they would have more flexibility to organize their time and working environment. One could also consider analyzing the impact of stress induced by unannounced time reductions on the mental health of individuals with autism and the subsequent effects on how the team functions. The purpose of this would not be to create more mindful routine disruptions or time reductions. Instead, it would scrutinize the employee's and peers' reactions when the situation occurs, based on ethnographic, participating/non-participating observation, or self-observation approaches. Collecting adequate data may prove difficult as autism is still sometimes perceived as a shameful condition (Fletcher-Watson & Happé, 2019). Bringing together on-spectrum, off-spectrum, and neuroscience researchers may yield promising results.

The prevalence of autism in the academic community (Baron-Cohen et al., 2001) suggests that colleagues with autism represent a much larger group than we think. It could thus be meaningful to consider testing our framework within the academic community to investigate the characteristics of the environments where the competences of people with autism can flourish. It may make sense to collect data through semi-structured interviews with a qualitative discourse analysis. Filming the interviews may be revealing as it would allow for the analysis of non-verbal language. However, this should be done with the utmost degree of precaution, because being filmed can be very emotionally challenging for people with autism. It is long overdue for researchers to collectively address the conditions of neurodivergent workers in organizations. Like any human being, a person with autism deserves to be treated with respect and dignity.

## Conclusion

The limited research on people with autism in organizations thus far has focused on difficulties in social interactions. Here, I have integrated existing literature, including from neuroscience, within a framework rooted in humanistic management, temporality and high-functioning autism to help us understand the tension between the acceleration of organizational temporality and autistic atemporality. I have shown how the articulation of this triptych allows us to better deconstruct the social stereotypes and discrimination suffered by people on the high end of the autism spectrum. As such, this study contributes to current debates and lays the groundwork for future research. I have analyzed the way in which people with autism's difficulties of situating themselves in time are a source of misunderstanding, which is perhaps as disabling as their difficulties with social interactions. The complexity of their integration into the workplace is therefore multidimensional.

Throughout this article, I have brought together existing scholarship and my own framework. Its conceptual elements still need to be proved with empirical evidence. Qualitative studies of the effects of remote working on organizational temporality among people with autism may provide a better understanding of this complex managerial reality.

**Acknowledgements** The author wishes to thank the Associate Editors and the three anonymous reviewers for their sharp and constructive comments, which helped improve the manuscript. She warmly thanks her colleagues from ICN & Cerefige for their support, especially Pr. Berger, Dean of the Faculty. She gratefully acknowledges Dr. Jérôme KIEFFER, MD, PhD, for his valuable explanations throughout the writing of this text, and Dr. Stacie ALLAN, for her commitment throughout the copy-editing process. This paper, however, remains the sole responsibility of its author.

## Declarations

**Conflict of interest** I have no conflict of interests whatsoever to report. This research has never been funded by any natural person or entity.

