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# **From Dignity to Employment**

**Newly arrived immigrants and refugees' interpretations of  
opportunities to improve labor market participation  
through the Introduction Program**

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## Abstract

The aim of this thesis is to explore how newly arrived immigrants and refugees interpret their opportunities to improve labor market participation through the Introduction Program. The thesis is based on qualitative interviews with six former participants of the program situated in Oslo, Norway.

The Introduction Program is an activation program designed to qualify newly arrived immigrants and refugees for economic independence through the goals of employment and higher education. The implementation of the program in 2004 represented a shift from an integration policy relying on unconditional social assistance benefits to a compulsory work-oriented activation program with intensive qualifying measures. As an activation program the Introduction Program has more potential for inflicting shame for its participants than unconditional benefits, as the use of conditions represents a curtailment of individual autonomy. Nevertheless there are variations of activation strategies used within activation policy and programs, in this thesis understood in a continuum between a Human Resource Development (HRD) approach and a Labor Market Attachment (LMA) approach. As the Introduction Program represents a strong Human Resource Development (HRD) approach through the focus on long-term skill development, the program has the potential to promote dignity for its participants. A focus on quick entry into the labor market through elements of a Labor Market Attachment (LMA) approach may in contrast inflict a feeling of shame for the participants in the program. In the thesis I make use of Axel Honneth's theory of recognition to identify structures in the program that may promote dignity or inflict shame for the participants in the program.

The respondents in the study interpreted a close and personal relationship with their caseworker and the ability to develop skills through the program as the most important factors for their opportunities to improve labor market participation. The material indicates that recognition through a relationship of support, close follow up, user involvement and mutual respect with one's caseworker combined with access to high quality qualifying measures promotes dignity for the participants and offers them

“more” in terms of opportunities to improve labor market participation. Not experiencing recognition through the relationship with one’s caseworker, poor quality qualifying measures, and a focus on a quick entry into the labor market at the expense of long-term skill development may on the other hand inflict a feeling of shame for the participants and be a demotivating factor for skill development. Shaming factors in the program may thereby offer “less” for the participants. Offering “less” is in this study connected to curtailment of rights and autonomy, with the potential of having none or even negative effects on the participants’ opportunities to improve labor market participation through the program.

Based on my findings I argue that there is a need to continue the Introduction Program’s aim of long-term skill development through a Human Resource Development (HRD) approach, as the approach is dignifying and offers the participants “more” in terms of opportunities to improve labor market participation through the program. Especially important in this aspect was the respondents wish to have more intense and higher quality language education, as it gives them the necessary skills for finding employment and prepare them for higher education.

**Keywords:** activation, integration policy, dignity, the Introduction Program, newly arrived immigrants and refugees, recognition theory

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## 1. Introduction

Newly arrived refugees constitute a vulnerable group in the Norwegian Welfare State and are highly exposed to the risk of not finding employment in their new home country.

Despite of being a diverse group, newly arrived refugees in Norway have been characterized by low education levels, causing difficulties for integration into a labor market characterized by high demands for formal qualifications (Djuve 2016, 16-17). In the 1990s refugees amounted about half of the immigrant population in Norway, but had substantial higher levels of unemployment rates than Western immigrants and the Norwegian population (Sivertsen 1995). Other risks included low income, high dependency on social assistance, low Norwegian language skills and social exclusion (Djuve and Hagen 1995, Hagen 1997, Vassenden 1996). The Introduction Program was implemented in 2004 as a policy response to political concerns of high levels of unemployment and a critique from the research community of the failure of the integration regime of unconditional social assistance to qualify newly arrived refugees into the labor market.

The Introduction Program has been characterized as an activation program as participation is compulsory for the target group and a set of rules, sanctions and activation measures are applied with the aim of improving labor market participation. The aim of labor market participation is represented by the main aim of the program “*to strengthen opportunities for newcomers to participate in the labor market and society, and enhance their economic independence*” (*Introduksjonsloven (the Introductory Act) 2003, §1*). The program is designed to promote economic independence through the program goals of employment and higher education (with higher education defined as high school or university education). The introduction of compulsive participation for the programs target group involves a reduction of autonomy for the individual as receipt of benefits is connected to participation in the program. The loss of autonomy is complemented with an expansion of rights through access to a generous benefit, a broad array of qualifying measures, and a right to user

involvement through an Individual Plan on the use of measures in the program written collaboratively by the participant and caseworker. The program is full-time and year-round for a time-period of two years<sup>1</sup>, and participation is a statutory right and duty for those who fall under the target group. The target group of the program is newly arrived immigrants from the ages 18 to 55 years who are in need of basic qualifications for participating in the Norwegian labor market. To have a right and duty to participate the newly arrived immigrant must have residency in Norway based on their status as refugees, have family reunification with refugees that have lived in Norway for less than five years, or residency after marriage dissolution due to forced marriage, violence and similar reasons (Rundskriv Q-20/2015, § 2). In the following I will characterize the target group of the program as newly arrived immigrants and refugees, as not all the participants in the program have refugee background.

There has been increased political interest in the labor market integration of newly arrived immigrants and refugees the recent year, as a global refugee crisis led to an increase of asylum seekers in Norway. The current coalition Government of The Conservatives (H) and The Progress Party (FrP) published a new White Paper on integration (Stortingsmelding nr. 30 (2015-2016)) as a response to the increased numbers of asylum seekers in the previous year and the prospected increased public expenditure for the Norwegian Welfare State. The White Paper is partly based on a settlement on integration policy by a majority of the parliament parties except the Socialistic Left (SV) and the Green Party (MDG), stressing the need to evaluate and improve the Introduction Program (Arnstad et al. 2015, 4). Following up on this the focus of the White Paper is on how the Introduction Program more effectively can improve labor market participation for newly arrived immigrants and refugees (Stortingsmelding nr. 30 (2015-2016), 51).

A way of assessing if the program is effective for integrating newly arrived immigrants and refugees into the labor market is quantitative research on success rates of the program goals of employment and higher education. Research conducted by the Norwegian Statistical Bureau (SSB) found that 62 % of those who finished the Introduction Program in 2014 was employed or in higher education one year after

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<sup>1</sup>The program can be extended to three years in special occasions.

participation, failing to meet the governmental aim of minimum 70 % rate of goal accomplishment. There were large variations between municipalities ranging from below 50% success rate in some of the municipalities to over 80% in others. In addition there were variations between success rate of women (50%) and men (70%), and those between 20-24 years (80%) versus those above the age of 51 (29%). Of the 38 % that did not meet the program goals of employment or higher education, 11 % were registered as unemployed, whereas 27 % had other or unknown status (SSB 2015). The employment rate of immigrants with refugee background is 20 percentage points lower than the Norwegian average (SSB 2016), proving that there still is great potential for improving labor market participation for the participants of the Introduction Program.

### 1.1. Aim of thesis and research questions

In this study I aim to get insight of experiences within the program to explore how the Introduction Program can improve labor market participation for newly arrived immigrants and refugees. Instead of focusing on quantitative outcomes, I therefore explore the processes within the program through qualitative research. The focus is on the psychosocial impact the program has on the individual participants (Gubrium 2014), and how they relate this to their opportunities to improve labor market participation. This is called opening up the “black box” in research, as one aims to get an understanding of the processes leading to program outcomes (Weiss 1998). Hence, the main research question informing my study is the following:

- 1. How do former participants interpret their opportunities to improve labor market participation through the Introduction Program?*

To answer the research question I conducted qualitative interviews with six former participants of the program in Oslo and analyzed their interpretations by the use of thematic analysis. I define former participants as those who have finished their Introduction Program in the last two years. By having a retrospect view of their own qualification through the program, they can connect experiences in the program to their opportunities to improve labor market participation after finishing the program. I make use of Axel Honneth’s Theory of Recognition to discuss the former

participants' interpretations, building on his argument that individual autonomy is dependent on mutual recognition in the three spheres of love, rights, and achievements. According to Lysaker and Jakobsen (2015, 7-8) Honneth's theory of recognition is suitable for identifying actions and institutional arrangements that can harm the dignity of people. In the Poverty and Shame research project (Walker 2014, Chase and Bantebya Kyomuhendo 2015, Gubrium, Pellissery, and Lødemel 2014), the argument is that policies that protect people's need for dignity and respect and reduce shaming factors may increase the efficiency of policy (Gubrium and Lødemel 2014b). The Poverty and Shame project contributed to the incorporation of a sentence in the International Labour Organization (ILO) recommendation on social protection floors: "*states should have respect for the rights and dignity of people covered by the social security guarantees*" (ILO 2012). Building further on this I aim to explore how experiences of recognition and dignity in the program affect participants' opportunities to improve labor market participation through the program.

Following up on the main research question I aim to explore what the former participants interpret as giving them "more" or "less" in the Introduction Program. The "more" or "less" equation is based on Lødemel and Trickey's (2001, 11) notion that activation programs can extend opportunities to improve labor market participation for recipients of benefits and thereby offer "more", or curtail existing rights and offer "less". Through curtailing rights the program may result in reduced autonomy and none or even negative chances of finding employment. In this study I explore the "more" or "less" equation through what the participants in the program interpret as giving more or less. Following up on the main research question, the second research question informing my study is:

2. *What do former participants interpret as giving them "more" or "less" in the Introduction Program?*

As participation in the Introduction Program is compulsive for the target group, the program represents a threat to the autonomy of the newly arrived immigrants and refugees. The participants' interpretations of the legitimacy of the use of compulsion and the following reduction of autonomy is highly linked to their motivation to develop skills through the program and thereby for their opportunities to improve

labor market participation. Factors that motivate participants to develop their skills through the program are therefore important aspects in the discussion of the findings in this thesis. Furthermore the legitimacy of the use of compulsion is related to how the participants interpret the balance of rights and obligations in the program to alternative provision arrangements. In the discussion on what constitutes “more” or “less” I will therefore compare the participants’ interpretations to both the former and the existing system of social assistance. I expand the more or less equation to include a broader understanding of rights than just entitlement to a benefit, through a focus on how access to qualifying measures impact opportunities to improve labor market participation.

My interest in the subject derives from encounters with newly arrived immigrants and refugees through my job as a caseworker in the Introduction Program. I strongly believe that newly arrived immigrants and refugees have both the capability and motivation to become economically independent. By experiencing the frustration by those who struggle to enter the labor market and higher education and the joy by those who reach their goals, I find motivation to explore how the program can be improved. Through focusing on what the respondents interpret as important for their ability to improve labor market participation, I aim to provide new perspectives to the scene of integration policy.

## 1.2. Outline of the thesis

In chapter two I outline the policy context for the Introduction Program, describe former research and my contribution. I describe Axel Honneth’s Theory of Recognition in chapter three. Chapter four provides a detailed description of the methodological steps and choices made throughout the study, and I present the main findings of the study in chapter five. The main findings are discussed in chapter six through Honneth’s three spheres of recognition; love, rights and achievements. I conclude the thesis with chapter seven where I highlight possible policy implications and make suggestions for further research.

## **2. The policy context of the Introduction Program**

The Introduction Program has been characterized as an activation program (Djuve and Kavli 2015b, Fernandes 2013), as it applies a set of rules, sanctions and activation measures to attain the goal of employment or higher education. Activation programs are a part of a change from passive welfare income maintenance schemes and programs to a work-oriented activation policy, in which policy makers design benefit rules and qualification measures for unemployed benefit recipients of various programs in accordance with the goal of employment. A core characteristic of activation policy is that participating in the activation measures are compulsory for attaining the benefit of the program (Lødemel and Moreira 2014, 8-9). The program represented a shift in Norwegian integration policy with an intensive qualification program directed especially towards newly arrived immigrants and refugees (Djuve 2011a).

The aim of this chapter is to provide a context for how the introduction of compulsion through the Introduction Program has involved a new balance of rights and obligations for newly arrived immigrants and refugees in Norway. Starting of the chapter I give a description of and rationale behind the activation policy that replaced the trend of passive welfare policy in the US and Europe in the 1980s and 90s. I explain how variations of activation policy can be understood in a continuum between the main approaches of Human Resource Development (HRD) and Labor Market Attachment (LMA), and how the trend in the US and Europe the last decade has been a move away from an HRD to an LMA approach. Through describing the background for integration and activation policy in Norway and the different aspects of HRD and LMA in the Introduction Program, I argue that the enactment of the program represents a move towards an HRD approach in the integration of newly arrived immigrants and refugees. I then move on to discuss what may offer participants of the Introduction Program “more” or “less”, and conclude the chapter by describing previous qualitative research conducted on the program and my contribution.

## 2.1. Activation policy

There has been a move away from passive welfare to an activation policy in the US and Europe since the last decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century (Lødemel and Moreira 2014, 1, see also Bonoli and Natali 2012, Deacon 2002, Gilbert 2002, Goul Andersen 2005, Lødemel and Trickey 2001). Common denominators for the activation policy implemented through different political parties in various country settings are an extended use of conditionality and a diffusion of labor and social policies with the aim of improving labor market participation for the unemployed. Activation policy is also characterized by divergence in the various strategies used (Lødemel and Trickey 2001, 2-3), here described in a continuum between the HRD and the LMA approach.

Activation policy is a broad term used to describe how policy makers design benefit rules and employment and training measures for unemployed recipients for various types of benefits in accordance with the goal of employment. Activation is compulsory, in the meaning that participation in the activation measures is a condition for attaining the benefit. In addition the policy includes interventions in areas of public policy that affects the inclusion of the unemployed into the labor market, like creation of financial incentives to take up work in the tax system (Lødemel and Moreira 2014, 8-9). The underlying rationale behind activation policy is that recipients of benefits are autonomous actors that are capable of making their own choices, for example through engaging in a contractual relationship (Van Aerschoot 2011, 3). User involvement is thereby an important term in activation policy, as participants of programs or schemes are expected to take an active part in their own qualification process (Berkel and Hornemann Møller 2002, 48). To be active in terms of activation policy is to be economically independent through employment, or to actively seek jobs and improve opportunities for labor market participation through qualifying measures (Hvinden 1999, 27).

Activation programs are a part of the activation policy trend, with a set of specific activation measures designed for attaining the goal of employment for its participants. The programs are characterized by compulsion for attaining benefits, and a specific set of rules and sanctions is often applied within the program (Lødemel and Moreira 2014, 9). To reach the goal of employment activation programs aim to enhance work

skills and social abilities, work morale and motivation, and to promote a positive self-esteem (Dahl 2003). A broad array of qualifying measures is used within different activation programs, ranging from internships, education, qualifying courses, and measures for enhancing social abilities.

The shift towards activation policy involves a diffusion of social and labor market policy through the focus on employment (Lødemel and Trickey 2001, 23). An important aspect of this is the access to Active Labor Market Policies (ALMPs) for the unemployed uninsured (Van Aerschot 2011, 7). ALMPs were introduced in Scandinavian Welfare States for the insured unemployed in the post war years, but have been introduced to the uninsured along with the activation trend the recent years. Through demand side measures the focus of ALMPs involves interfering in the labor market through subsidies for employers, whereas the focus of supply side measures is to qualify people for the labor market (Drøppin, Hvinden, and Vik 1999, 135).

#### *2.1.1. Variations of activation – a continuum between a HRD and a LMA approach*

There are variations of activation strategies used within different country settings and between programs. Trickey and Lødemel (2001) proposes a distinction between focusing on long-term skill development through a Human Resource Development (HRD) approach, or a focus on finding routes for early transition to employment through a Labor Market Attachment (LMA) approach. Most activation policies and programs are situated in a continuum between the two approaches.

Activation policies close to a HRD approach are designed on the premise that social exclusion is the main cause for unemployment, with a following policy response aiming to include the excluded through long-term skill development (Dean 2003, 3). Through investing in a broad variety of education and training measures preparing people for the labor market (Morel, Palier, and Palme 2012, 2), policy responses close to the HRD ideal are characterized by the aim to complement existing rights of protection with new rights of improved opportunities for the recipients of benefits (Gubrium and Lødemel 2014c, 329). Social policies and programs close to a HRD approach tend to be tailored to individual needs of the recipient, to offer more in terms of services and benefits, and to have a strong focus on individual rights (Trickey 2001, 279-281). HRD-influenced programs are in general more centralized

than approaches closer to the LMA ideal, permitting little local agency or caseworker discretion (Lødemel and Trickey 2001, 16-17).

Based on the argument that generous passive welfare services demotivates people from finding employment and creates a dependency culture that embraces welfare receipt, the policy response of LMA-oriented approaches is directed towards discouraging welfare dependency (Lødemel and Trickey 2001, 18-22, Dean 2003, 3). Blaming the individual for lack of work ethic and failing to fend for themselves, the focus is thereby on individual behavior of the welfare recipients (Dahl 2003, 274-275). Described as “work first”, the aim of LMA-oriented approaches is to find routes for entering the labor market quickly, and to match existing rights with obligations that control and deter welfare recipients (Gubrium and Lødemel 2014c, 329). Approaches close to the LMA ideal therefore represents a curtailment of rights in the sense that benefit levels are suppressed so that they always are below the lowest wage in an economy, and social control is imposed through recipients having to give away their freedom in order to receive benefits (Lødemel 2001a, 297-298). Workfare is close to this ideal type strategy, defined as “*programs or schemes that require people to work in return for social assistance benefits*” (Lødemel and Trickey 2001, 6).

