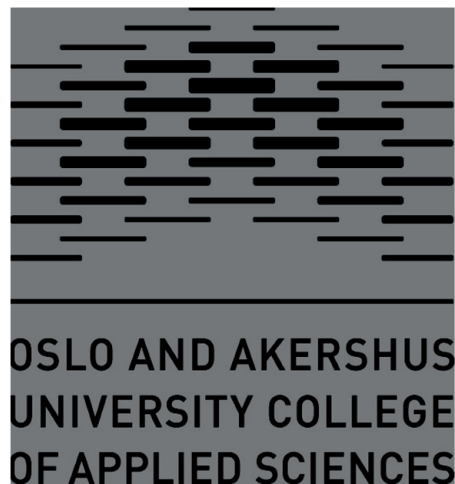# When Divergence Appears Coherent: An Investigation of How Ambiguous Policy Rationales Shape the Activation Trajectories of Hard-to-employ Clients

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Abstract

This doctoral dissertation investigates how potentially ambiguous rationales of activation policy shape social work practice. In particular, the study examines the interaction of enabling and coercive rationales in clients' activation processes and the practical implications of these divergent rationales for clients' trajectories towards employment.

Using a combination of qualitative datasets, the study focuses on two main issues: a) social workers' discretion in designating activation measures and b) the practical implications of enabling and coercive policy rationales in the social work employed throughout clients' activation trajectories. The empirical material for this study was derived from 16 case files during a 1.5-year period for clients participating in a Norwegian activation scheme directed at long-term social assistance recipients, and interviews with each client's social worker. Theoretically, the study applies concepts and perspectives from the Bakhtinian theory of dialogism and the Foucauldian theory of governmentality.

The body of this dissertation comprises three research papers. The first paper examines continual decision-making processes as social workers personalise activation measures to encapsulate each client's needs and capabilities. The second investigates social workers' dual professional mandates—the emancipatory objectives of social work and the facilitation of rapid labour-market entry—and how these mandates are manifest in clients' activation trajectories. Drawing on two purposefully selected contrasting cases, the third research paper examines contractualism as the foundation for activation policies involving both personalised support and sanctions for non-compliance. It investigates how social workers and clients simultaneously enact these rationales. Taken together, the three research papers shed light on politically and institutionally founded perceptions of how social assistance recipients can achieve labour market participation.

The study extends previous knowledge of social work practice with activation of long-term unemployed clients and asserts that activation processes emphasise enabling of clients by strengthening their autonomy and targeting their behaviour through acquisition of practical and social skills. However, fostering clients' autonomy is challenged by coercive practices, which induce compliant behaviour. This dissertation demonstrates the importance of viewing social work practices not merely as representing the social worker's discretionary choices, but also as shaped by policy rationales. This research also demonstrates the importance of considering how different policy rationales may merge to yield cohesive, ambiguous or

contradictory foundations for practice. The governmentality perspective renders visible how even enabling practices encompass modes of governance and control. The findings have significant implications for social work in activation settings, as they have the potential to increase awareness among practitioners and policymakers regarding how potentially divergent policy rationales may contextualise and shape social work practice.

Sammendrag

Formålet med studien var å undersøke hvordan aktiveringspolitikken, som inneholder potensielt motsetningsfylte logikker, former sosialarbeideres praksiser. Spesielt hadde studien til hensikt å undersøke hvordan målet om å styrke muligheten for arbeid, og forvaltningen av tvang gjennom økonomiske sanksjoner, virker sammen i sosialt arbeid med aktivering av personer langt fra arbeidsmarkedet.

I studien blir et kvalitativt forskningsdesign benyttet. Studien fokuserer spesielt på to aspekter ved aktiveringsarbeidet: For det første, hvordan sosialarbeiderne utøver skjønn når de tilpasser aktiveringstiltak til hver enkelt. For det andre, hvordan målet om å styrke muligheten for arbeid og risikoen for tvang gjennom økonomiske sanksjoner virker sammen og har praktiske konsekvenser i personers forløp mot arbeid. Studien bygger på saksmapper for 16 deltakere i NAVs kvalifiseringsprogram over en periode på et og et halvt år, og intervjuer med saksbehandleren i hver enkelt sak. Studien benytter teoretiske perspektiver både fra Bakhtins teori om dialogisme og Foucaults teori om governmentality.

Avhandlingen består av tre forskningsartikler. Den første artikkelen undersøker sosialarbeidernes skjønnsutøvelse når de tilpasser arbeidsrettede tiltak til hver enkelt. Den andre undersøker hvordan sosialt arbeids mandat om myndiggjøring og det aktiveringspolitiske målet om rask tilknytning til arbeidsmarkedet viser seg i forløp mot arbeid. Den tredje forskningsartikkelen undersøker hvordan ideen om en velferdskontrakt, som underbygger utformingen av aktiveringspolitiske tiltak ved å implimentere både personlig tilpasning av tjenester og økonomiske sanksjoner, gir seg praktiske utslag i prosesser mot arbeid. Sett i sammenheng belyser studiens tre forskningsartikler politiske og institusjonelle oppfatninger av hvordan langtidsmottakere av sosialhjelp best kan oppnå tilknytning til arbeidsmarkedet.