## References

- Allman, M. (2011). Deficits in temporal processing associated with autistic disorders. *Frontiers in Integrative Neurosciences*. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fnint.2011.00002>
- Allman, M., & DeLeon, G. (2009). No time like the present: Time perception in autism. In A. Giordano & V. Lombardi (Eds.), *Causes and risks for autism* (pp. 65–76). Nova Science Publishers.
- Allman, M., & Mareschal, D. (2016). Possible evolutionary and developmental mechanisms of mental time travel (and their implications for autism). *Current Opinion in Behavioral Science*, 8, 220–225.
- American Psychiatric Association. (2013). *Diagnostic and statistical manual of mental disorders DSM-5* (5th Edition). American Psychiatric Publishing.
- Ancona, D., Goodman, P., Lawrence, B., & Tushman, M. (2001). Time: A new research lens. *Academy of Management Review*, 26(4), 645–663.
- Annabi, H., & Locke, J. (2019). A theoretical framework for investigating the context for creating employment success in information technology for individuals with autism. *Journal of Management and Organization*, 25(4), 499–515.
- Arnaud, S., & Wasieleski, D. (2014). Corporate humanistic responsibility: Social performance through managerial discretion of the HRM. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 120(3), 313–334.
- Attwood, T. (2007). *The Complete Guide to Asperger's Syndrome (2nd Edition)* (2015th ed.). Jessica Kingsley.
- Baio, J., Wiggins, L., Christensen, D., Maenner, M., Daniels, J., Warren, Z., & Durkin, M. (2018). Prevalence of autism spectrum disorder among children aged 8. *MMWR Surveillance Summaries*, 67(6), 1–23.
- Baldwin, S., Costley, D., & Warren, A. (2014). Employment activities and the experiences of adults with high-functioning autism and Asperger's disorder. *Journal of Autism and Developmental Disorders*, 44(10), 2440–2449.
- Bansal, P., & Des Jardine, M. (2014). Business sustainability: It is about time. *Strategic Organization*, 12(1), 70–78.
- Barclay, L., & Markel, K. (2009). Ethical fairness and human rights: The treatment of employees with psychiatric disabilities. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 85, 333–345.
- Baron-Cohen, S. (2018). Hans Asperger's nazi collusion. *Nature*, 557, 305–306.
- Baron-Cohen, S., Wheelwright, S., Skinner, R., Martin, J., & Clubley, E. (2001). The autism-spectrum quotient (AQ): Evidence from Asperger syndrome/high-functioning autism, males and females, scientists and mathematicians. *Journal of Autism and Developmental Disorders*, 31(1), 5–17. <https://doi.org/10.1023/a:1005653411471>
- Baumeister, R., Vohs, K., & Zhang, L. (2004). Gossip as cultural learning. *Review of General Psychology*, 8(2), 111–121.
- Black, M. H., Mahdi, S., Milbourn, B., Thompson, C., D'Angelo, A., Ström, E., Falkmer, M., Falkmer, T., Lerner, M., Halladay, A., & Gerber, A. (2019). Perspective of key stakeholders on employment of autistic adults across the United States, Australia and Sweden. *Autism Research*, 12(11), 1648–1662.
- Blue, S. (2019). Institutional rhythms: Combining practice theory and rhythm analysis to conceptualise processes of institutionalisation. *Time & Society*, 28(3), 922–950.
- Bluedorn, A., & Denhardt, R. (1988). Time and organizations. *Journal of Management*, 14, 299–320.
- Boucher, J. (2001). Lost in a sea of time: Time-parsing and autism. In C. Hoerl & T. McCormack (Eds.), *Time and memory* (pp. 111–135). Oxford University Press.
- Brewer, N., Young, R., & Barnett, E. (2017). Measuring theory of mind in adults with autism spectrum. *Journal of Autism and Developmental Disorders*, 47, 1927–1941.
- Bruni, L., & Santori, P. (2021). The illusion of merit and the demons of economic meritocracy: Which. *Journal of Business Ethics*. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10551-020-04727-7>
- Buescher, A., Cidav, Z., Knapp, M., & Mandell, D. (2014). Costs of autism spectrum disorders in the United Kingdom and the United States. *JAMA Pediatrics*, 168, E1–E8.
- Buhusi, C., & Meck, W. (2005). What makes us tick? Functional and neural mechanisms of interval timing. *Nature Reviews Neuroscience*, 6(10), 755–765.
- Bury, S., Flower, R., Zulla, R., Nicholas, D., & Hedley, D. (2021a). Workplace social challenges experienced by employees on the autism spectrum: An international exploratory study examining employee and supervisor perspective. *Journal of Autism and Developmental Disorders*, 51, 1614–1627.