### *2.1.2. Background for activation and integration policy in Europe*

The first attempt of activation was a national activation strategy directed at social assistance recipients implemented in the US in the 1980s. The approach had an explicit HRD strategy, but was replaced with state-driven workfare LMA programs in the mid 1990s alongside a decentralization of governance of activation (Wiseman 2001, 243). The new workfare programs were based on a cross party consensus of the need to cut costs of social assistance through a platform of “ending welfare as we know it” due to an increase of social assistance expenditure. A policy view that was formerly only associated with liberal-right ideology (Lødemel and Trickey 2001, 2).

Similarly to the US, welfare states in North-Western Europe experienced a growth in people receiving social assistance during the 80s and 90s, as a result of high levels of unemployment from the 1970s. The spending priorities of the welfare state became a high priority, and politicians to the right and left of the political spectrum agreed on the shift from passive welfare benefits to a policy based on activation. The shift in

policy was supported by key organizations such as the OECD and the EU (Lødemel and Trickey 2001, 12-14). In the 1990s there was a strong trend towards a HRD focus in European social policy (Trickey 2001, 285), with the most prominent example of activation policy in Denmark. Along with the introduction of compulsion for recipients of benefits, Denmark had a specific focus on raising skills and qualifications through training and education for benefit recipients rather than imposing work-requirements. Moreover, user involvement in the planning and participation of activities was a right for the individual, with an emphasis on giving participants a real choice between different activation measures (Torring 1999, 17-18). Following the US trend there was a broad move towards an LMA-approach in activation policy all over Europe from the early 2000s (Gubrium and Lødemel 2014c, 329), including the gradual change of the Danish activation approach towards lower benefits and curtailment of freedom, especially for the young, ethnic minorities and immigrants (Kvist and Harsløf 2014, 48).

In line with the activation trend, many European countries have implemented various requirements for the integration of newly arrived immigrants and refugees, including mandatory introduction programs, contracts, and language and civic education and tests for attainment of permanent residency and state citizenship (Carrera 2006, Goodman 2010, 2012, Jacobs and Rea 2007, Joppke 2007). In Scandinavia Introduction Programs targeted at newly arrived immigrants and refugees have been introduced, with variations of the balance of rights and duties imposed. Denmark represents the strictest form of integration policy, with a compulsory Introduction Program accompanied by a requirement to sign a contract pledging to integrate and be an active citizen, and to pass a language and citizenship test for attainment of permanent residency or citizenship. Participation in the Introduction Program in Sweden is in contrast voluntary (with restriction of access to social assistance by non-participation), and there are no requirements for permanent residency or citizenship. Norwegian integration policy is considered to lie somewhere in between, with a compulsory Introduction Program and the requirement to participate in certain hours of Norwegian language courses and civic training to attain permanent residency or citizenship. The current coalition Government of the Conservatives and the Progress Party (2013-) have announced that a minimum of oral Norwegian and a test in civics will be the requirement for attaining Norwegian citizenship in the future. The

Introductory allowance in both Norway and Sweden is considered to be generous and set higher than the social assistance benefit, whereas it is equal to social assistance levels in Denmark (Fernandes 2015, Brochmann and Hagelund 2010).

## 2.2. Norwegian activation and integration policy

The Introduction Program in Norway was part of a trend in Norwegian social policy towards an activation policy with intensive qualification measures in compulsory full day programs, and represented a shift in integration policy with an activation program directed especially at newly arrived immigrants and refugees (Djuve 2011a). In contrast to the general activation trend of increased LMA approaches in European activation policy and the system of social assistance in Norway, the program is highly influenced by a HRD approach.

The Norwegian Welfare State has together with other Nordic countries been characterized as a social democratic welfare state, in which the state is the main provider of welfare (Esping-Andersen 1990). Key characteristics of the social democratic Norwegian Welfare State is the aim to promote equality through universalistic welfare services and an active labor market policy for full employment. All political parties in the welfare state agreed upon that health, education and social services should be in high quality and available for all strata's in society (Gubrium and Lødemel 2014a). This political consensus laid a base for the development of a big welfare state with high benefit levels and programs and schemes covering various risk groups of the population (Lødemel 1997), built on the concept of social citizenship. By granting citizens social rights, the state guarantees that all citizens within the Welfare State enjoy an acceptable standard of living (Marshall 1963). The strong focus on employment is linked to securing a big tax base for funding the various schemes and programs, and is characterized as "the work approach" in Norwegian social policy. The approach stresses that paid work should be the first choice for those in working age, and ALMPs was implemented for the unemployed insured to reach the goal of full employment (Lorentzen and Dahl 2005, 28). In accordance with the work approach, economic independence through employment has always been a goal for Norwegian integration policy.

However, the integration regime prior to the Introduction Program was characterized by a strong culture relativist focus on tolerance for cultural differences and little job training efforts. The prevailing integration discourse was based on the understanding that immigrants should be able to decide what kind of adaptation to the society they wanted (Djuve and Kavli 2007, 204). This is exemplified in White Paper no. 39 (1987-88) proposed by the Labor Party government, where immigrants rights to preserve their own culture and not be assimilated is stated. The White Paper further places integration services under general welfare services, and with equality as a leading principle the paper stated that immigrants should receive the same welfare services as the rest of the population (Stortingsmelding nr. 39 (1987-88) cited in Djuve 2011a, 116). The municipalities have been responsible for the implementation of integration measures through the use of state financing since 1982, and as identified problems for the refugees were lack of employment, income and housing, they were usually referred to social assistance offices in the municipalities equal to ethnic Norwegians with no rights to unemployment insurance (Djuve 2011a, 4-5). In 1991 work requirements was enacted into the system of locally organized social assistance in Norway, where it was optional for the local authorities to use these new measures or not. This represented a turn towards workfare and a LMA-strategy in social assistance provision and was part of a wider process of emphasis on work and activation in policy as opposed to passive provision of aid (Lødemel 2001b, 133-134). As there was a division between social assistance and job training offices, and the job training offices required the pass of a language test to participate, job-training measures through ALMPs were rarely used in integration efforts. As a result there was a large variation between the use of integration measures in different municipalities, but they typically consisted of a few hours of voluntary language classes per week and receipt of unconditional social assistance benefits (Djuve 2011a, 4-5). The system of social assistance for the integration of newly arrived refugees was thereby unconditional in practice even though the system was not unconditional in principle, as the local offices had the possibility to enforce work requirements for the attainment of benefits (Lødemel 2001a, 302). Due to the poor quality and even lack of qualifying measures directed towards integration of newly arrived refugees, many became long term recipients of social assistance (NOU (1986: 8)).

The Progress Party to the far right in Norwegian politics made a breakthrough in the local political elections in 1987, and managed to put the failure of immigration and integration on the political agenda (Djuve and Kavli 2007, 204). In relation to this there was a gradual change in policy documents in the direction of placing more obligations on refugees to participate in labor market and society in general (Djuve 2011a, 119), and research conducted in the 90s focused more and more on the failure of integration policies. A study on living conditions conducted by the research institution Fafo with qualitative interviews with 329 refugees from six nationalities that came in 1988/89 found that 49% of the refugees interviewed was dependent on social assistance benefits after 6-7 years in Norway. Furthermore the researchers found that most of the refugees felt economically marginalized and suffered from social isolation (Djuve and Hagen 1995). Research conducted by the Norwegian Statistical Bureau (SSB) found that almost half of the refugees that came to Norway in 1987-88 claimed social assistance benefits in 1993 (Vassenden 1996), and in 1994 the unemployment rate for immigrants from third world countries and Eastern Europe was four to five times higher than the unemployment rate for Norwegians and immigrants from industrialized countries (Sivertsen 1995).

According to Djuve (2011a, 118) the explanation for the integration failure from the research community can be put into three categories. The first is a critique of the quality, continuity and intensity of qualification of the refugees. This was explained in part by the division between the social assistance offices and job centers (Djuve and Hagen 1995, Berg 1996, Djuve and Pettersen 1997). The second critique was the view that the unconditional social assistance offered to refugees gave rise to unemployment and passive participation in society. It was argued that the low intensity and poorly individually adapted training combined with the paternalistic measure of paying peoples bills gave rise to long-term welfare dependency and passivity (Djuve and Hagen 1995, Djuve et al. 2001, Djuve and Pettersen 1997). The third critique evolved around the passivity of public integration services to communicate Norwegian core values. Wikan (2002) argued for instance that Norwegian integration policy sacrificed the rights of women and girls by putting an emphasis on the right for immigrants to preserve their cultural values. There were massive media attention on cultural practices on oppression of women like forced marriages and female circumcision,

contesting the culture relativist paradigm by a political equality discourse with an emphasis on women's rights.

As a result activation policy gained support as the best solution for integration of refugees and in social policy in general in the late 1990s. The stand was now that refugees should internalize core Norwegian values and White Paper no. 17 (1996-1997) explicitly stated the need for a unified training effort to qualify refugees for employment and participation in society (Stortingsmelding nr. 17 (1996-97)). On the basis of a parliamentary resolution in 1998 (Instilling S.nr. 192 (1997-1998)) the Norwegian Department of Municipal and Regional Development invited 16 municipalities to a trial project from 1998 to 2001, with the aim of restructuring the income for refugees from unconditional social assistance to activation measures that could enhance qualification for employment and education. The proposal stated that the benefit should be dependent on participation in the program, that the measures should be individually adapted to each participant, and that each participant should have an Individual Plan for qualifying measures based on prior skills. The measures for qualification should be five days a week and at least involve Norwegian courses and measures directed at finding employment. Each participant should have one contact person, and the social assistance office and job centers should collaborate on the qualification (Djuve et al. 2001). The project was clearly influenced by a HRD approach in activation policy.

A new act on a introductory program was elaborated during the trial projects, through Green Paper (NOU (2001: 20)), resulting in a law proposition (Odelstingspreposisjon nr. 28 (2002-2003)). The final act on the Introduction Program was passed in 2003 (Introduksjonsloven (the Introductory Act) 2003) and came into force for all the countries municipalities in 2004. The use of words in the act like "participant" (in contrast to client) and income (in contrast to benefit), and the close relation to the rules of the labor market in terms of vacation and sick leaf (Introduksjonsloven (the Introductory Act) 2003) suggest the aim to promote economically active citizens through an activation policy. Two years after the implementation of the Introduction Program, the Nav reform of 2006 involved a drastic change of Norwegian social policy, where formerly separated labor, social insurance and social assistance agencies were merged together to local Nav offices in each municipality. It

represented an intensification of activation policy in Norway, especially through the introduction of the Qualification Program for long term recipients of social assistance in 2007, that was built on the model of the Introduction Program (Gubrium, Harsløf, and Lødemel 2014, 27). The Introduction Program is organized under local NAV offices in many municipalities in Norway, easing the access to job-training measures.

### 2.3. The Introduction Program in the LMA-HRD continuum

The Introductory Act was passed with broad political support from both the political right and left side parties. By combining the HRD and LMA approach to activation in the act, all political parties could agree on the new activation measure for integration refugees (Djuve 2011a, 121). The way immigrant unemployment is perceived and described in policy documents is of importance, as it has implications for the types of measures that are implemented for qualifying newly arrived immigrants and refugees (Fernandes 2013, 190).

The program represented three major reforms of integration policy. Firstly the qualification offered was more intense and of larger quantity. Secondly it was compulsory to participate for those that fall within the target group, and by choosing to not participate the refugees would lose eligibility for the attainment of social assistance. Thirdly participation in the program represented an individual right, as it was mandatory for the municipalities to offer the program. All in all, the program represented an increase in the use of conditionality, but also an expansion of rights for the target group. The obligation to participate is reciprocated by an entitlement to intensive individually adapted qualification measures based on user involvement and the right to be followed up by one individual caseworker (Djuve 2011a, 117).

#### *2.3.1. Human Resource Development Approach*

The Introduction Program represented an expansion of rights, with a highly codified law preventing local and caseworker discretion. The statutory right to participate in a program with intensive qualifying measures, and the right to an individual plan and to a generous benefit exemplify the expansion of rights. In combination with a combined goal of higher education alongside the goal of employment, the activation program represents a move in the direction of a Human Resource Development (HRD) approach.

The Labor Party government (Ap) (1996-1997) with support from the Socialistic Left Party (SV) was highly influential on the content on the Introduction Program through White Paper no. 17 (1996-97). Following a HRD approach the problem of long term dependency on social assistance among newly arrived refugees is discussed in the White Paper. The fear was that dependency on social assistance would lead to social exclusion, and represented a change in the Labor party's view on integration policy from a belief in unconditional benefits to a belief in the possibilities of activation policy to lift newly arrived refugees out of poverty through qualifying measures (Djuve 2011a, 114). This change can be explained by increased immigration, failure of the integration regime of the 80s and 90s, and increased competition from the anti-immigrant Progress Party (Djuve and Kavli 2007). In contrast to other European countries, it can be argued that the reform was not based on cost-containment, as paid full day training is clearly more expensive than offering a few hours of language classes per week (Djuve 2011a, 114).

In the pilot projects leading to the law proposition, the Labor Party Government suggested the right to a benefit that was generous in comparison to the social assistance benefit. As the benefit is not means tested, it allows the participants of program to have employment on the side of the 37,5 hours of mandatory activity per week. Another important right proposed by the government was the right to an Individual Plan on the qualifying measures for the individual participant in the program. The act § 6 states that the plan shall be based on prior qualifications and skills, and to be written collaboratively by the participant and the caseworker (Introduksjonsloven (the Introductory Act) 2003), following the example of the use of Individual Plans for insured unemployed participating in ALMPs (Stortingsmelding nr. 17 (1996-97), 57). The plan is meant to secure tailored measures and user involvement for the participant, and the Introduction Program thereby follows the activation policy trend of expecting the participants to take an active role in their qualification process (Djuve 2011a, 115). The broad interpretation of skill development through Norwegian language courses, education and the use of ALMPs suggested in White Paper no. 17 (1996-97) alongside the goal of employment further supports a HRD strategy in activation policy, as it does not solemnly focus on an early entry in the labor market but a long-term strategy to prevent social exclusion.

### *2.3.2. Labor Market Attachment Approach*

In the final passing of the act in 2003, the HRD elements were complemented with LMA elements proposed by the Coalition government of the Conservative party (Høyre), the Christian Democrats (Krf) and the Liberal Party (Venstre) (2001-2005) as well as support from the Progress Party (FrP) to the far right of Norwegian politics (Djuve 2011a, 121).

The political right was as the political left alarmed by increased welfare consumption, but in opposition to the political left, were oriented towards the abuse and dependency of social assistance and stressed the need to discipline social assistance clients. In the law proposition Green Paper no. 28 (2002-2003) the coalition government introduced a new vocabulary closer to the LMA specter in the LMA-HRD continuum. “The need to make responsible” appears four times in the law proposition, as well as a 34 times repetition of the phrase “rights and obligations”. The newly arrived immigrants and refugees are made responsible for participating actively in society, and the document reflects the LMA focus on controlling individual behavior. The LMA focus proposed by the parties to the Right in Norwegian politics was influential on the framing of the program (Djuve 2011a, 120-121). The focus on the need for newly arrived immigrants and refugees to become active in the policy documents leading up the law might be understood as refugees needing to be motivated and activated due to their lack of willingness to work, followed by measures aimed at changing their behavior in line with an LMA approach (Fernandes 2013, 205).

Even though the Individual Plan is meant to secure user involvement in the program, the existence of a plan does not necessarily imply the existence of user involvement and vice versa. The measures listed collaboratively in the Individual Plan have to follow the goal of employment or higher education, and have to at least include measures that qualify for employment. Furthermore the law states that the municipality has the last word in a disagreement on which qualifying measures to include in the plan. The failure of the participant to follow up on the agreed measures through illegitimate absence, leads to a reduction in the introductory benefit and restricts access to social assistance (Rundskriv Q-20/2015, § 6). This suggests an LMA focus in the legislation.

There are elements of both HRD and LMA in the program as a result of different ideological anchoring leading to the act, but in general the act is characterized by a strong HRD approach with its generous benefit and expansion of rights. A reason for the strong HRD approach might be how the target group was constructed as “socially excluded” due to lack of qualifying measures for labor market inclusion in the policy documents leading to the act, and that the state took legal and financial responsibility for the implementation of the program, with a highly codified law (see Lødemel and Trickey 2001, 16-17 and 328).

#### 2.4. Giving “more” versus giving “less”

The introduction of compulsion tied to receipt of aid through the Introduction Program represented a fundamental change in the balance between rights and obligations for the integration of newly arrived immigrants and refugees. According to Lødemel and Trickey (2001, 11) the reduction of autonomy following the use of compulsion can be justified if the program is offering more for the participants in terms of increased opportunities to improve labor market participation, in contrast to offering “less” in terms of curtailing existing rights and autonomy and none or even negative chances of finding employment.

Prior to the implementation of the Introduction Program there was a debate on the use of conditionality and activation in the integration of refugees. In the pilot projects leading to the program the use of conditionality was met with opposition by some of the teachers and caseworkers (Djuve et al. 2001). On the one hand the use of economic sanctions was considered unethical, assimilationist, stigmatizing, counterproductive and as violating the integrity and autonomy of individuals. On the other hand it was argued that the use of conditions could be justified as it helped people move into the labor market (Djuve 2011a). This debate reflects the general debate of the use of activation measures in social policy.

##### *2.4.1. Offering less through curtailment of autonomy and rights*

An argument against the use of compulsion in activation policy is that it undermines welfare as a guarantee of social citizenship by not being unconditional (Marshall 1985, cited in Lødemel and Trickey 2001, 8) as conditional benefits represents a change in social citizenship from status to contract, in which rights only are attached

if the obligations are fulfilled (Handler 2003). This especially imposes a threat for individual autonomy if the set conditions are experienced as unreasonable and offensive by the target group (Djuve 2010, 405).

In the trial projects leading to the Introduction Program it was questioned in what degree the majority could impose the minority population to assimilate to majority norms as the act is based on norms set by the majority population. There was a worry that the use of conditions and sanctions would be stigmatizing for the target group by implying that they did not want to participate but had to be forced, and that the compulsive character would worsen newly arrived immigrants and refugees' already vulnerable position (Djuve et al. 2001). Critics who otherwise support activating measures challenge the justification for compulsion stating that it is counterproductive because it undermines consumer feedback by making people unable to reject poor quality programs. The argument is that voluntary programs are more motivating and give better results in terms of integration to work (Grimes 1997).

Moreover, a power asymmetry is existent in the relationship between the participant and caseworker, as the target group of the program often have poor Norwegian skills, poor knowledge of the Norwegian society, and have very few possibilities of exiting the program. The participants are thereby dependent on the mercy of their caseworker in their possibility to exercise autonomy through user involvement (Djuve and Kavli 2015b). Caseworker discretion is therefore an important theme when discussing individual autonomy in the Introduction Program (Djuve and Kavli 2015a). The ability to exercise autonomy is further restricted by the fact that user involvement within the program do not tackle structural injustice in society and thereby place responsibility of solving the problem of unemployment on the individual (Fernandes 2015).

Compulsion, poor quality programs and power asymmetry can promote a resistance culture where participants use "the weapon of the weak": failing to participate actively or even sabotage opportunities, poor motivation and absenteeism (Jordan 1996). The teachers in the pilot projects thought the use of conditions towards adult students would be counterproductive as the conditions may hinder the students motivation to learn (Djuve et al. 2001). The combination of a resistance culture and

demotivation may have a negative impact on opportunities to improve labor market participation for the individual.

#### *2.4.2. Offering “more” through improved chances of labor market participation*

The main argument for the use of compulsion in activation policy is that a good balance of rights and obligations can be effective for integrating people into the labor market (Lødemel and Trickey 2001, 11). Yeatman (1997) argues that the use of conditions does not necessarily reduce individual autonomy and replace status in social citizenship, but that conditions may redefine social citizenship to “contractual capacity” for the individual. Through an extension of rights conditions may enable the participant to be active in one’s own qualification process and become an economically active participant in society.

Supporters of the use of conditionality in integration policy during the trial projects emphasized the fact that the use of qualifying measures enhances the refugees ability to fend for themselves and counteracts the negative dependency effect of unconditional benefits (Djuve 2011b). Through individual adaption of the program and the legal right to user involvement through the Individual Plan the participants are given the means to be economically independent. This was in line with the HRD focus in activation policy theory and gained political support in Norway in a short period of time (Djuve 2011a, Djuve 2010).

In the Introduction Program giving “more” is connected to the HRD-elements, whereas giving “less” is connected to LMA-elements of the program. According to Lødemel and Trickey (2001, 303) an HRD focus has a greater potential for providing more for the individual participant, as it can create a change in terms of creating new opportunities for people.

#### 2.5. Former qualitative research on the program and my contribution

Lødemel and Trickey (2001, 11) argue that what constitutes more or less is depended on participants’ own interpretations, and suggest a need for qualitative studies. In line with Lødemel and Trickey’s argument I propose in this paper that the discussion on if the program offers “more” or “less” is explored best through a qualitative study on the

participants' interpretations of their opportunities to improve labor market attachment through the Introduction Program.

In a summary of research conducted of the Introduction Program since its implementation, Djuve and Kavli (2015b, 59) state that very few studies on the Introduction Program have been designed to obtain participants' experiences. The few studies that have been conducted indicate some important aspects of the participants' experiences and interpretations, but have either been conducted before the implementation of the program (Djuve et al. 2001), have targeted a specific group of the program (Djuve, Hagelund, and Kavli 2011), or have focused on only Norwegian language education (Rambøll 2011). A qualitative study of 286 participants experiences and interpretations in the trial projects leading the Introduction Program indicated that very few reacted negatively to the use of economic sanctions in the program (Djuve et al. 2001). Furthermore a qualitative study of 31 female participants with low education and great family responsibilities found that very few had knowledge of their Individual Plan (Djuve, Hagelund, and Kavli 2011). In a study on Norwegian language education among 90 adult immigrants Rambøll (2011), found that the students found lack of differentiating in language education to be a problem.

Djuve and Kavli (2015b, 78) state that most previous studies have been done while the participants still were in the program, and that there is a need for studies that capture differences in experiences and motivation. Following up on this I have interviewed former participants of the program, as it allows me to explore how participants interpret their opportunities to improve labor market participation in relation to experiences they had in their Introduction Program. I have interviewed a diversified group of participants' as I wanted to capture some common experiences and interpretations of the program. Through exploring what the participants themselves interpret as giving them "more" or "less" in the program the aim is to get insight of factors in the program that the participants considers as important for their ability to improve labor market participation. More specifically I aim to get insight of how experiences of recognition in the program affects participants motivation for skill development in the program and opportunities to improve labor market participation.

### 3. Recognition Theory

The experience of recognition is one of the most basic needs for humans, and to feel recognized you are dependent on recognition from other people. For newly arrived immigrants and refugees in Norway this becomes especially important because they have to re-socialize into a new society, and thereby re-claim recognition.

As a theoretical backdrop for the discussion of the findings in this study I will use Axel Honneth's Theory of Recognition. Honneth sees individual autonomy as the center of all concepts of social justice (2014), and argues that autonomy always is based on experiences and relations of recognition in the three spheres of love, respect, and achievement. For Honneth recognition is a precondition for realizing one's individual autonomy through self-realization (Honneth 1995, 2003). Experiences of recognition through the Introduction Program may thereby enable participants to realize their autonomy and improve labor market participation through the program.

#### 3.1. Axel Honneth's theory of recognition

Building on Hegel's *Philosophy of right* Axel Honneth argues that the autonomy of the individual should be at the center core for a theory of justice. The reason for this, he claims, is that all spheres of society are elements of individual self-determination, and that autonomy is the main link between the individual and society (Honneth 2014, 15). Honneth argues that individual self-determination is learned through mutual relations of recognition, and that individual autonomy therefore always is based on relations and experiences of recognition (Honneth 2003, 177-178). To be able to make use of their autonomy, individuals need to be recognized within three main spheres of relations with corresponding experiences of self-relations that constitute this mutual recognition: love and basic self-confidence, rights and self-respect, and achievement and self-esteem (Honneth 1995, 2003, 181). For Honneth individual identity formation takes place through internalizing socially standardized recognition responses within the three spheres. Based on this Honneth argues that the quality of social relations should be the reference point for a theory of social justice, as the justice of a society is equal to the ability to secure conditions for mutual recognition that fosters positive identity formation (which for Honneth is equal to self-

realization). The lack of supportive relations within the spheres in contrast results in experiences of disrespect and shame that has negative effects on the identity formation of the individual (Honneth 2003, 173-177).

In Honneth's theory autonomy is thereby created within the three spheres of mutual recognition, and social integration is established through relations of recognition through which people are confirmed in different aspects of their identity and seen and seeing themselves as autonomous members of society (Honneth 2003, 185). Honneth explains social change through normative claims based in relations of mutual recognition, and argues that the three spheres of recognition are historical products of recognition struggles (Honneth 1995, 2). He argues that the three spheres of recognition emerged as institutionalized patterns of recognition through capitalism in modern Western societies (Honneth 2003, 125-134). Honneth states that conditions for self-realization only can be found in modern societies, in which the universalistic achievement of equality and individualism is embedded in patterns of recognition in a way that all individuals in society have the possibility to be recognized as autonomous, equal and special (Honneth 1995, 175).

### *3.1.1. Love and basic self-confidence*

The sphere of love is according to Honneth close relationships that are characterized by strong emotional attachment between few people. Examples of this can be parent-child relationships, friendships, and romantic relationships, in which people mutually confirm each other in terms of needs (Honneth 1995, 95).

Through capitalism the need for love and care in childhood was institutionalized through cultural norms and legal construction, and affection between sexes was institutionalized through marriage in contrast to the former base of economic and social pressure (Honneth 2003, 138-139). The internal conflict that calls out for a struggle for recognition within the sphere of love are bringing forth neglected needs to love in order to demand a new or different kind of care (Ibid, 144). Within these new forms of intimate relationships with mutual affection and concern, people have been able to see themselves as individuals with their own needs (Honneth 2003, 142).

Through childhood children are developed in a process of interaction with parents, and especially the ability to be alone is dependent on the child's trust in the continuity

of love from its parents (Honneth 1995, 98-103). Recognition through love is therefore independence that is guided and supported by care (ibid, 107). Deriving from the importance of love and care in early childhood, Honneth add that emotional bonds of love and care in adulthood relationships also open up for the possibility of relating to one-self in basic self-confidence. To be denied one's needs for love and affection can in contrast lead to a negative self-image characterized by insecurity. In order to have a strong emotional bond in adult life, one must be able to relate to oneself in terms of basic-self confidence to be able to make affectionate bonds with other people (ibid, 104-105). Relationships of love cannot be chosen according to Honneth, as they are dependent on liking and affection between people in close relationships. He further argues that a self-relation of basic confidence through loving relationships of mutual recognition is vital for autonomous participation in society (ibid, 107).

For Honneth it was important to see the interconnections between the institutions of love, law, and state in terms of recognition principles. He argued, for instance, that the modern family is not only represented by the recognition principle of love, as there has been a gradual implementation of laws that regulate family life in the modern society (Honneth 2003, 146). For newly arrived immigrants and refugees who often have been disrupted from family and friends, caseworkers who operate as both implementers of public policy and in personal contact with clients may represent both the love and right sphere of recognition.

### *3.1.2. Rights and self-respect*

Contrary to the recognition principle of love, legal recognition is detached from affectionate feelings and liking, and more connected to cognition. In the transition from traditional to modern societies, legal individual rights have become detached from social status, and universally attached to every member of society as an autonomous and equal person. Recognition found in legal relations can therefore only be understood through the historical development of rights (Honneth 1995, 110-112).

For Marshall (1963) the detachment of legal rights from social status involved the historical emergence of citizenship as a principle for equality. The principle of citizenship expanded in meaning from the civil rights in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, to political

rights in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, and the emergence of social rights in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The argument for the civil rights movement was the need of legal protection in the individual's sphere of liberty, and the expansion of political rights was based on an argument that every member of a political community should be granted equal rights to participate in the political process of will-formation. The social rights expansion that came especially through the introduction of welfare states in Western Europe in the 20<sup>th</sup> century was based on the argument that individuals only can exercise their civil and political rights if they have a certain social standard of living. Modern law therefore put emphasis on the aim of equal exercise of rights through equal opportunities for realizing their freedom. The expansion of rights represented new claims for individuals, but also an expansion in terms of universalization of rights to include more members of society (Honneth 1995, 115-118). The struggle for recognition within the sphere of rights is thereby based on excluded groups demanding legal recognition, or the demand that neglected facts is included to differentiate legal principles, in accordance with the principle of equality (Honneth 2003, 144).

Recognition through legal rights makes a positive relation to oneself possible, as they increase a person's ability to see him or herself as morally responsible person. Being universally respected as equal to others can be seen as an expression of individual autonomy, and promote self-respect for the individual. In contrast, not being granted the same rights as others deprives people of their chances of developing self-respect (Honneth 1995, 118-121). The introduction of social rights in the welfare state contained the recognition sphere of achievement by making a minimum of esteem and economic welfare independent of achievement and transforming them into individual right claims (Honneth 2003, 147-150).

### *3.1.3. Achievement and self-esteem*

People in modern societies are esteemed on the basis of achievements of culturally defined goals in society, as a result of an individuation process from focusing on collective to individual traits (Honneth 1995, 125).

Along with the gradual process of detaching legal relations from social status, what is considered valuable traits and abilities in society has also undergone a change. In

traditional societies esteem or honor was attached to the owning of estate and the social class one was born into, whereas esteem became gradually individualized in modern societies by being more linked to individual achievements in realizing culturally defined goals. Esteem in modern societies is based on individual and not collective traits and no longer determined in advance. What was considered to be culturally defined goals in a society came up for interpretation, and a pluralized value horizon opened up for various forms of self-realization in society. What is considered to be admirable traits and abilities in a society is dependent on the cultural interpretation made by the dominant social groups in society, and social movements built on the tension on what should be considered as important values and goals in society is based on the struggle for recognition (Honneth 1995, 124-126). This is also true for individual struggle for recognition of neglected activities or capabilities in society (Honneth 2003, 145). For the participants in the Introduction Program the culturally defined goal of contributing to the welfare state and be economically independent is represented in the program goals of employment and education.

The experience of being recognized by others on the base of one's achievements in society co-responds with a positive confidence and self-esteem. According to Honneth, relations of symmetrical esteem between individualized and autonomous people is a condition for solidarity in a society as shared goals only can be realized through mutual recognition of others achievements. The individual can by contrast experience passive tolerance of individual traits of other people as disrespect and an insult (Honneth 1995, 129-130).

### 3.2. Outro – Recognition and dignity

In sum autonomy is important in all of the three spheres of recognition. Supportive love and care can enhance basic self-confidence which is a precondition for autonomy, and the feeling of having the same rights as others in society can enhance the feeling of self-respect and possibility to participate autonomously in political will-formation in society. Getting acknowledgement on culturally valued achievements in society strengthens a person's self-esteem and can motivate individuals to realize their autonomy through self-realization.

In *Redistribution or Recognition? A political-philosophical exchange* by Nancy Fraser and Axel Honneth (2003), Fraser argues that Honneth reduces the concept of justice to a matter of psychology through his focus on individual self-realization and identity formation. For Fraser, distribution and recognition are two sides of the same coin, where distribution can be explained through socio-economic inequality and class politics, whereas recognition is better understood through movements of identity politics like gender and ethnicity. For Honneth redistribution is better understood as a concept within recognition theory. In his newest book *Freedoms right* (2014) Honneth follows a non-psychological approach, which can be seen as an attempt to follow up on Fraser's critique and not relying on the concept of self-realization in a theory of justice.

Lysaker and Jakobsen (2015, 7-8) argue that Fraser's critique is an exaggeration and misunderstanding of Honneth, as his theory is based on relations between people and how struggles for recognition leads to institutional changes, not on individual psychological features. They suggest that Honneth's theory of recognition is suitable for identifying actions and institutional arrangements that can harm the dignity of people. Honneth also argued that his typology of the three spheres of recognition should be tested empirically by data as it is a philosophical theory that lacks empirical support (Honneth 1995, 93).

In this study I position myself with Lysaker and Jakobsen, and aim to explore how the participants interpret their opportunities to improve labor market participation through the program. In line with the argument that policies that protects peoples need for dignity and respect and reduce shaming factors may increase the efficiency of policy (Gubrium and Lødemel 2014b), I explore the participant experiences of recognition to identify actions and institutional arrangements that may promote dignity or inflict shame for the participants. Through qualitative research I thereby explore the psychosocial factors within the program that leads to program outcomes.

## 4. Methodology

The aim of this thesis is to explore former participants' interpretations of their opportunities to improve labor market participation through the Introduction Program. Being a qualitative study the goal of my research is to provide thick and rich descriptions (Geertz 1993) of the former participants' interpretations through a focus on how the participants give meaning to experiences within the Introduction Program (Denzin and Lincoln 2011). By exploring the process in the program, I aim to get an understanding of factors leading to program outcomes (Weiss 1998). In this chapter I give detailed descriptions of methodological steps and choices made throughout the research process and with it I hope to give a transparency of the research process leading up to my findings.