- Bury, S., Flower, R., Zulla, R., Nicholas, D., & Hedley, D. (2021b). Workplace social challenges experienced by employees on the autism spectrum: An international exploratory study examining employee and supervisor perspectives. *Journal of Autism and Developmental Disorders*, *51*, 1614–1627.
- Campbell, F. (2009). *Contours of Ableism: The Production of Disability and Abledness*. Palgrave Macmillan.
- Campillo, C., Herrera, G., Ramirez de Ganuza, C., Cuesta, J., Abellan, R., Campos, A., & Amati, F. (2014). Using Tic-Tac software to reduce anxiety-related behaviours in adults with autism and learning difficulties during waiting periods: A pilot study. *Autism: the International Journal of Research and Practice*, *18*(3), 264–271.
- Casassus, M., Poliakoff, E., Gowen, E., Poole, D., & Jones, L. (2019). Time perception and autistic spectrum condition: A systematic review. *Autism Research*, *12*, 1440–1462.
- Chiang, H., Cheung, Y., Li, H., & Tsai, L. (2013). Factors associated with participation in employment for high school leavers with autism. *Journal of Autism and Developmental Disorders*, *43*, 1832–1842.
- Clark, P. (1985). A review of the theories of time and structure for organizational sociology. In S. Bacharach & S. Mitchell (Eds.), *Research in the sociology of organizations* (pp. 35–79). JAI Press.
- Coetzer, G. (2016). Researching autism spectrum disorder in the workplace: Lessons learned from researching the relationship between adult attention deficit disorder and organizational behavior. *Journal of Business and Management*, *22*(1), 39–70.
- De Zeeuw, C., Hoebeek, F., Bosman, L., Schonewille, M., Witter, L., & Koekkoek, S. (2011). Spatiotemporal firing patterns in the cerebellum. *Nature Reviews: Neuroscience*, *12*(6), 327–344.
- Dierksmeier, C. (2011). Reorienting management education: From homo economicus to human dignity. In W. Amann, M. Pirson, C. Dierksmeier, E. Von Kimakowitz, & H. Spitzack (Eds.), *Business Schools Under Fire* (pp. 19–40). Palgrave Macmillan.
- Dunbar, R. (2004). Gossip in an evolutionary perspective. *Review of General Psychology*, *8*(2), 100–110.
- Farley, S., Timme, D., & Hart, J. (2010). On coffee talk and break-room chatter: Perception of women who gossip in the workplace. *Journal of Social Psychology*, *150*(4), 361–368.
- Fletcher-Watson, S., & Happé, F. (2019). *Autism: A New Introduction to Psychological Theory and Current Debate*. Routledge.
- Fombonne, E. (2003). Epidemiological surveys of autism and other pervasive developmental disorders: An update. *Journal of Autism and Developmental Disorders*, *33*(4), 365–382.
- Forrest, D., Kroeger, R., & Stroope, S. (2020). Autism spectrum disorder symptoms and bullying victimization among children with autism in the United States. *Journal of Autism and Developmental Disorders*, *50*, 560–571.
- Foster, E. (2004). Research on gossip: Taxonomy, methods and future directions. *Review of General Psychology*, *8*(2), 78–99.
- Goodley, D. (2010). *Disability: Psyche, Culture and Society*. Sage.
- Grey, I., Healy, O., Leader, G., & Hayes, D. (2009). Using a time timer (TM) to increase appropriate waiting behavior in a child with developmental disabilities. *Research in Developmental Disabilities*, *30*(2), 359–366.
- Griffiths, A., Giannantonio, C., Hurley-Hanson, A., & Cardinal, D. (2016). Autism in the workplace: Assessing the transition needs of young adults with autism spectrum disorder. *Journal of Business and Management*, *22*(1), 5–22.
- Grove, R., Hoekstra, R., Wierda, M., & Begeer, S. (2018). Special interests and subjective wellbeing in autistic adults. *Autism Research*, *11*, 766–775.
- Harmuth, E., Silletta, E., Bailey, A., Adams, T., Beck, C., & Barbic, S. (2018). Barriers and facilitators to employment for adults with autism: A scoping review. *Annals of Occupational Therapy*, *1*, 31–40.