By the use of semi-structured interviews with six former participants of the program my aim was to explore the world seen from the respondents' worldview. As the interview is constructed in the interaction between the researcher and the respondent, particularly ethical issues of researcher influence on the interview is of importance (Kvale et al. 2015, 108-110). Researcher influence is also an ethical issue for the choices made during the process of analyzing the data. Using thematic analysis I hope to give a precise and thorough description of my respondents' interpretations of their opportunities to improve labor market participation through the program.

### 4.1. Socially constructed knowledge

A social constructivist perspective informs this research project, as the knowledge produced is constructed through social interaction. The classical work of social constructivism is Berger and Luckmann's "*The social construction of reality*" (1967) where they argue that there is a mutual influential relationship between people and society. Through socialization people internalize the socially constructed reality in a society, which again is constructed through institutionalization of norms created through repeated patterns of human action.

The life worlds of the respondents in my study are socially constructed through internalization of norms through primary and secondary socialization (Berger and

Luckmann 1967). An aspect of this is the role they have internalized as newly arrived refugees and participants in the Introduction Program. Their interpretations of opportunities to improve labor market participation through the program is colored by their backgrounds, their experiences, and the context of the interview situation. Their life world represents a version of reality, and I aim to understand each version as a representation rather than a factual account (Guba and Lincoln 1994).

The knowledge production through the study is furthermore influenced by my position as a researcher and caseworker in the program, and the asymmetrical relationship between the respondents and me. As a researcher I had the power to initiate and define the situation by deciding the main theme of the interview, questions asked, what answers to follow up on, and to end the interview. Moreover I had monopoly on interpreting the participants statements' (Kvale et al. 2015, 52). My background as a social worker and caseworker in the Introduction Program influenced the knowledge production in that I had pre-conceived ideas about the participants interpretations, which again influenced the focus of the interview guide and the questions asked in the interviews. An example of this was my focus on user involvement in the planning and interview phase of the study.

Throughout the interviews it became evident that user involvement was not the most important factor for the respondents in their Introduction Program, but rather their opportunities to find employment and start higher education. By changing the focus of the study after getting a sense of what the respondents highlighted as important in their Introduction Program, the respondents mutually influenced the production through the interviews.

#### 4.2. Recruitment of respondents

I restricted the research to consist of five to ten former participants situated in Oslo, Norway as I aimed to get thick and rich descriptions of individual experiences of the program and because of time limitations for the study. Five of the respondents were recruited through their former caseworkers in the program, and one was recruited through one of the other respondents. Recruitment of respondents through caseworkers in the program involves a risk of the caseworkers “creaming” the

respondent through choosing their top candidates. In order to reduce the risk of creaming I specifically asked for a diverse group of respondents, both those who met the program goals through the program and those that did not.

The process of choosing respondents was purposive with certain criteria. The first criteria for choosing respondents was that they had finished their Introduction Program in the last two years, as I wanted to get information of changes in their thoughts and experiences during their time in the program from a view of their status today. Another criteria for recruitment of respondents was that I wanted a diverse group of former participants in terms of home country, age, gender, education background and status today. The reason for this criterion was the wish that the respondents reflected the diversity in the program and the fact that I wanted to focus on what was common for people with different backgrounds and experiences. As a result I got a diversified group of respondents ranging from age 25 to 50, from three different Introduction Programs in Oslo, three women and three men, three that found employment through the program and three that did not, some with higher education and some without formal education, and from four different countries.

#### 4.3. The interview situation

In planning and conducting the research I followed the ethical guidelines produced by Norway's National Committee for Research Ethics in the Social Sciences and Humanities (NESH 2006), and got permission from the Norwegian Social Science Data Services (NSD) for conducting the research project.

The interviews lasted from 60 to 90 minutes each and were conducted by me in Norwegian over a total of three months. I had five of the interviews in a room at university, and one in my home at the respondent's request. All were given thorough information about the study prior to the interview, and all gave written consent. The study was presented as focusing on user involvement and positive and negative experiences with the program. In the beginning of each interview I went through the subject of confidentiality thoroughly using examples of how they would be portrayed in the written document. The language barrier being present, it was important for me to devote time to make sure the respondents knew what they were being a part of, as

participation in research must be voluntary decisions made by a informed choice by especially a thorough understanding of anonymity and confidentiality (Thagaard 2009). There was a varying degree of language skills amongst the respondents, but the language skills did not create too many difficulties in any of the interviews. Where language created barriers for understanding, we made use of thorough explanations and Google translate.

Through the interviews I aimed to have a reflexive approach to the research, to reduce the researcher influence and capture the participants' experiences (Braun and Clarke 2006). Having a reflexive approach to the research, the focus of the study and in the interviews changed throughout the research process. All interviews started with broad questions on what the respondents thought was important for them in their program to allow the respondents set the focus of the interviews. The interviews were semi-structured and organized around topics of interest, such as user involvement, experiences with respect, knowledge of rights with a specific focus on the Individual Plan, cooperation with caseworker, quality of program and thoughts on life situation prior to and after participation in the program. The interview situation was characterized by flexibility, and the conversations often changed directions in accordance with the respondents focus. Aiming to get in-depth knowledge of the respondents' experiences, it was essential that I as a researcher was flexible enough to "go-with-the-flow" to get a real experience of the respondents' life worlds (Johnson and Rowlands 2012, 107).

One difficulty I found while conducting the interviews was the fact that five of my respondents knew that I had recruited them through their former caseworker and thereby assumed that I knew the caseworkers well. As I noticed that the respondent that was recruited through another respondent spoke more openly about the relationship with the former caseworker, I assume that being recruited through a caseworker made the respondents more cautious of their descriptions of their former programs and caseworkers. Moreover the asymmetrical relationship between me and the respondents may have influenced the interview situation. As a reaction to dominance Kvale et al. (2015, 52) argue that respondents can withdraw information or talk around the subject as a defense mechanism. I experienced this in many of the interviews, where the respondents constantly refused to talk about the program or

their caseworker in negative terms. As a technique I therefore asked the respondents hypothetical questions on what their reactions would be like if they had experienced something negative in their program. Following up on this some of the respondents were reminded of experiences they had that they wished would have been different and spoke about this.

It is important that the interviews should be a positive experience for the respondent and not have negative consequences for their lives (Kvale et al. 2015, 49-50). All of my respondents raised the ability to be able to talk to a Norwegian as a positive part of the interview process, as many rarely had this possibility in the Norwegian society in general. Furthermore participants were not pushed to follow up on painful issues and during the interview process I found that creating a positive and relax atmosphere with jokes and laughter made the respondents comfortable enough to speak freely about their experiences in the program.

#### 4.5. Analysis

According to Braun and Clarke (2006) a thematic analysis involves searching across a data set to find repeated patterns of meaning, and there are many choices to be made throughout the analysis. Prior to the analysis I found focusing on the specific aspects of the data set that relates to my focus rather than a surface description of the entire set, as it provides depth and complexity to the analysis. My analysis was strongly driven by interpretation, as can be seen in the presentation of the findings.

The way of analyzing my data have been reflexive and I have used a combination of an inductive bottom up analysis and a deductive top down analysis for identifying themes within the data set. My main reason for choosing an inductive approach was the wish to let the data speak for itself, without letting my pre-conceived ideas influence the analysis. After transcribing the interviews I coded the data using NVivo while writing the context and initial thoughts for each interview, and collated the codes into themes that gave meaning from the data set. Through induction the researcher identifies themes that are strongly linked to the data, and do not try to fit it into a pre-existing coding frame. As I cannot totally free myself from theoretical and practical experience that have influenced my preconceived ideas on the research, the

analysis process was also characterized by a deductive approach. Deductive analysis is analyst driven and tends to provide less rich overall description of the data and more detailed analysis of some aspects of the data (Braun and Clarke 2006). The deductive approach was informed by the design of my interview guide and how it was influenced by theory and former research on activation theory and the Introduction Program and my experience as a caseworker in the program. The themes that formed my analytical interest and thereby were focused upon in the interviews were especially user involvement, knowledge of rights and the Individual Plan, and experiences with respect in the program.

The thematic analysis was carried out in five steps inspired by a model of Braun and Clarke (2006). First I familiarized myself with the data by reading the transcripts and re-listening to the audio files while taking notes for ideas to themes. Secondly I started the initial coding process by coding the entire data set in NVivo, and looked for patterns of repeated themes. Even though I focused mostly on interpretations of possibilities to improve labor market participation, I coded the entire set in touch with my inductive approach. Thirdly I sorted the different codes into themes and created a mind map for organizing the relationship between the themes. During this step I found it interesting how circumstances in the respondents program seemed to have effects on active or passive participation in the program. The fourth step involves reviewing themes to make sure they are internal homogenous and externally heterogenic. I went through all the themes to make sure there was enough data to support the themes, that the themes within the themes were not too diverse, and considered the validity of each theme in relation to the data set as a whole. To make sure the themes accurately reflected the meanings expressed through the interviews I went back to the context I had written for each interviewed and re-read and re-listened to every interview. The fifth and final step included defining and naming themes. I found three themes to best describe my data set: the importance of the relationship the respondents had with their caseworkers, the ability to develop skills through the program, and the active participant factor.

After analyzing the data I found that Honneth's theory of recognition was suitable for discussing the findings of my study. Following my aim to be "data-driven" I chose the theory after the analysis of what the respondents themselves highlighted as important

for the in their Introduction Programs. Equal to my respondents, Honneth stresses the importance of recognition in terms of personal relationships, rights, and achievements as pivotal for self-realization in society.

#### 4.6. Quality of the research

The ethical issue of researcher influence in the preparation, during the interviews and in the process of analysis has been a denominator through the process of research. I had an explicit goal of flexibility throughout the research, and the participants have had a high degree of influence on the data production and direction of the research. When analyzing the data I combined a deductive and inductive approach, and aimed to let go of preconceived ideas and be “data-driven”.

The knowledge produced in this paper is therefore socially constructed, making measures of validity and reliability difficult. Seale (1999) argues that the quantitative measures of validity and reliability does not apply in qualitative research, and that they therefore should be translate into dependability and trustworthiness of the researcher. Through thorough procedure, awareness of researcher bias, researcher reflexivity, and transparency of the research process I hope to have strengthened the dependability and trustworthiness of my research. I hope that my focus on the context of my respondents, the diverse sample of respondents, and the re-reading and re-listening to the interviews have strengthened the research as a representation of “the real world” (Braun and Clarke 2013). Being a qualitative study with in-depth interviews of six former participants of the program in Oslo, I do not claim the findings of my study to be generalizable to all participants of the Introduction Program. In contrast by providing information about myself as co-constructer of the knowledge production in the program, the research context, processes, respondents and relationship with respondents I aim to enhance the transferability of the study (Morrow 2005). If these findings are transferable to other settings depends on the setting of the individual project.

#### 4.7. Presentation of the respondents

In the following I will present the respondents in terms of their age group, background, goals in the program and the qualifying measures they participated in, and life situation today. In the presentation of respondents and in the following findings chapter certain aspects are anonymized to secure confidentiality. This includes the respondents' names, home countries, age, part of the city of Oslo they lived in, name of internships they had and other situational factors that could make them recognizable by others.

All of the informants in the study finished their Introduction Program in the last two years and have been living in Oslo since they started the program. The three men that were interviewed found employment after the program, whereas the women were currently unemployed. None of the respondents had started higher education after the program, but one of the respondents, Maryam, had started primary education.

*Maryam* is in her thirties and have some primary education and employment background from her home country. Her goal in the Introduction Program was to start higher education, as she did not want to be stuck in a dead end job. She combined language education with internships and some qualifying courses in the program. After finishing the program she started primary education while receiving social assistance benefits.

*Fatima* is in her thirties and had higher education and experience as a hairdresser from her home country. Her main goal was to start higher education through the program. She did not participate in any internships or courses, but attended language education three days a week. She started in the Qualification Program after finishing the program, in which she started a qualifying course in combination with language education.

*Mohammed* is in his thirties and has some experience from a supermarket in his home country, but no educational background. His main goal through the program was to find employment, and he found a short-time employment through his first internship

in the program. He had some other internships after this, and found employment at a factory after finishing the program.

*Sara* is in her fifties and has higher education and some employment background from her home country. She had a goal of finding employment through her program, and had internships at a kiosk and a kindergarten combined with language education. She continued the internship in the kindergarten after finishing the program, and started to participate in the Qualification Program after a few months on social assistance.

*Ahmad* is in his early twenties, and has no school or employment background from his home country. His first goal in the program was to start primary education, but after a very short time of attending primary education classes, he decided that it was not for him and changed his main goal to find employment. Ahmad combined language education three days a week with internships in his Introduction Program. He had his first internship in a hotel, a second as a cleaner, and his last internship at a factory. He found a job through a recruitment agency shortly after finishing the program in the factory where he had an internship through the program.

*David* is in his thirties and has a background of higher education and skilled employment from his home country. His primary goal in the program was to continue his education in Norway and find a job related to his previous profession, his first internship was therefore related to his professional skills. After not having his education paper approved in Norway and not seeing the first internship as leading to employment, David started in an internship in a supermarket where he found employment after the program. He decided to stop pursuing his goal of higher education, as he wanted to earn enough money quickly to meet the governmental measure of earnings for family reunification with his wife and children.

Before and while writing up the presentation of the findings I again immersed into the data through reading and listening to the interviews to make sure I reflected the true meanings of my respondents in the final presentation.

## 5. Presentation of the findings

From the analysis of the interviews it became evident that what was most important for the respondents Introduction Program was the relationship they had with their caseworker, and the ability to develop their skills within the institutional frames of the program. Furthermore, I identified how experiences with these two main themes had consequences for their active participation in the program.

In order to explore participants' interpretations of opportunities to improve labor market participation through the program I conducted in-depth interviews with six former participants of the program. Through the interviews I got vivid descriptions of feelings and thoughts related to experiences with the program. Using thematic analysis I have categorized the respondents statements into themes I hope capture the true meanings of my respondents. I have characterized the caseworker as female irrespective of actual gender, and given the respondents fictional names in the presentation: Fatima, Mohammed, Sara, Maryam, Ahmad and David.

### 5.1. Relationship with caseworker

A repeated theme throughout every interview was the importance of having a close and personal relationship with their caseworker. The relationship with their caseworkers was characterized through individual personality traits of the caseworker like "social", "open", "patient", "responsible" and their opposites. The interaction with their caseworkers were also characterized repeatedly, for example "the caseworker reads me", or "we were not so good with each other".

The respondents expressed a special need for support in the forms of safety and guidance based on a feeling of loneliness in a new country, and argued for the need for the caseworker to know them well and prioritize them through a close follow up. The feeling of being heard and to be able to have a discussion on equal terms through user involvement was furthermore highlighted as important. Lastly the respondents' highlighted respect as important to a variety of aspects of the relationships they had with their caseworkers, suggesting that respect was a denominator for their general well-being in the program. Respect was connected to a feeling of reciprocity and was

considered to be pivotal for their motivation to collaborate with their caseworker on skill development in the program.

#### *5.1.1. The need for support*

The respondents talked about how the feeling of loneliness was a core characteristic of the life situation for them as newly arrived immigrants and refugees in Norway, and how this called out for a special need for support in terms of safety and guidance through a good relationship with their caseworker.

The loss of network that newly arrived immigrants and refugees experience when leaving their home country can be interpreted as a loss of safety in life, as we all are social beings that are dependent on those around us for feeling safe. Through his interview David explained how the loss of network was connected to a need for newly arrived immigrants and refugees to have a close relationship with their caseworker in the Introduction Program.

*“Some come live here and they leave their parents, they leave their siblings, brothers, sisters, friends, schools, everything, and come to a new country which has nobody. (...) Everything for that person is their contact person. He must have a good relationship with that person (...) And I hope contact persons are to be nice and behave properly with people because these refugees that come here they are people who have nothing.” (David)*

David explained that for refugees, leaving one's home country and family is not something they want, but something they have to do. He further explained that for him, fleeing to a new country involved a drop in status and thereby a loss of confidence. In his home country, he had a car, a good job and a house; in Norway on the other hand he found himself struggling and being dependent on help from NAV to pay his bills and to find employment. He found himself starting from nothing, and expressed a need for his caseworker to function as a supportive network for safety in his second country. Others added to this stand arguing that the time right after arrival to Norway was characterized by a strong feeling of loneliness.

The loss of a former network also implies the loss of support in terms of guidance. Newly arrived immigrants and refugees in Norway must re-socialize into a new culture, and learn and internalize new cultural codes in their second country without the support of their former network. The respondents reported that this called out for a support in terms of guidance from their caseworker.

*“Some people have family and friends in Norway, I do not. After two and a half years I do not have friends to contact. Only three or four friends from school, but only at school not at home (...) I think that (the caseworker) thinks I talk to other people, because all people talk a lot with their family and friends and get information. I do not have family and friends.”* (Fatima)

In their home countries the refugees had a network that helped them socialize and learn cultural codes through childhood and that continued to work as sources of information throughout adult life. Fleeing to a second country means leaving your network behind, and having to learn new cultural codes in a new country without the stability of your network. Not having family or friends to provide you with important information about your new society, triggers the need to be provided with information from your one contact person in the Norwegian society – your caseworker. Fatima expressed a wish to get to know Norwegian people in order to learn about Norwegian culture in her interview. She thought this might help her managing her life here and find employment. She talked about how she felt her caseworker did not have time to talk to her and give her the information she needed to find employment, and expressed a feeling of being very lonely in her qualifying process in the Introduction Program. Some of the respondents added to this that the lack of support from one’s caseworker characterized their time after finishing the program, *“and the program was finished and I think I was alone, and I think what am I going to do?”* (Sara).

#### *5.1.2. The need for a close follow up*

All of the respondents argued that it was very important to have a close follow up by their caseworker. One of the respondents even claimed the relationship with his caseworker was the reason behind his success of finding employment after the program, *“because I had a caseworker that helped me a lot (...) if I did not have (the caseworker) I would not be employed now”* (Ahmad). A close follow up was

characterized as regular meetings one-on-one with caseworker, meetings with school and internships, and getting the help to handle their day to day problems and managing their qualification process.

A close follow up was linked to having a close personal relationship of mutual understanding of each other as persons *“and the caseworker reads your right, and if you understand that at the first moment, if you understand each other, it becomes easy”* (Maryam). Creating a mutual understanding of each other through a close relationship was seen as a factor making collaboration easier. Especially important was the importance of the caseworker understanding the participants’ ambitions. Ahmad explained how seeing his caseworker working hard *“knocking on all doors”*, calling and writing emails on his behalf, evoked a sense of thrust in the relationship with his caseworker. He argued that this was because, *“(the caseworker) knows me very, very well. And she knows that I want to work.”* Not having a close personal relationship of mutual understanding could in contrast complicate collaboration through the program, *“we cannot do good with each other. It was a bit difficult”* (Sara).

Those of the respondents that were satisfied with their follow up, talked about the importance of feeling prioritized. Mohammed for instance still felt like he could call his former caseworker if he had problems *“Now I am working and he is not my caseworker. But any problem I can call her and talk”*. The respondents that reported not being satisfied with their follow up, talked about how the caseworker not taking the time to meet them or energy to help them intensified their feeling of being alone in Norway.

*“I think the caseworker does not have time enough for all immigrants. My caseworker has more people like me, and does not have time for me, and sometimes I wished that the caseworker would call me and ask what I am doing and what I need, and ask me to come for a meeting and talk with me. And I thought I was alone.”* (Sara)

When the caseworker does not take the time to meet up with the participant, the participant is not able to receive information or help, or collaborate about their

qualification in the program. As previously described, the feeling of loneliness was highlighted as a core characteristic of the respondents' life when first arriving in Norway. Not being prioritized may enhance this feeling of loneliness, and may play as a demotivating factor for the participant.

### *5.1.3. The need to exercise user involvement*

Being able to decide what to do in their program was a recurrent theme throughout the interviews and having a good relationship with one's caseworker was linked to the ability to decide what to do in the program. David felt lucky that he found a caseworker that let him exercise user involvement as he knew other participants that had caseworkers that decided over them: *"(...) there was a kind of possibilities that I could choose things myself. But I have gotten the permission and I got this from my contact person in NAV"*. The feeling of being heard and the ability to have an adult discussion on equal terms with their caseworker was highlighted as important in the interviews.

To be able to decide what to do in the program, the participant first has to feel heard by the caseworker. One example from the interviews can serve as an example of the importance of this. A respondent was refused an interpreter after a while in the program, with the argument that she knew enough Norwegian to have conversations without interpretation. She on the other hand felt like she needed an interpreter because *"it is important that you can understand whole sentences when you talk to each other."* (Sara). For her it became a double burden of not being heard. First of all she felt she was not listened to when she asked for help, and secondly because she felt she could not fully express herself to her caseworker without an interpreter present.

This relates to another theme that was brought up several times during the interviews; how some of the respondents argued for the importance of being able to have a discussion on equal terms with their caseworker. The participants felt very strongly about how important it was to be able to go into a discussion with their caseworker, and to really be listened to. One of the respondents gave this explanation to a question on if she felt like she could decide what to do in the program:

*“The caseworker and I we are grown up people (...) For example, if (the caseworker) said I want you to have an internship at a nursing home, then I could say “no, I do not want to go there, I want to have internship in a kindergarten.” And the caseworker would say, “Ok, we can do that.” And the caseworker always asked, “How do you think we should do this?”” (Maryam)*

The relationship between the participants and their caseworker is characterized by a power asymmetry, as the caseworker has the power to exercise discretion and is the liaison between the participant and the state. The caseworker has the last word in discussion about what the participant should do in the program and also has the power to give economic sanctions on illegitimate absence. In addition the power asymmetry is existent in the fact that the participants are of lower social status than their caseworker. The ability to exercise user involvement can lessen this power asymmetry. Maryam connects user involvement to an adult relationship in her statement, suggesting that she felt she and her caseworker were on equal terms in an adult discussion on what she should do in the program. Some of the respondents connected this to the caseworker asking them where to have an internship and what they thought was the best way to go about with their qualification process, and one of the respondents connected this to the importance of having and actively using her Individual Plan.

#### *5.1.4. The need for mutual respect*

The importance of respect was a common denominator of the respondents descriptions of their relationship with their caseworkers, *“Respect is the key, you have to have respect” (Ahmad), “both of us, we respected each other. And that is very right” (Sara)*. Respect was connected to a feeling of reciprocity, and had an effect on motivation to collaborate with one’s caseworker.

The feeling of respect was connected to a variety of aspects of their relationship with the caseworker, such as the caseworker taking the time to see them and listening to their problems and needs, *“To have respect is important. If I had a problem I could for instance go and talk to my caseworker” (Mohammed)*. Furthermore the ability to decide what to do in the program was connected to the feeling of being respected by several of the respondents. Ahmad felt that he in general could decide what to do in

the program. He explained that the Introduction Program decided the first internship he had, and that he did not like this. He said *“I knew it was not good, because when I started the internship, there were four others there in an internship like me. And that makes it a little difficult to get a job there”*. But when he told his caseworker that he did not want to continue in the internship, the caseworker had let him quit with no argument. *“It is because the caseworker respected me.”* After this Ahmad felt that he could decide where to have an internship, and refused internships where there were no promises of employment.

The feeling of being respected was connected to reciprocity in the relationship they had with their caseworkers. This can be exemplified to how one of the respondents connected respect to her caseworker respecting her religious beliefs, to the extent that they were taken into consideration when choosing an internship.

*“(...) I cannot sell pork, I cannot wear trousers. It is very good to have respect, right. Or if you want to pray. And when you feel people have respect for you, you can become better and give respect to them”* (Maryam)

For Maryam it was important that her caseworker recognized her religious beliefs, and she connected this to reciprocity in the relationship. If she felt she was treated with respect, she would feel positive and be motivated to collaborate with her caseworker on her skill development through the program. The feeling of not being respected could in contrast lead to a demotivation to collaborate with one's caseworker. When asked what he would feel like if he were not treated with respect, Ahmad responded,

*“I would behave badly. I would feel bad and would not like to meet the caseworker (...) She does not decide what I should do. Like you have to go there and do this. She has to ask you what you want and your plans.”*  
(Ahmad)

Concluding from this Ahmad ties user involvement, having a good relationship with the caseworker and respect together, where all three are mutually dependent on each other. The feeling of being controlled can in contrast have negative effects on the

participants' motivation to collaborate with their caseworker and actively develop skills in the program.

#### *5.1.5. Concluding remarks on relationship with caseworker*

The stories told by the respondents gave a vivid description on the importance of having a good relationship with one's caseworker. They associated the need for support, a close follow up, the ability to exercise user involvement, and respect to having a good relationship. The respondents expressed a need for the caseworker to give them safety and guidance, a need to be understood and prioritized, to be heard and able to have an adult discussion on equal terms about the activities they wanted in their program, and for a general feeling of mutual respect. A good relationship with one's caseworker can in this aspect be a good base for the participants' ability to develop their skills through the program, which is the topic of the next section.

### 5.2. The ability to develop skills through the program

All of the respondents had clear visions on what they wanted to accomplish through their program, even though most of the respondents had little knowledge of their Individual Plan. Not all of the respondents reached their goals, and some changed their goals along the way. Either way, they all had developed their own strategies for reaching their goals. This indicates that skill development was of high priority for the respondents.

A key finding through the analysis was that all of the respondents told that learning Norwegian was the most important aspect of their program. Furthermore the respondents expressed the wish for a long-term skill development, and some uttered concerns of being exploited as free labor in internships.

#### *5.2.1. Language first priority*

When asked about their initial thoughts on the program and what was most important for them, the answers were very clear. *“Language first, language is the key”* (Ahmad), *“and most importantly they learn the language”* (David), *“before the Introduction Program I thought how can I learn Norwegian, because if I talk Norwegian I can work”* (Mohammed). It seemed as if some of the respondents thought that the Introduction Program was mainly about language classes, and that internships were either optional or just a small addition to their skill development.

*“I think the Introduction system is good because it is for two years, right, and you can learn a lot of Norwegian, if you are in the right class, right, and the right teacher. That is the program I think” (Maryam)*

Maryam points out something important in this quote that is reflected in many of the other interviews, namely that the main critiques of the program was directed at the poor quality of the language classes. The Norwegian classes were characterized as not being differentiated enough, of being of poor quality, that the progress was slow, and that the respondents felt they had little user involvement at school. The feeling that what was mostly important for their integration was of poor quality and that they could not do anything about it seemed to cause a lot of frustration for the respondents.

The respondents argued that learning the language was the most important part of the Introduction Program because it allowed them to participate in the Norwegian society. Being able to participate in society was linked to interactions like being able to give people directions at the street, to learn about Norwegian culture, and to be able to socialize with Norwegians.

*“(…) I learned a lot of things I did not know. For example I learned how to make cake, right, what is it called, waffles, right, and “krumkake” (traditional Norwegian cake). And they called me the queen of “krumkake”.” (Maryam)*

By using her language in the internship Maryam felt like she could learn about Norwegian culture, and even felt like she could master a traditional Norwegian cake recipe. In fact internships were highlighted as arenas for learning the language for many of the respondents, *“I have to use the language. To learn the language I have to use it. Not only take Norwegian classes” (Sara)*. Mohammed explained that it was very important that he could speak Norwegian at his first internship, and furthermore that he could get to know his boss, *“for example the first time I came he asked are you married, do you have family, are they in Norway, not in Norway.”* As explained previously, the respondents talked a lot about how they felt lonely in their second country, and the ability to socialize through learning and speaking the language was a pivotal theme throughout the interviews.

### 5.2.2. Long term over short term skill development

The wish for long-term skill development through the program was exemplified through the wish to have higher intensity language training in the beginning of the program, the wish to prolong the program by one year, and the aim of pursuing higher education shared by two of the respondents.

For finding employment many of the respondents felt they needed to have better Norwegian skills and argued that at least the first year of the program should focus more intensively on language training, so that they could use these skills to find employment on their own.

*“So first you have to go to school five days per week. In two years he can manage to talk Norwegian. But he cannot not be able to write his name and then just go to an internship. If he works in an internship he will be thrown out” (Ahmad)*

Furthermore three of the respondents expressed a wish that their Introduction Program was prolonged with one year, so that they could fully learn the language and be more easily integrated into the labor market, *“it is very difficult, after one year I only knew the words, after one more year I learned what is grammar. I think three years are better”* (Fatima). Fatima based her wish on prolonging the internship with the need to learn more Norwegian. This supports a more long-term thinking of their qualification, than a short-term find employment as fast as you can focus. Ahmad wanted to spend the first of his year in the program to intensively learn as much Norwegian as possible to be better prepared for an internship. He felt that when he started in his first internships he never had any chance of employment due to poor Norwegian skills. Some of the respondents supported this view, whereas others saw an internship early in their program as an opportunity to learn more practical Norwegian than you do at school.

Many of the respondents argued that employment was the main focus of the Introduction Program, *“But all Introduction Programs, a 100 % I think, have to have a goal about work. You need work, right”* (Ahmad). By solemnly focusing on finding quick routes for employment, the program might restrict the participants' goals of

education. An example from Maryam interview might serve as an example of this. She told in her interview that she had asked her caseworker if she could go to primary or high school after the Introduction Program.

*“And they told me, no, you do not have rights to go to high school or primary school. But if you want to you can apply, but you have to take a loan from Lånekassen (the Norwegian State Educational Loan Fund). And I did not get the information that I could go to primary school in the Introduction Program.”* (Maryam)

During the interview Maryam elaborated on this stating that what was most important for her in her program was to learn enough Norwegian so she could continue her education and start university in the future. It seems like it was important for Maryam to focus on long-term skill development through primary education, rather than finding employment prior to reaching her goal of university. Fatima shared Maryam’s goal to start higher education after the program. They both wanted to learn as much Norwegian as possible in the program so they could pass a language test that would allow them to get in to higher education. They wanted an education to get a job based on formal qualifications, instead of an unskilled job where they are easily replaceable.

*“My goal is that I have to study Norwegian and get an education in Norwegian and afterwards get employment, because I do not want to be a hairdresser. After two or three years or for example ten years I do not have a permanent job. I will go back to NAV and talk with them, “NAV can you help me?”* (Fatima)

Fatima thought long term about her future, she felt that if she would settle for a job as a hairdresser that she had in her home country, she would easily be worn out and would have to return to NAV and ask for help. She wanted to be economically independent long term, and wanted to use her Introduction Program to reach this goal. Low skilled jobs are usually based on temporary job contracts, have low pay, and are labor intensive. Fatima refused to have an internship in the program if it was not connected to her aim of study. As her caseworker did not help her find this, she focused all her time in the program to taking Norwegian classes. Maryam explained

how she was in an argument with the social assistance services after finishing her program,

*“And I remember not telling them that I really wanted to take higher education, because I know they are mean to me, right. And I told them my plan is not higher education, my plan is to go to school so I can pass a language test to work in a kindergarten. I did not want to, but I had to tell them, right”*  
(Maryam)

Knowing that the social assistance services would not let her go to school to be able to start higher education, Maryam felt that she had to lie and tell them she wanted to work in a kindergarten as one have to pass a language test to be able to work in a kindergarten in Norway. Maryam expressed during the interview that she did not want a dead end job after finishing the program, but continue language and primary education to reach her goal of higher education.

### *5.2.3. Feeling of being exploited as free labor*

A theme that was repeated in the interviews was the feeling of being exploited as free labor in the internships and how this was a demotivating factor in their skill development. Although internships are meant to be skill-development with the goal of employment, the respondents had different experiences: *“but some bosses do not think like that. They think only work as animals. For free.”* (Ahmad), *“and they do not get employed because they can get free labor”* (Sara), *“and I asked the boss do you want me for 3 more months? “Yes, yes, yes”, because they got free labor”* (Maryam).

The respondents felt they were treated unjustly in the internships, and expressed feelings of powerlessness and demotivation. One of the respondents connected her feeling of being free labor in her internship and difficulties in finding a job to labor market discrimination.

*“But some jobs you do not have possibilities, only for Norwegians, not for immigrants. You write an application, and the boss sees your name, and its*

*gone from the pile. It is thrown out. But when it is "Turid", oh I can employ her" (Sara)*

Being discriminated against in the labor market can break down motivation for people, as they do not feel they are in control of their own lives or are moving forward in their qualification process. For the respondents it became important to find internships where they felt they had a chance of finding employment and many expressed a wish of a guarantee of employment before starting an internship. For Ahmad the ability to exercise user involvement led him to find an internship where he thought he could find employment. A good relationship with caseworker where the participants have the ability to decide over their own lives and finding high quality internships can work as a defense mechanism against structural injustice.

#### *5.2.4. Concluding remarks on the ability to develop skills through the program*

Skill development through the program was of high priority for the respondents, first and foremost through learning the language. The feeling that the Norwegian classes was of poor quality and the experience of not being able to fully focus on learning the language in the beginning of the program was a demotivating factor many. Learning the language was seen as an entrance for participation in the Norwegian society, and many used internships to develop this skill. I identified how the respondents thought long term of the skill development both through the wish of learning more Norwegian through the program, and through the wish for some of the respondents to avoid ending up in a dead end job through investing in higher education. The feeling of demotivation for being exploited as free labor was an experience for many of the respondents. I have argued that user involvement can work as a defense mechanism against this structural injustice.

### 5.3. The active participant factor

Following up on the importance of user involvement, what struck me as an important theme throughout the interviews was the respondents' description of active participation in their programs, and how experiences in their programs allowed them to act as active or passive participants in their own skill development.