- Haslam, N. (2006). Dehumanization: An integrative review. *Personality and Social Psychology Review*, *10*(3), 252–264.
- Hedley, D., Cai, R., Uljarevic, M., Wilmot, M., Spoor, J., & Richdale, A. (2018). Transition to work: Perspectives from the autism spectrum. *Autism*, *22*, 528–541.
- Hendricks, J. (2010). Employment and adults with autism spectrum disorders: Challenges and strategies for success. *Journal of Vocational Rehabilitation*, *32*, 125–134.
- Heslin, P., Bell, M., & Fletcher, P. (2012). The devil without and within: A conceptual model of social cognitive processes whereby discrimination leads stigmatized minorities to become discouraged workers. *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, *33*(6), 840–862.
- Hillier, A., Campbell, H., Mastroianni, K., Izzo, M., Kool-Tucker, A., & Cherry, L. (2007). Two-year evaluation of a vocational support program for autism on the autism spectrum. *Career Development for Exceptional Individuals*, *30*, 35–47.
- Holt, R., & Johnsen, R. (2019). Time and organization studies. *Organization Studies*, *40*(10), 1557–1572.
- Huy, Q. (2001). Time, temporal capability and planned change. *Academy of Management Review*, *26*(4), 601–623.
- Johnson, K., Ennis-Cole, D., & Bonhamgregory, M. (2020). Workplace success strategies for employees with autism spectrum disorders: A new frontier for human resource development. *Human Resource Development Review*, *19*(2), 122–151.
- Jurek, L., Longuet, Y., Baltazar, M., Amestoy, A., Schmitt, V., Desmurget, M., & Geoffroy, M.-C. (2019). How did I get so late so soon? A review of time processing and management in autism. *Behavioural Brain Research*, *374*, 112121.
- Karau, S., & Kelly, J. (1992). The effects of time scarcity and time abundance on group performance quality and interaction process. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*, *12*, 542–571.
- Koon, V.-Y. (2021). Bibliometric analyses on the emergence and present growth of humanistic management. *International Journal of Ethics and Systems*, *37*(4), 581–598.
- Koyama, T., & Wang, H. (2011). Use of activity schedule to promote independent performance of individuals with autism and other intellectual disabilities: A review. *Research in Developmental Disabilities*, *32*(6), 2235–2242.
- Krieger, B., Kinebanian, A., Proding, B., & Heigl, F. (2012). Becoming a member of the workforce: Perceptions of adults with Asperger syndrome. *Work*, *43*(2), 141–157.
- Krzeminska, A., Austin, R., Bruyère, S., & Hedley, D. (2019). The advantages and challenges of neurodiversity employment in organizations. *Journal of Management and Organizations*, *25*(4), 453–463.
- Küpers, W. (2020). From anthropocene to ecocene—Eco-phenomenological perspectives on embodied anthro-decentric transformations towards enlivening practices of organising sustainability. *Sustainability*, *12*(9), 1–20.
- Lai, J., & Weiss, J. (2017). Priority service needs and receipt across the lifespan for individuals with autism spectrum disorder. *Autism Research*, *10*, 1436–1447.
- Lai, M.-C., Lombardo, M., & Baron-Cohen, S. (2014). Autism. *The Lancet*, *383*(9920), 896–910.
- Lambrechts, A., Flater-Wagner, C., & van Wassenhove, V. (2018). Diminished neural resources allocation to time processing in autism spectrum disorders. *NeuroImage: Clinical*, *17*, 124–136.
- Landsiedel, J., & Williams, D. (2020). Increasing extrinsic motivation improves time-based prospective memory in adults with autism: Relations with executive functioning and mentalizing. *Journal of Autism and Developmental Disorders*, *50*, 1133–1146.
- Laszlo, C. (2019). Strengthening humanistic management. *Humanistic Management Journal*, *4*, 85–94.

- Lawrence, T., Winn, M., & Deveraux-Jennings, P. (2001). The temporal dynamics of institutionalization. *Academy of Management Review*, 26(4), 624–644.
- Lay, J., & Weiss, J. (2017). Priority service needs and receipt across the lifespan for individuals with autism spectrum disorder. *Autism Research*, 10, 1436–1447.
- Lim, S., & Murnighan, J. (1994). Phases, deadlines, and the bargaining process. *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes*, 58, 153–171.
- Lorenz, T., Frischling, C., Cuadros, R., & Heinitz, K. (2016). Autism and overcoming job barriers: Comparing job-related barriers and possible solutions in and outside of autism-specific employment. *PLoS ONE*, 11, 1–19.
- Mamashli, F., Kozhemiako, N., Khan, S., Nunes, A. S., McGuiggan, N. M., Losh, A., Joseph, R. M., Ahveninen, J., Doesburg, S. M., Hämäläinen, M. S., & Kenet, T. (2021). Children with autism spectrum disorder show altered functional connectivity and abnormal maturation trajectories in response to inverted faces. *Autism Research*. <https://doi.org/10.1002/aur.2497>
- Markel, K., & Elia, B. (2016). How human resource management can best support employees with autism: Future directions for research and practice. *Journal of Business and Management*, 22(1), 71–85.
- Mawhood, L., & Howlin, P. (1999). The outcome of a supported employment scheme for high-functioning adults with autism or Asperger syndrome. *Autism*, 3, 229–254.
- McGrath, J., & Rotchford, N. (1983). Time and behavior in organizations. *Research in Organizational Behavior*, 5, 57–101.
- McIntosh, C. K. (2016). Asperger's syndrome and the development of a positive work identity. *Journal of Business and Management*, 22(1), 87–101.
- Mejia, S. (2020). The moral imperatives of humanistic management. *Humanistic Management Journal*, 4, 155–158.
- Melé, D. (2003). *Motivation and Agency*. Oxford University Press.
- Melé, D. (2016). Understanding humanistic management. *Humanistic Management Journal*, 1, 33–55.
- Montaigne (de), M. (1595, rééd. 2019). *Essais*. Paris: Robert Laffont.
- Müller, E., Schuler, A., Burton, B., & Yates, G. (2003). Meeting the vocational support needs of individuals with Asperger syndrome and other autism spectrum disabilities. *Journal of Vocational Rehabilitation*, 18, 163–175.
- Nord, D., Stancliffe, R., Nye-Legerman, K., & Hewitt, A. (2016). Employment in the community for people with and without autism: A comparative analysis. *Research in Autism Spectrum Disorders*, 24, 11–16.
- Nourski, K., & Brugge, J. (2011). Representation of temporal sound features in the human auditory cortex. *Reviews in the Neurosciences*, 22(2), 187–203.
- Nussbaum, M. (1998). *Plato's republic: The good society and the deformation of desire*. Library of Congress.
- Panda, S., Hogenesch, J., & Kay, S. (2002). Circadian rhythms from flies to human. *Nature*, 417, 329–335.
- Pence, S., & Svyantek, D. (2016). Person-organization fit and autism in the workplace. *Journal of Business and Management*, 22(1), 117–134.
- Pesce, N. (2021). *Elon Musk reveals he has Asperger's syndrome on SNL*. Retrieved from Marketwatch: <https://www.marketwatch.com/story/watch-elon-musk-reveals-he-has-aspergers-syndrome-on-snl-heres-why-thats-raising-some-eyebrows-11620667511>
- Pirson, M. (2019). A humanistic perspective for management theory: Protecting dignity and promoting well-being. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 159, 39–57.
- Pirson, M. (2021). Leading for well being—Dignity as cornerstone. *Humanistic Management Journal*, 6, 147–150.
- Pirson, M., Dierksmeier, C., & Goodpaster, K. (2015). Human dignity and business. *Business Ethics Quarterly*, 24(3), 501–503.
- Pirson, M., Goodpaster, K., & Dierksmeier, C. (2016). Guest Editors' introduction: Human dignity and business. *Business Ethics Quarterly*, 26(4), 465–478.
- Pirson, M., Vázquez-Maguirre, M., Corus, C., Steckler, E., & Wicks, A. (2019). Dignity and the process of social innovation: Lessons from social entrepreneurship and transformative services for humanistic management. *Humanistic Management Journal*, 4, 125–153.
- Ponnet, K., Buysse, A., Roeyers, H., & De Corte, K. (2005). Empathic accuracy in adults with a pervasive developmental disorder during an unstructured conversation with a typically developing stranger. *Journal of Autism and Developmental Disorders*, 35(5), 585–600.