The respondents told of decisions they made throughout their program that they felt benefitted their qualification. Examples of this is how Maryam found an internship for learning the language before starting the program, Fatima's strong determination to start higher education in Norway "*I do not want to, I HAVE to study*", and David's decision to end an internship related to his former profession because he did not feel it led to employment and finding an internship where he later on got employed. Mohammed had ability to find employment in his first internship after only a short time in Norway; Ahmad found employment through a recruitment agency after finishing the program and Sara had a constant motivation of finding employment through numerous internships. "*I think I'm not giving up, I am trying a few places. If I can have a job (...) it helps my future. I will get salary, I am going to become independent.*" For Sara the motivation was to become economically independent from NAV and her husband. She did not give up on this goal, even though she had setbacks of not finding employment through internships in her program. Throughout the interviews I found indications on motivational and demotivating factors for active participation in the program.

### *5.3.1. Motivational factors*

All of the respondents mentioned motivational factors in their programs. Motivational factors for learning the language included the ability to start higher education and finding employment. Motivational factors for starting in internships included the ability to be social "*you learn about your colleagues and boss*" (Ahmad) and to be able to support one self and one's family "*then I decided to go to "the internship" because I needed to support myself and also my family*" (David). Furthermore, motivational factors were connected to the relationship the respondents had with their caseworkers. Ahmad explained that the reason to why he found employment was first and foremost the help he received from his caseworker, then having the internship he chose for himself, and then going on his own to a recruitment agency.

*"First internship, because I do not have experience (...) So first internship, then "the recruitment agency". But first of all help from caseworker, she knocks on all doors"* (Ahmad)

Inferring from this Ahmad linked the close follow-up he got from his caseworker and the ability to exercise user involvement to his ability to find a good internship where he could develop skills he later on could use as an asset in searching for employment. The combination of the success in these two factors motivated him to find employment through a recruitment agency. Another example is how Maryam found motivation to pursue her aim of higher education through reaching her goal of passing a language test. She explained in her interview that she managed to pass the test because she was able to practice Norwegian actively in an internship she found in collaboration with her caseworker. Prior to this internship she had an internship where she did not feel like she could practice Norwegian, and decided to quit after discussing it with her caseworker. Even though she did not reach her goal of starting higher education directly after finishing the program, she expressed motivation for continuing to pursue her goal. Both relational factors of the feeling of getting support, follow up and user involvement from their caseworkers, and the ability to develop skills were important for the respondents' motivation to be active participants in their own Introduction Program.

### 5.3.2. Demotivating factors

On the other hand, demotivating factors for active participation included the institutional factors of poor quality of language education leading to slow progress “*I couldn't read Norwegian and I was very sad*” (Fatima) and the feeling of being exploited as free labor in internships “*I thought it was bad, and I thought no more internship*” (Ahmad). In addition to this the respondents highlighted relational factors of being controlled, not being respected, and not getting a close follow up as demotivating factors. The feeling of being controlled can lead to passive participation in the program, “*if they say no, you have to do this, you can suddenly become a negative person*” (Maryam). On a question on how he would feel if he were not treated with respect by his caseworker Ahmad responded “*I would behave badly. I would feel bad and when I would see (the caseworker) I would not be able.*” In addition to this the feeling of not getting follow up can be a demotivating factor. Fatima's story can serve as an example of this. As mentioned previously she did not want a dead end job, but rather had a goal of passing a language test through the program so she could pursue her goal of higher education. She therefore refused having an internship that was not related to her desired field of study, and argued

through her interview that she did not get help finding this internship nor had any close follow on other aspects of her life.

*“(...) The second year I had contact with my caseworker three times. Every time I called, “I am busy. I am at a course. I cannot. What do you want? You can talk on the phone with me.” (Fatima)*

Not getting the support, follow up and user involvement from the relationship with one's caseworker can be a demotivation for skill development in the program. In Fatima's case this meant she did not have an internship through the program, nor a close follow up on her language skill development. She did not reach her goal of a passing a language test through the program, and expressed a fear of being stuck in the NAV system in her interview.

### *5.3.3. Concluding remarks on the active participant factor*

Based on my findings I argue that both the relationship the respondents had with their caseworker and the ability to develop skills through the program were denominators for active participation in the Introduction Program. Motivational relational factors included the feeling of getting support and a close follow up by the caseworker, the ability to exercise user involvement, and the feeling of mutual respect in the relationship. Demotivating relational factors included a feeling of not getting a close follow up, and to be controlled and not respected by their caseworker. Factors that promoted motivation for skill development included learning the language to be able to start higher education or finding employment, and the possibilities to be social and become employed and economically independent through internships. On the contrary the respondents highlighted poor quality of language education, not being able to develop long-term skills, and the feeling of being exploited as free labor in internships as demotivating factors for skill development in the program.

## 6. Discussion

In this chapter I will discuss the respondents' interpretations of opportunities to improve labor market participation through the program in light of Axel Honneth's theory of recognition.

The respondents in the study interpreted having a personal relationship with their caseworker and the ability to develop skills in the program as important for their motivation to be active in their own qualification process. Based on my findings I argue that dignifying factors in the program is highly connected to offering "more" through improved chances for labor market participation. In the Introduction Program giving "more" is connected to the Human Resource Development (HRD) elements in the program. Shaming factors in the program is in contrast connected to offering "less" through curtailment of rights and autonomy, and having none or even negative impacts on the participants' opportunities to find employment. Moreover offering "less" is connected to the ideal type of Labor Market Attachment (LMA) approach in activation policy. The discussion is organized after Axel Honneth's division of the three spheres of recognition love, rights and achievements as presented in chapter three.

I have translated the recognition sphere of love to the importance for the respondents in this study to have *a personal relationship with one's caseworker (section 6.1)*. I discuss how this relationship is affected by the caseworker's role as both policy implementer and caregiver, and how the participants in the program are dependent on their caseworker for exercising user involvement. Summing up the section I discuss how experiences of recognition through the program can be seen as a trust-building process resulting in either basic self-confidence or insecurity for the individual participant. These two conflicting relations to self are vital for participants' feelings of dignity and shame and motivation for improving labor market participation through the program. The recognition sphere of rights is discussed in terms of the *new balance of rights and obligations (section 6.2)* the program represents. In this section I discuss if the loss of autonomy through the program can be legitimized if the program is considered to be better than the alternatives and improve labor market participation. I

discuss how the loss of autonomy is complemented with an expansion of rights, especially through the access to a broad array of qualifying measures. Concluding the section I discuss how interpretations of opportunities to find employment or access higher education have effects on feelings of dignity and shame, and how this impacts the participants motivation for skill development through the program. *Recognition of achievements* is discussed under section 6.3, with an emphasis on how finding employment may not be the only achievement admired for participants in the program. A pluralized value horizon including being able to socialize and get in to higher education may also contribute to the participants well being and promote labor market participation in the long run. I argue that being recognized on the base of one's aims of achievements is important for building confidence and promote dignity through the program. Concluding the chapter I discuss structural injustice in relation to the program, with an emphasis on labor market discrimination.

#### 6.1. Recognition through a personal relationship with caseworker

The respondents in my study highlighted the relationship they had with their caseworker as vital for their motivation to develop skills through the program and thereby improve their opportunities for labor market participation. The need to develop a personal relationship corresponds with the need for love and care in personal relationships of mutual recognition in Honneth's theory, and is vital for basic self-confidence and dignity. The role of the caseworker as both policy-implementer and caregiver, and the dependency on the caseworker to be able to exercise user involvement affects this relationship.

##### *6.1.1. The caseworker as policy implementer and caregiver*

As street-level bureaucrats caseworkers in the program translate integration policy formulated by the Introductory Act into discretionary decisions as administrators of public integration policy and professional caseworkers (Lipsky 1980). In addition the caseworkers also involve in personal emotional relations with their participants through their follow up with participants in the program. The caseworkers in the program thereby have a duplex role as both implementers of governmental policy and of caregivers through personal relationships with their participants (Jørgensen 2015, 51-52).

According to Djuve and Kavli (2015a) the individual characteristics of the caseworker is a strong component of implementation theory. They distinguish between the ideal types of care-oriented and rule-oriented caseworkers. The care-oriented ideal type is closer to the love sphere of recognition characterized by affection and close relationships, whereas the rule-oriented caseworkers are closer to the legal rights sphere of recognition characterized by professional distance and cognition. Throughout the interviews it was evident that the respondents in my study preferred a close relationship of care and affection to a rule-oriented relationship characterized by professional distance. This was exemplified by how the respondents in the study focused on the individual personality traits of their caseworkers when describing their relationship and how close follow up was linked to the importance of having a mutual understanding of each other's personalities. As the caseworker also have a role as a professional implementer of public policy, it might constitute a conflict in some situations. Examples of this might be the use of economic sanctions on illegitimate absence in the program, if the programs employment-focus conflicts with the participant's goals of skill development, and the need for professional distance. As a policy implementer of public policy the caseworker cannot go into too close relationships with the participants. Nevertheless, there is a possibility for the caseworker to complement the need for professional distance with a "professional" personal relation, recognizing the participant through being supportive, a close follow up, respect, and facilitate for user involvement in the program.

A close and personal relationship was argued to ease the collaboration through the program, and especially important was the caseworker knowing and understanding the respondents' ambitions. To be taken seriously and listened to as a person with specific needs and ambitions was highly motivating for collaboration with the caseworkers on skill-development in the program, suggesting that a close and personal relationship was a precondition for realizing their autonomy through user involvement.

#### *6.1.2. The ability to exercise user involvement*

User involvement is a part of the activation trend, with the aim of promoting active participation in the program. For the respondents in my study, user involvement was connected to personal traits of their relationships with their caseworkers rather than

the legal right through the Individual Plan. The focus on individual factors of the caseworker and the power asymmetry existent in the relationship influence the participants' ability to make use of their right to user involvement through the program.

The legal right to user involvement through the Individual Plan in the Introduction Program is a part of an activation trend aiming to give participants in programs an active role in their own skill development process (Djuve and Kavli 2015a). The Individual Plan is meant to be based on the participants' prior skills and experiences and to be written collaboratively by the participant and the caseworker (Introduksjonsloven (the Introductory Act) 2003, § 6). In this way the Individual Plan is individually adapted to each participant and based on the participants own aims of skill development. In the words of Le Grand (2003, 2) policy directed towards recipients of unemployment benefits have undergone a change of understanding individuals capacity to action from passive victims of circumstances *pawns*, to active *queens* that are motivated to enhance their life quality. At the same time there has been a change from a policy belief of the motivations of caseworkers implementing policy from altruist knights during the building of the welfare state to knaves driven by self-interest in the activating state. In an extension of this the individual right to user involvement through the Individual Plan may be seen as an attempt to take power away from self-interested *knights* and give it to active *queens*.

For the respondents in my study the legal right was not a focus point when talking about user involvement. Only one of the respondents mentioned it in relation to user involvement, and some had never heard of the plan at all. What was most important for the respondents was the human factor of the caseworker, in terms of the caseworker taking the time to listen to their concerns and engage in an adult discussion on the use of qualifying measures in the program. A similar point was made in a study by Djuve and Kavli (2015a), who found that the participants of the program were not so interested in the legal right of the Individual Plan itself, but rather more in the ability to make informed decisions, and the possibility that caseworkers also could change their mind in line of a discussion. It may thereby seem like the individual caseworker is more important for the participants' ability to exercise user involvement than the legal right to an Individual Plan.

The power asymmetry in the relationship between the caseworker and the participant may influence the degree of user involvement experienced by the participant. As a form of activation the Introduction program entails sanctions for influencing the behavior of the participants, which may in turn reduce individual autonomy for the participant. Paternalistic traits involve modifying actions that does not suit program goals, and to “curb” autonomy that is considered inappropriate (Dean 2007). These paternalistic characteristics are reflected in how the caseworker has the last word in disagreement on the qualifying measures and goals to include in the participants Individual Plan and thereby the program, and in the economic sanctioning of illegitimate absence in the program. In addition the participants’ poor Norwegian skills, knowledge of the Norwegian society and very few possibilities of exiting the program strengthen the power asymmetry in their relationship with their caseworkers. The imbalance of power suggests that the caseworker tends to decide what is best for the participant (Djuve and Kavli 2015a).

Caseworker discretion thereby plays a vital factor in the implementation of the autonomy the participants are legally granted through the Individual Plan. First and foremost because participants tie their ability to exercise user involvement to the relationship with their caseworkers rather than their legal right, but also because of the power asymmetry existent in the relationship. The dependency on one’s caseworker to be able to realize autonomy through the program is problematic as a close and personal relationship is dependent on mutual liking (Honneth 1995, 107). According to Le Grand (2003) a way out of being totally dependent on the caseworker assigned is to allow participants to choose between caseworkers. None of the respondents in my study talked about the ability to do this, as it was the general opinion that they felt destined to the caseworker assigned to them. The policy aim of giving the participants power to be *queens* in their own lives through the Individual Plan is thereby reduced through the implementation of the act.

### *6.1.3. Trust-building and feelings of dignity and shame*

Loneliness was highlighted as a core characteristic of the respondents’ life as newly arrived immigrants and refugees in Norway, and triggered a need for support from the relationship with their caseworker. Having to re-socialize into a new society thereby

required a special kind of support, and the respondents expressed a need for the caseworker to act as both safety and guidance in learning new cultural codes and integrating into the Norwegian society. This process of re-socialization is similar to the trust-building process in childhood, where children learn independence through a trust in the continuity and love from their parents. Emotional bonds of love and care in adult relationships opens up the possibility for people to relate to themselves in basic self-confidence (Honneth 1995, 98-105), which is of vital importance for newly arrived immigrants and refugees in their process of integrating into the Norwegian labor market. Basic self-confidence may promote a feeling of dignity for the individual, whereas the lack of supportive relations may on the other hand result in a feeling of shame.

For the respondents in my study having a close and personal relationship of mutual understanding of each other as individuals and a feeling of being prioritized through a close follow up invoked a sense of trust in the relationship. In addition to this the ability to exercise user involvement through the feeling of being heard and being able to have an adult discussion on equal terms with the caseworker, and the feeling of being respected were important motivational factors for skill development. The promotion of active participation through user involvement is connected to a HRD approach in activation theory and I argue here that the participants' ability to exercise user involvement is highly linked to the discussion on the legitimacy of compulsion in reducing individual autonomy. Being able to have an adult discussion on equal terms on what to do in the program based on a close personal relationship with one's caseworker can lessen the power asymmetry existent in the relationship between participants' and caseworkers and promote dignity for the individual. Strong emotional bonds based on support, a close follow up, user involvement and respect opens up the possibility for newly arrived immigrants and refugees to relate to themselves in basic self-confidence and maneuver their way into the Norwegian society independently. In this way a close relationships of mutual affection and concern is vital for relating to one-self in basic self-confidence, which is a precondition for autonomous participation in society (Honneth 1995, 104-107). A supportive relationship may thereby offer the participants "more" in terms of increased motivation for skill development in the program.

To be denied a close relationship of care and support can in contrast lead to a negative self-image characterized by insecurity (Honneth 1995, 104-105). To feel insecure and lonely in the process of re-socializing into a new culture was a demotivating factor for active participation in the program and may promote a feeling of shame. Furthermore a feeling of being controlled by the caseworker deciding over the participant can be shaming and be a demotivating factor for skill development and a way of offering the participants “less” motivation than what they had before entering the program. An example of the experience of not being able to exercise user involvement can be demonstrated by Maryam’s encounter with the social assistance services after finishing the program. Social assistance in Norway is highly associated with elements of a LMA approach, in that it contains strong elements of control for preventing dependency and abuse of the services and in that it priorities a quick entrance into the labor market over long-term skill development. In her encounter with the social assistance office, Maryam felt like she could not exercise user involvement and therefore could not be open about her goal of starting higher education. Using the “weapon of the weak” (Jordan 1996) she felt she had to lie and tell them she wanted to work in a kindergarten and therefore had to pass a language test, so she could continue language education and start primary education. The feeling of not being able to be honest about one’s intentions and goals and to be denied user involvement may hinder collaboration and motivation for skill development.

The intention of Introductory Act of preventing caseworker discretion through a highly codified law in line with a HRD approach is weakened in the implementation of the policy. The combination of not having knowledge of one’s rights, the importance of the personal relationship for motivation to develop skills and exercise user involvement, and the power asymmetry existent in the relationship may decrease the participants legal right to user involvement through caseworker discretion. In the following section a greater emphasis is put on the participants’ legal rights in the program, through the new balance of rights and obligations the program represented.

## 6.2. Recognition through a new balance of rights and obligations

The legitimacy of the use of compulsion in the Introduction Program depends on what the participants interpret as giving more or less in terms of opportunities to improve

labor market participation (Lødemel and Trickey 2001, 11). In the following I will explore the more or less equation in terms of if the program is considered to be better than the alternatives, the quality of the qualifying measures, and how participation in the program affects feelings of shame and dignity.

Marshall (1963) argued that equal rights is a precondition for integration. Especially social rights is important as they aim to give people equal opportunities to realize their autonomy in society through securing all citizens a certain standard of living (Honneth 1995, 115-118). With the implementation of the Introduction Program Norwegian integration policy shifted from being based on a principle of equality of services for all members of society through access to social assistance, to a selective program directed especially for the integration of newly arrived immigrants and refugees. The new balance of rights and obligations through the program represented a turn towards active citizenship by putting a stronger emphasis on obligations to fulfill activation duties in return for benefits and become economically independent through employment (Hvinden and Johansson 2007, 43-44). Through activation policy the Marshallian concept of rights as an enablement for people to fulfill their duties in society is transformed to duties as conditions for achieving rights (Borevi 2010, 10).

In the trial projects leading to the program there was a worry that the use of conditions and economic sanctions in the program would be stigmatizing for the target group, as it implies that newly arrived immigrants and refugees have to be forced to qualify for employment (Djuve and Kavli 2001). Some would even characterize the recent European trend of imposing majority norms through mandatory introductory programs and requirements for the attainment of long term residency and citizenship as assimilationist (Borevi 2010, Joppke 2007). Another argument against the introduction of compulsion in activation is that it undermines welfare as a guarantee of social citizenship by not being unconditional (Marshall 1985, cited in Lødemel and Trickey 2001, 8) as conditional benefits represents a change in social citizenship from status to contract, in which rights only are attached if the obligations are fulfilled (Handler 2003). This especially imposes a threat for individual autonomy if the set conditions are experienced as unreasonable and offensive by the target group (Djuve 2010, 405).

### *6.2.1. Is the Introduction Program considered to be better than the alternatives?*

The legitimacy of the use of compulsion in activation programs is thereby depended on how the participants interpret the new balance of rights and obligations in relation to other provision arrangements and the possibility to participate in voluntary programs (Lødemel and Trickey 2001, 11). In the following I will discuss the respondents interpretations in relation to the former (in practice) unconditional system of social assistance, the current workfare and LMA oriented social assistance system, and how not being able to choose to participate voluntarily in the program hinders consumer feedback of the program.

None of the respondents in my research had problems with the program being mandatory or with the economic sanctions on illegitimate absence. This is in line with former research (Djuve et al. 2001, Djuve, Hagelund, and Kavli 2011), and suggests that the respondents did not interpret the intervention in personal autonomy through conditionality and economic sanctions as illegitimate. Following the HRD argument that dependency on unconditional social assistance leads to social exclusion as it creates passive citizens and fails to produce social citizenship, the aim of the program was to lift refugees out of poverty through the use of qualifying measures (Djuve 2011a). The respondents highlighted the access to qualifying measures as important for their ability to improve labor market participation, suggesting that the Introduction Program would offer them “more” than the previous system of unconditional social assistance with little access to qualifying measures. In addition the highly codified Introductory Act has strengthened the legal position for the participants as it prevents local and caseworker discretion on the eligibility to the program and benefit, and through securing that the municipalities are obliged to offer services of a certain quality to the target group. In contrast newly arrived immigrants and refugees relied highly on discretion performed by the local social assistance office and individual caseworker for attainment of benefits as well as qualifying measures in the former provision arrangement (Brochmann and Hagelund 2010, 155). This supports the main argument for the use of compulsion – that a good balance of rights and obligations can be effective for integrating people into the labor market (Lødemel and Trickey 2001, 11). Yeatman (1997) argues for instance that the use of conditions does not necessarily reduce individual autonomy and replace status in social citizenship, as conditions may redefine social citizenship to “contractual capacity” for the individual.

Through the legal right to user involvement the Introduction Program may enable the participant to be active in one's own qualification process and become an economically active participant in society (Djuve 2011a, Djuve 2010).

Refusal to participate in the Introduction Program restricts the access to social assistance for those who fall under the target group (Rundskriv Q-20/2015, 20). This might be seen as a curtailment of the newly arrived immigrants and refugees' rights as they are restricted access to social assistance that is accessible for the rest of the population. The system of social assistance has undergone a change through the NAV reform with access to state-run ALMPs and the Qualification Program for long-term recipients of social assistance. Still, the system of social assistance represents an LMA approach with strong curtailment of autonomy through work requirements, a focus on finding a quick entry into the labor market, and low degree of user involvement that deviates far from the citizenship right to social assistance (Lødemel and Trickey 2001, 299). In addition the obligation to participate for those who fall under the target group in the Introduction Program is matched with a right to participation in that the municipalities are obliged to offer the program (Rundskriv Q-20/2015, 18). The participants in the program thereby have a right to a generous introductory benefit set higher than the social assistance benefit and without deductions for income outside the program, in contrast to the means tested social assistance benefit. All in all this suggests that access to social assistance still would offer "less" than the Introduction Program in terms of curtailment of rights and autonomy.

As the Introduction Program is mandatory for those who fall under the target group and the right to a benefit is tied to participation in the program, there is no possibility for the newly arrived immigrants and refugees to choose between programs on a voluntary basis. Not being able to choose an activation program voluntary undermines consumer feedback, as participants cannot choose to not participate in programs with poor quality (Grimes 1997). The participants in the program thereby have little influence on the quality of the qualifying measures in the program.

### *6.2.2. A wider understanding of rights – quality of qualifying measures*

Access to qualifying measures was interpreted to be the most important right for the respondents' opportunities to improve labor market participation, making the quality of the measures vital for the legitimacy of the use of compulsion through the program. The right to access to qualifying measures is considered to be a wider interpretation of rights than merely a right to a benefit (Lødemel 2001a, 297).

In line with a HRD approach, the Introduction Program promoted long-term skill development through a broad array of qualifying measures. A recurrent theme throughout the interviews was how especially language education was highlighted as important for the respondents in the study. This view is supported by a qualitative study of 90 interviews with participants in the program (Rambøll 2011). The ability to learn Norwegian was connected to the possibility to find employment, start education and to be able to socialize with others. Learning Norwegian was highly motivating for the participants, suggesting that the ability to learn Norwegian was a vital factor in offering “more”. Access to internships was also considered to offer “more” in terms of improved opportunities for labor market participation. Internships in the Introduction Program is both offered inside the system of ALMPs, and outside, usually characterized as language training. Some of the respondents saw participating in internships as arenas for learning the language, and argued that they could improve both language and labor market participation used in combination with language courses. This is an example of a “place then train” strategy, with the aim to learn the language and skills in internships to improve chances for labor market participation. Others wanted to wait starting up in an internship until they had learned enough language to speak more fluent, arguing that they had little chance of finding employment through the internship if they did not speak Norwegian properly. This is supported by a “train-then-place” strategy in activation policy, where the argument is that there is no use in looking for an ordinary job before being trained properly in a segregated environment (Spjelkavik 2012). Few of the respondents talked about participation in qualifying courses through ALMPs. Research shows that the use of ALMPs are used in a modest degree in the Introduction Program (Djuve, Hagelund, and Kavli 2011, 40), suggesting that there still is great potential for improvement in terms of job-training through the program.

A recurrent theme in my study was the view that the Norwegian language education offered was of poor quality through not being differentiated enough and through offering slow progress. In addition the respondents expressed having little or even none opportunities to influence the way the language was taught, signaling a low degree of user involvement. As what was highlighted by the respondents as the most important for their ability to reach the goals of employment and higher education through the program was of poor quality represents a legitimacy problem for program. Furthermore a common denominator for the respondents was the feeling of being exploited as free labor in internships and the wish for a guarantee of employment before starting up in an internship. As the respondents in this study participated in Introduction Programs in Oslo, the legitimacy problem of poor quality of qualifying measures cannot be transferred to other municipalities. But in general studies have shown that participation in ALMPs, like internships, have little or even negative effect on peoples opportunities of finding employment in Norway (Hardoy and Zhang 2013). In addition there are large municipal variations of the quality and what measures are available for the participants in the Introduction Program (Djuve and Kavli 2015b, 36), suggesting that variations in quality and access to qualifying measures substitute a legitimacy problem for participants in the program in general.

### *6.2.3. Equal opportunities and feelings of dignity and shame*

According to Honneth an important aspect in legal sphere of recognition is how having equal rights as others in society makes positive relations to self possible and promotes individual autonomy through a feeling of self-respect (Honneth 1995, 118-121). For the respondents in this study having equal opportunities to find employment and access higher education as others in society was more important for feelings of dignity and shame than merely equality of rights.

In Norway shame is related to not being employed, as unemployment rates are low, standard of living is high and the welfare state is generous. Participating in anti-poverty programs can therefor involve a sense of shame, because one does not live up to the norm of being employed (Gubrium, Pellissery, and Lødemel 2014). Perhaps surprisingly in this study, the respondents did not connect participation in the program to feelings of shame. A reason for this might be that they interpreted the ability to

develop their skills through the program as improving their opportunities for labor market participation.

Strongly based in a Human Resource Development approach the Introductory Act represents an expansion of rights, and the program was considered by the respondents to give “more” than the former (in practice) unconditional system of social assistance with little job-training efforts. The Introduction Program also offers “more” than the current LMA-oriented system of social assistance with a strong curtailment of autonomy through work requirements. Recognition through equal rights and opportunities as others in society increases the ability of a person to see one-self as morally responsible and worthy of respect (Honneth 1995, 118), and especially the ability to develop skills through the program was a motivational factor for the respondents. The possibility to develop skills through the program can thereby be connected to dignity as it improves opportunities for labor market participation, and thereby enhanced their ability to realize their autonomy in society.

The feeling of not having equal opportunities as others to find employment and being able to start higher education compared to the rest of the population, may in contrast result in a feeling of shame for the individual. Poor quality language education with no means to change it and the feeling of being exploited as free labor in internship were highlighted as demotivating factors in program. Especially the feeling of being exploited as free labor in internship can result in a feeling of being a second-class citizen in the Norwegian society, suggesting it may offer the participants “less” in terms of demotivation and a feeling of being less worth than others. Poor quality qualifying measures may thereby be seen as a curtailment of autonomy and rights, and may have none or even negative impact on the participants opportunities of improving labor market participation.

Improving the quality of qualifying measures in the program may promote a feeling of dignity and motivation for skill development, and increase the participants’ opportunities to improve labor market participation. The respondents in this study highlighted poor quality of language education as especially inhibiting their opportunities for improving labor market participation through the program. There are few studies on the quality of language education, suggesting that there is need for

evaluation of language education in the Introduction Program. Especially quality of the teachers and the collaboration between language education centers and the Introduction Program are highlighted as important aspects for research (Djuve and Kavli 2015b). Moreover the respondents in this study expressed a wish for a guarantee of employment when participating in internships. Supported Employment through ALMPs is a way of guaranteeing employment after internships, by providing wage-subsidies to the employer in a training period in exchange for the guarantee of employment after the training (Spjelkavik 2012), and studies show it is an effective mean for incorporating people into the labor market (Stortingsmelding nr. 30 (2015-2016), 69).

The right to user involvement through the Individual Plan on the use of qualifying measures through the program is perhaps best understood as a policy aim of giving the participants “more”, as it aims to empower participants and give them the opportunity to be active in their own skill development. A stronger emphasis on the right to an Individual Plan may thereby increase the feeling of dignity for participants in the program. The plan is intended to be written collaboratively by the participant and the caseworker, based on what the participants themselves consider as valuable achievements within the framework of the program goals of the program.

### 6.3. Recognition of pluralized achievements

The participants in the program are esteemed on their abilities to fulfill the program goals of employment or higher education after finishing the program, as desirable achievements in Norway are connected to being economically independent and contributing to the tax base.

The respondents in this study argued that the goal of employment was given priority by the caseworkers in the Introduction Program, suggesting that the program goal of employment has been given priority at the expense of higher education in the implementation of policy. Moreover, the effectiveness of the program is measured after success rates of participants finding employment or accessing higher education after finishing the program. Caseworkers implementing the program are thereby directed more towards finding quicker routes for employment, than a long-term focus

on poverty prevention. The coalition government of the Conservatives and the Progress Party (2013-) emphasize the need for a more effective integration of newly arrived immigrants and refugees into the labor market in the new White Paper on integration (Stortingsmelding nr. 30 (2015-2016)). The White Paper is based on a fear of increased public expenditure for the Norwegian Welfare state due to increased arrival of asylum seekers since the fall of 2015, and the negative consequences it may have for the sustainability and legitimacy of the welfare state. The government therefore aims to lead an integration policy enabling newly arrived immigrants and refugees to contribute to the welfare state more quickly (Stortingsmelding nr. 30 (2015-2016), 7), perhaps signaling a stronger emphasis on finding quick routes for entering the labor market through a “work-first” LMA approach in future integration policy.

The priority of economic independence through labor market participation in Norway is built on dominant groups' cultural values (Honneth 2003, 145), and may perhaps not reflect admirable traits and achievements for the minority population, represented here by the target group of the Introduction Program.

### *6.3.1. Pluralized value horizon of admirable achievements*

For the respondents in this study the value horizon of what was considered admirable achievements was pluralized, reflected in the high priority given to language education in the program. Language education was seen as an enablement for finding employment, but it was also connected to the ability to access higher education and to be able to participate in society and socialize with Norwegians.

Accessing higher education increases opportunities for becoming economic independent as it entitles newly arrived immigrants and refugees to student grants and loans from the Norwegian State Education Loan Fund (Lånekassen). Moreover higher education improves opportunities for participation in a labor market characterized by high demands for formal qualifications. Immigrants in Norway must pass a Norwegian Language Test or finish primary school to be able to access higher education in Norway (Samordna opptak 2013), making language education an important mean for improving labor market participation through higher education. In my study this is exemplified through how Fatima and Maryam wanted a more

intensive language education and the opportunity to start primary education in the Introduction Program. They wanted a skilled profession instead of an unskilled “dead-end-job” were they were easily replaceable. A recent report by Statistics Norway (SSB) give Fatima and Maryam support in their interpretations of opportunities to improve labor market participation. According to projections made by SSB there will be a decrease in demand for unskilled labor in the future labor market, whereas there will be a deficit of laborers with vocational education, teachers and nurses (Cappelen et al. 2013). Accessing higher education through intensive and high quality language education in the Introduction Program may thereby promote more long-term poverty prevention in line with a HRD approach in contrast to short-term poverty prevention through finding quick routes for employment in line with an LMA approach.

The respondents in my study furthermore highlighted being able to participate in society and socialize with Norwegians as important, suggesting that not only reaching the program goals of employment and higher education were valuable achievements. Participation in society is also a part of the programs main aim: “*to strengthen opportunities for newcomers to participate in the labor market and society, and enhance their economic independence*” (*Introduksjonsloven (the Introductory Act) 2003, §1*). Nevertheless, the effectiveness of the program is only measured in quantitative numbers of success rates of reaching the goals of employment and higher education. Hagelund and Kavli (2009) argue that other forms of citizenship than just labor market participation should be accounted for when discussing integration of newly arrived immigrants and refugees through the Introduction Program. As the target group of the Introduction Program is highly heterogeneous, some of the participants in the program have significant challenges of entering the labor market, with the prime example of women with little formal education and great family responsibilities. This is reflected in the low success rate of women finding employment and higher education after the program (50%), compared to men (70%) (SSB 2015). An important aspect is thereby if the program is successful in improving participation in other areas of society than the labor market. Learning the language through the Introduction Program may enable newly arrived immigrants and refugees to participate more actively in society, and perhaps most important for women with great family responsibilities – to be able to follow up their children’s education and social life. Even though a part of the target group of the program may not reach the

goal of becoming economically independent, qualification through the program may contribute to stronger independence for the women and perhaps contribute to improving labor market participation for their children.

Through the new White Paper on integration the coalition Government of the Conservatives and the Progress Party (2013-) acknowledges the heterogeneity of the target group, and suggest a differentiation on the length of the Introduction Program on the basis of how far away the participants are from the labor market. The government suggests a shorter Introduction Program for newly arrived immigrants and refugees with skills that are in demand in the Norwegian labor market (Stortingsmelding nr. 30 (2015-2016), 60), whereas participants that are further away from the labor market may prolong their qualification to four years (ibid, 67).

### *6.3.2. Confidence building and feelings of dignity and shame*

The experience of being recognized by others on the base of one's achievements in society can create positive confidence and self-esteem that is pivotal for building dignity. Passive tolerance of individual traits and goals of achievements can in contrast have negative effects (Honneth 1995, 129-130) and inflict a feeling of shame for the participants.

The feeling of the caseworker actively helping the participants reaching their goal in the program may promote a positive self-esteem and dignity in the program. Especially user involvement is important for confidence, as motivation to be active in the program is connected to the feeling of being taken seriously on one's goals of achievements in the program, be it employment or higher education. To feel confident and self-esteemed the participants in the program are in a need of being recognized on the base of their achievements, be it passing a language test, being successful in an internship, or learning a new skill. This needs to be based on what the participants themselves see as important achievements and goals in their lives, and the Individual Plan can be an important asset in this. Being able to follow one's own goal of achievement may thereby offer "more" as it promotes confidence and dignity to participate autonomously in society.