- Rosa, H. (2013). *Social Acceleration: A New Theory of Modernity*. Columbia University Press.
- Rosa, H. (2019). *Resonance: A Sociology of Our Relationship to the World*. Polity.
- Rosa, H., Dörre, K., & Lessenich, S. (2017). Appropriation, activation and acceleration: The escalatory logics of capitalist modernity and the crises of dynamic stabilization. *Theory, Culture & Society*, 34(1), 53–73.
- Scott, M., Jacob, A., Hendrie, D., Parsons, R., Girdler, S., Falkmer, T., & Falkmer, M. (2017). Employers' perception of the costs and the benefits of hiring individuals with autism spectrum disorder in open employment in Australia. *PLoS ONE*. <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0177607>
- Seitz, S., & Smith, S. (2016). Working toward neurodiversity: How organizations and leaders can accommodate for autism spectrum disorder. *Journal of Business and Management*, 22(1), 135–152.
- Sen, A. (2001). *Development as Freedom*. Oxford University Press.
- Simone, R. (2010). *Asperger's on the job*. Future Horizons.
- Solomon, C. (2020). Autism and employment: Implications for employers and adults with ASD. *Journal of Autism and Developmental Disorders*, 50, 4209–4217.
- Stich, J.-F., Tarafdar, M., & Cooper, C. (2018). Electronic communication in the workplace: Boon or bane? *Journal of Organisational Effectiveness: People and Performance*, 5(1), 98–106.
- Stoner, R., Chow, M. L., Boyle, M. P., Sunkin, S. M., Mouton, P. R., Roy, S., Wynshaw-Boris, A., Colamarino, S. A., Lein, E. S., & Courchesne, E. (2014). Patches of disorganization in the neocortex of children with autism. *New England Journal of Medicine*, 370, 1209–1219.
- Strauser, D. (2013). Introduction to the Centrality of Work for Individuals with Disabilities. In D. Strauser (Ed.), *Career Development, Employment and Disability in Rehabilitation: From Theory to Practice* (pp. 1–9). Springer.
- Sztompka, P. (1993). *The sociology of social change*. Blackwell.
- Vogel, D., Falter-Wagner, C., Schoofs, T., Krämer, K., Kupke, C., & Vogeley, K. (2019). Interrupted time experience in autism spectrum disorder: empirical evidence from content analysis. *Journal of Autism and Developmental Disorders*, 49, 22–33.
- Waisman-Nitzan, M., Gal, E., & Schreuer, N. (2019). Employers' perspectives regarding reasonable accommodations for employees with autism spectrum disorder. *Journal of Management and Organization*, 25(4), 481–498.
- Waisman-Nitzan, M., Schreuer, N., & Gal, E. (2020). Person, environment and occupation characteristics: What predicts work performance of employees with autism. *Research in Autism Disorders*, 78, 101643.
- Waller, M., Conte, J., Gibson, C., & Carpenter, M. (2001). The effect of individual perceptions of deadlines on team performance. *Academy of Management Review*, 26(4), 586–600.
- Waller, M., Giambattista, R., & Zellmer-Bruhn, M. (1999). The effects of individual time urgency on group polychronicity. *Journal of Managerial Psychology*, 14, 244–256.

- William, J., & Mavin, S. (2012). Disability as a constructed difference: A literature review and research agenda for management and organization studies. *International Journal of Management Reviews*, *14*, 159–179.
- Winter-Messiers, M. (2007). From tarantulas to toilet brushes: Understanding the special interest areas of children and youth with Asperger syndrome. *Remedial and Special Education*, *28*(3), 140–152.
- Wu, L., Birtch, T., Chiang, F., & Zhang, H. (2018). Perceptions of negative workplace gossip: a self-consistency theory framework. *Journal of Management*, *44*(5), 1873–1898.
- Zimbardo, P., & Boyd, J. (1999). Putting time in perspective: A valid, reliable individual-differences metric. *Journal of Personality and Personal Psychology*, *77*, 1271–1288.

**Publisher's Note** Springer Nature remains neutral with regard to jurisdictional claims in published maps and institutional affiliations.

Springer Nature or its licensor (e.g. a society or other partner) holds exclusive rights to this article under a publishing agreement with the author(s) or other rightsholder(s); author self-archiving of the accepted manuscript version of this article is solely governed by the terms of such publishing agreement and applicable law.