Not being recognized on one's achievements or followed up on individual program goals can in contrast have a negative impact for the self-esteem and be a shaming factor for the individual participant. An example of this can be that the caseworker only focuses on finding a quick route for labor market participation, without recognizing that the participants may have other goals. Not being recognized on the base of one's achievements and wishes of long-term development can be a curtailment of rights and autonomy for the individual participant and thereby offer "less". Being pushed into short-term skill development that is not based on the participant's own goals of achievements may thereby promote shame for the individual participant.

#### 6.4. Structural injustice – critique of Honneth's theory and the Introduction Program

Nancy Fraser's main critique of Honneth's theory of recognition is that it does not put enough emphasis on structural injustice in society, like labor market discrimination (Fraser 2003). This is also a critique directed at the Introduction Program, through focusing on only individual improvement the program individualizes social problems and thereby fails to address structural injustice (Fernandes 2013).

According to Fraser, Honneth's theory puts too much focus on the psychology and self-realization, and thereby fails to give space to how structural injustice affects various groups in society. Fraser argues that all status groups are two-dimensional in some way or another, as they both suffer misdistribution and misrecognition independently. All misrecognition is for example not a product of misdistribution, and all misdistribution is not a product of misrecognition. A wealthy immigrant in Norway may still be discriminated against on the basis of his skin color, religion or name, and a white worker who is laid off for economic reasons is not the victim of misrecognition. To handle both cases, Fraser argues that a theory of justice must examine both institutionalized patterns of recognition and the structure of economic inequality (Fraser 2003). Newly arrived immigrants and refugees may be discriminated against on the basis of their skin color and foreign names. A report by Midtbøen and Rogstad (2012) states that jobseekers with foreign names have 25 percent less chance of finding employment than those with ethnic Norwegian names,

showing that participants of the Introduction Program does not have equal opportunities to find employment as ethnic Norwegians.

Analyzing the policy documents behind the Introductory Programs in Norway, Sweden and Denmark, Fernandes (2013) found connections between how the target group is constructed as “others” and the individualization of the social risk of unemployment. According to Fernandes, newly arrived immigrants and refugees are constructed as more “passive” than the rest of the population, serving as a justification for the use of more punitive means in the Introduction Program than other activation programs. The Introduction Program is thereby directed at transforming participants from being passive recipients of welfare benefits to active participants in their own qualification process, with the aim of creating economically active participants in society and labor market. An important mean in this process is user involvement through the Individual Plan. Even though user involvement through a close relationship with one’s caseworker enhanced the respondents’ motivation and ability to be active in their own qualification process, it is not directed at the structural causes for unemployment for the target group of the program. According to Fernandes (2015) the focus on changing individual behavior may produce stigma of participating in the program, as it portrays the participants as passive actors in society that needs to be changed due to their passive state. Through not highlighting structural injustice like labor market discrimination, the Introduction Program does not tackle structural causes for the immigrant unemployment problem.

In this thesis it is acknowledged that there are structural problems for newly arrived immigrants and refugees’ opportunities to improve labor market participation. Nevertheless the existence of labor market discrimination does not preclude how factors within the program can promote labor market participation. This is exemplified by how the respondents in my study highlighted the importance of dignity through recognition in the program and how it affects their opportunities to improve labor market participation.

## 7. Concluding remarks

In this study I have explored how former participants interpret their opportunities to improve labor market participation through the program. I have explored what they interpret as giving them “more” or “less” in terms of curtailment of autonomy and rights, and opportunities to find employment. Through qualitative in-depth interviews I have aimed to explore processes within the program that have a positive effect on participants opportunities to improve labor market participation. I have discussed the former participants interpretations through the three spheres of recognition: Personal relationship with caseworker (love), a new balance of rights and obligations (rights) and of pluralized achievements (achievements). In doing so I have identified structures in the program that may promote dignity or inflict shame for the participants in the program. The respondents interpretations of what promotes dignity or inflict shame is vital for exploring if the Introduction Program follows the ILO recommendation on social protection floors: *“states should have respect for the rights and dignity of people covered by the social security guarantees”* (ILO 2012).

The respondents in the study highlighted a relationship of care with one’s caseworker combined with access to high quality long-term skill development and a strong element of user involvement as motivating factors for skill development and thereby offering “more” in terms of increased opportunities. I have argued that these factors may contribute to build dignity for the participants in the Introduction Program. A focus on short-term skill development for a quick entry into the labor market combined with not experiencing recognition through the relationship with their caseworker and poor quality qualification measures may on the other hand promote negative self-esteem and demotivation for the individual participant and thereby offer “less”. This may be intensified by not being able to influence one’s own qualification process. I have argued that these factors may inflict feelings of shame for the individual.

Concluding the thesis I highlight possible practice and policy implications and make suggestions for further research.

### 7.1. Practice and policy implications

What struck me as especially important in the respondents' statements was how a strong feeling of loneliness brought out the need for a close and personal relationship with their caseworkers. As a former caseworker in the program I was caught by surprise of the weight the respondents put on the individual characteristics of the caseworker for their motivation to develop skills through the program. I would encourage caseworkers in the program to acknowledge how especially the feeling of knowing each other on a personal level and the feeling of being prioritized are important factors for dignity in the program. In addition to this it seems as participants in the program feel destined to the caseworker assigned to them and have little knowledge about the individual right of user involvement through the Individual Plan, making the dependency on caseworker discretion strong. Information of rights and being able to choose between caseworkers might ease this dependency. Moreover a stronger focus on social inclusion activities in the program might have a positive effect on the participants' basic self-confidence in their process of re-socializing into a new society.

The experience of poor quality language education and the feeling of being exploited as free labor in internships may inflict feelings of shame and demotivation for participants in the program. A possible policy implication to prevent this can be implementation of user involvement at language education centers through for example elected student council groups, creating space for students to influence how Norwegian is taught. Another policy implication might be extended use of Supported Employment to hinder exploitation of newly arrived immigrants and refugees as free labor, or other ways of guaranteeing employment through internships. Through improving the quality of qualifying measures the participants in the program may increase their opportunities to improve labor market participation and promote dignity.

Increased refugee immigration has put the ability of the program to improve labor market participation on the agenda, based on a concern of prospected increased expenditure for the Norwegian Welfare State (Stortingsmelding nr. 30 (2015-2016)). The concern of increased expenditure might be a driving force for policy to move in a

direction of increased focus on finding quick routes for entry to the labor market, following the trend of a strengthening of the LMA approach in European activation policy. In contrast this study has highlighted how the respondents preferred a long-term skill development through a HRD approach. With a labor market increasingly demanding higher formal qualifications, a HRD approach with a focus on long-term skill development might be a better approach for improving labor market participation for newly arrived immigrants and refugees in Norway. Possible practice and policy implications might be a stronger focus on higher quality and more intense language education to enable participants to access higher education. In addition labor market discrimination plays a vital part in the participants opportunities to improve labor market participation, calling out for macro political measures for preventing discrimination in the labor market.

## 7.2. Suggestions for further research

In this thesis I have indicated that recognition through a personal relationship with one's caseworker, access to high quality qualifying measures and a pluralized value horizon of achievements were important factors for the respondents' motivation to develop skills through the program and thereby improve labor market participation. As the findings from this study represents common aspects of human needs in terms of recognition and dignity, I believe that they may be transferable to other participants in the Introduction Program and other people participating in activation programs.

To explore if the findings are transferrable there is a need for further studies on experiences in activation programs. Especially qualitative research on experiences with internships and opportunities to access higher education would provide important knowledge of how newly arrived immigrants and refugees and other participants in activation programs can find employment.

Participants' experiences are important in the scene of integration policy as processes within the program have effects on reaching program goals. Exploring what the participants' themselves interpret as the best means for promoting dignity and finding employment is thereby crucial for the effectiveness of integration policy in promoting labor market participation.

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## Appendices

### Appendix 1 – Request for interview and statement of consent

#### **Forespørsel om deltakelse i forskningsprosjektet**

***”User Involvement in the Introduction Program for newly arrived immigrants in Oslo, Norway / Brukermedvirkning i introduksjonsprogrammet for nyankomne innvandrere i Oslo, Norge”***

#### **Bakgrunn og formål**

Formålet med studien er å lære om brukermidvirkning i introduksjonsprogrammet gjennom intervjuer med tidligere deltakere. Jeg ønsker å intervjuer deltakere om rettigheter, oppfølging, kvalitet på program, mulighet til å påvirke, opplevelse av å bli behandlet med respekt, og om man føler det har skjedd en endring i sin livssituasjon etter deltakelse i programmet.

Prosjektet er en mastergradsstudie ved Høgskolen i Oslo og Akershus. Jeg ønsker å intervjuer deltakere med ulike utdanningsbakgrunn, landbakgrunn, alder og kjønn, som har avsluttet introduksjonsprogrammet i løpet av de to siste årene og spør derfor deg om å delta i prosjektet.

#### **Hva innebærer deltakelse i studien?**

Deltakelse i studien innebærer å delta i et 45-60 minutters intervju. Spørsmålene omhandler bakgrunn og status i dag, mulighet til å påvirke og respekt, informasjon og rettigheter, oppfølging og kvalitet på program, og status før og nå. Jeg vil bruke lydopptaker til å ta opp intervjuene og transkribere opptakene i ettertid.

### **Hva skjer med informasjonen om deg?**

Alle personopplysninger vil bli behandlet konfidensielt. Kun jeg vil ha tilgang til personopplysningene, og de vil lagres i et låst skap i et låst rom på Høgskolen i Oslo og Akershus. Navneliste vil lagres adskilt fra lydopptakene og transkriberingene.

Informasjon om deg vil anonymiseres slik at du ikke vil kunne gjenkjennes i publikasjonen av min masteroppgave.

Prosjektet skal etter planen avsluttes 31.05.16. Datamaterialet vil anonymiseres ved prosjektslutt. Det vil si at personlige opplysninger ikke vil oppbevares videre.

### **Frivillig deltakelse**

Det er frivillig å delta i studien, og du kan når som helst trekke ditt samtykke uten å oppgi noen grunn. Dersom du trekker deg, vil alle opplysninger om deg bli anonymisert.

Dersom du ønsker å delta eller har spørsmål til studien, ta kontakt med masterstudent Tora Ediassen på telefonnummer 932 44 910, eller veileder Ivar Lødemel på telefon 928 98 973.

Studien er meldt til Personvernombudet for forskning, Norsk samfunnsvitenskapelig datatjeneste AS.

## **Samtykke til deltakelse i studien**

Jeg har mottatt informasjon om studien, og er villig til å delta

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(Signert av prosjektdeltaker, dato)

### **Intervjuguide**

Jeg har lyst til å skrive om erfaringer med introduksjonsprogrammet. Siden jeg ønsker å lære om dine erfaringer, håper jeg at du kan fortelle om det som var viktig for deg. Kom gjerne med eksempler og fortell gjerne om tiden din i programmet i historiefrem. Håper at du kan se dette som en mulighet for deg til å si det du mener om introduksjonsprogrammet.

Intervjuet tar ca. 45 til 60 minutter og jeg vil anonymisere det du sier. Det vil si at jeg ikke vil bruke navn, eksakt alder, bydel, eller andre kjennetegn som gjør at du kan bli gjenkjent i min oppgave. Jeg vil ikke dele denne informasjonen med din tidligere saksbehandler.

Jeg tar opp intervjuet med lydopptaker og kommer til å skrive ned det som blir sagt senere. Dette vil jeg oppbevare i et låst skap, og jeg vil for det meste bare bruke hovedtrekk av det du sier i oppgaven min. Når jeg har skrevet oppgaven vil jeg slette opptakene. Du har lov til å ikke svare på spørsmål, og bare still spørsmål underveis hvis det er noe du ikke forstår.

Spørsmål om samtykke.

#### **Tema 1: Hvem er du?**

Kan du fortelle litt om deg selv?

- Hvor gammel er du?
- Hvor kommer du fra?
- Hva gjorde du i hjemlandet ditt?
  - o Arbeidserfaring
  - o Utdanning
  - o Annen type erfaring (familie, frivillig arbeid)

Hva gjør du i dag?

- Skole
- Kurs
- Jobb

- Andre ting du har lyst til å fortelle

Hva gjorde du i introduksjonsprogram?

- Norskundervisning og annen skole
- Praksis
- Kurs
- Norskprøver
- Når var du ferdig med introduksjonsprogram?

Hva er viktig for deg i livet ditt?

Hva ønsker du for fremtiden din?

- Har du spørsmål til noe av det vi har snakket om?
- Er det noe du har lyst til å legge til?

## **Tema 2: Bestemme selv og respekt i introduksjonsprogram**

Bestemme selv

- Opplevde du at du kunne bestemme hva du skulle gjøre i introduksjonsprogrammet?
- Har du eksempler på situasjoner hvor du bestemte hva du skulle gjøre?
- Har du eksempler på situasjoner hvor du ikke bestemte hva du skulle gjøre?
  - o For eksempel valg av praksis, kurs, skole
- Følelser knyttet til å bestemme og ikke bestemme. Er det viktig for deg?
- Var det endringer gjennom introduksjonsprogrammet?

Respekt

- Hva legger du i ordet respekt?
  - Opplevde du å bli møtt med respekt i introduksjonsprogrammet?
  - Kan du fortelle om situasjoner der du ble møtt med respekt i introduksjonsprogrammet?
  - Kan du fortelle om situasjoner der du ikke ble møtt med respekt?
    - o I den situasjonen du fortalte om nå, hva tenker du kunne vært gjort annerledes for at du skulle følt deg møtt med respekt?
  - Følelser knyttet til å møtes med respekt
- 
- Har du spørsmål til noe av det vi har snakket om?
  - Er det noe du har lyst til å legge til?

## **Tema 3: Rettigheter og individuell plan**

I introduksjonsprogrammet har man noen rettigheter og noen plikter. Man har for eksempel rett på informasjon, rett til å klage på vedtak, rett til individuell plan.

Synes du at du fikk nok informasjon om rettigheter og plikter? Var det noe informasjon du ikke fikk som du skulle ønske du hadde fått? Kan du fortelle litt om dette?

Rett til individuell plan er en viktig rettighet i introduksjonsprogrammet som skal sikre at jobb og utdanningsmål deltakeren har for seg selv skal høres og følges opp av programrådgiver.

- Kan du huske å ha skrevet individuell plan med din rådgiver?
- Husker du hva dere skrev i planen?
- Synes du planen ble fulgt?
- Endret dere planen underveis?
- Når du ser tilbake på din tid i programmet, synes du det var viktig å ha individuell plan?
- Er det andre måter du tenker at dine meninger kunne blitt hørt/ble hørt?
  
- Har du spørsmål til noe av det vi har snakket om?
- Er det noe du har lyst til å legge til?

#### **Tema 4: Samarbeid med programrådgiver og kvalitet på introduksjonsprogram**

Samarbeid med programrådgiver

- Kan du gi eksempler på hvordan samarbeidet fungerte?
- Var det endring i samarbeidet i løpet av introduksjonsprogrammet?

Utfordringer

- Kan du gi eksempler på utfordringer i introduksjonsprogrammet?
  - o For eksempel i samarbeidet med programrådgiver, med valg av praksis, skole
- Mestring av utfordringer
  - o Kan du gi eksempler på hvordan du har taklet utfordringer du har møtt?

Kvalitet på introduksjonsprogram

- Kan du fortelle litt om hva du synes var bra i introduksjonsprogram?
- Kan du fortelle litt om hva du synes var dårlig i introduksjonsprogram?
- Hva synes du om praksis, kurs, skole? Hjalp det deg med å nå målene dine? Hjalp det deg med å finne jobb/starte på skole?
- Fikk du hjelp med det du trengte hjelp til?
- Hvor ofte møtte du programrådgiver?
  
- Har du spørsmål til noe av det vi har snakket om?
- Er det noe du har lyst til å legge til?

### **Tema 5: Før og etter introduksjonsprogram og syn på fremtiden**

Hvordan hadde du det i Norge før du startet i introduksjonsprogram?

- Hvordan så du på livet?
- Hvordan så du på fremtiden din?
- Følte du deg hjemme i Norge?

Hvordan har du det i Norge etter at du har vært i introduksjonsprogram?

- Har livet ditt endret seg?
- Hvordan har livet ditt endret seg? Økonomisk, samfunn, personlig, nettverk
- Føler du deg styrket/svekket eller likt i arbeidsmarked og samfunn etter å ha deltatt i introduksjonsprogram?

Hva ønsker du for fremtiden?

- Føler du at du har kommet nærmere dette målet etter deltakelse i introduksjonsprogram?

Helt til slutt – har du forslag til hvordan introduksjonsprogrammet kunne vært bedre?

Takk for intervjuet, veldig spennende å høre på dine erfaringer! Det er viktig for meg å skrive om hvilke erfaringer folk har med introduksjonsprogrammet.