Studien utvider vår kunnskap om aktivering av personer utenfor arbeidsmarkedet ved å vise hvordan aktiveringstiltak søker å styrke deres muligheter for arbeid. Den viser hvordan hjelp ofte retter seg mot å styrke de arbeidsløses motivasjon og selvstendighet, øke sosiale ferdigheter og å bedre enkelte praktiske ferdigheter. Studien viser dessuten at dette blir vanskeligere å oppnå på grunn av risikoen for økonomiske sanksjoner.

Avhandlingen viser betydningen av å undersøke praksiser i velferdsyrker, ikke bare som resultat av de profesjonelles egne valg og erfaringer, men også som produkt av sosialpolitiske ideer og tenkemåter. Denne forskningen viser også viktigheten av å ha bevissthet om hvordan

ulike sosialpolitiske logikker og begrunnelsesmåter kan utfylle hverandre eller utfordre hverandre i praksis. Spesielt viser governmentalityperspektivet hvordan de praksisene som har til hensikt å selvstendiggjøre og myndiggjøre sårbare grupper, også inneholder styring og kontroll. Studien har implikasjoner for sosialt arbeid med aktivering av personer langt fra arbeidsmarkedet. Det ligger et potensiale i studien til å gi både praktikere og de som arbeider med politikkutforming større forståelse av hvordan potensielt motsetningsfylte politiske logikker kan gi seg utslag i profesjonelle praksiser.

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The **dissertation** consists of three research papers.

Research paper 1: Discretionary Approaches to Social Workers' Personalisation of Activation Services for Long-term Welfare Recipients

Author: Ida Solvang

Published in: *European Journal of Social Work*

Published online: 28 Jun 2016

Research paper 2: Consequences of Merging the Aims of Personal Emancipation and Gaining Employment in Activation Processes

Author: Ida Solvang

Under revision in *Nordic Journal of Social Work Research*

Research paper 3: Between Empowerment and Discipline: Understanding Contractualism

 as Social Work Practice through the Clients in a Norwegian Activation Scheme

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Under revision in *Journal of Social Work*.

The following appendixes are enclosed:
Appendix 1: Norwegian questionnaire created by the cluster-randomised controlled trial
Appendix 2: Norwegian interview guide, the segment not pertaining to specific cases
Appendix 3: Ethical approval of the HPMT project from the Norwegian Centre for Research Data
Appendix 4: Permission from the Norwegian Labour and Welfare Administration to access case files

1. Introduction

1.1. Background

This dissertation is a Norwegian study of social work among long-term unemployed people in an activation programme. The qualitative research illuminates the practicing of potentially ambiguous objectives and rationales of activation policy through an investigation of how they are manifest in social work practice, and in clients' attempts to gain employment.

As welfare policies have advanced over the past two decades, social protection systems have been significantly reconfigured, and activation of unemployed people has gained prevalence. To sustain cost efficiency, mature welfare states have gravitated towards facilitating labour market inclusion for larger segments of benefit recipients (Danforth 2014; Lødemel and Moreira 2014). Lauded as positive welfare or social investments, these alterations aim to enhance clients' opportunities to approach the labour market through a contractual model in which clients and welfare authorities share responsibility to assert relevant aims and subsequent responsibilities (Cheung 2016; Ervik, Kildal, and Nilssen 2015). In most mature welfare states, contractual activation policies have yielded bureaucracy retrenchments to accommodate personalised services and legislated sanctions (withdrawal of financial support) for non-compliance (Jochem 2011).

Policy, when practiced, seldom takes the same shape as when it was formally proposed. Therefore, we must understand how policies are adapted and practiced (Lipsky 2010), as informal practices shape policy outcomes, ultimately creating the services clients receive. Some scholars have emphasised that contractual arrangements of activation policy are not merely linear changes in welfare policy: from securing income provision to promoting self-sufficiency and from administration of benefits to design of activation services (Bonvin 2008; Van Berkel, Borghi, and Newman 2007; Whitworth and Carter 2014). Rather, they conclude that activation policies employ both enabling objectives through personalised support and coercive practices through enforcement of requirements, approaches that both complement and contradict each other in policy arrangements and ensuing social work practices (Bonvin 2008; Van Berkel, Borghi, and Newman 2007; Whitworth and Carter 2014).

1.2. Enabling and coercive rationales of activation policy

The dual approach to the activation of unemployed people mirrors a two-sided political view of the long-term unemployed (the target group for the activation scheme the dissertation investigates) and how best to assist them to enter the labour market. This dual approach

frames activation processes as employability enhancements and as obligations that justify receiving benefits. I have termed these co-existing aspects of activation policy as enabling and coercive rationales . In this dissertation, I investigate these paradoxical rationales as tensions that continually influence each other in social work practice, to shape individual activation trajectories.

Activation practices have been examined predominantly through two strands of research. Some scholars argue that personalised support aligns with social work ideals, such as empowerment and helping clients live independent lives (Villandsen 2007), and thus have explored how different components of activation trajectories foster social inclusion (Foot 2015; Heinsch, Gray, and Sharland 2016; Jessen and Tufte 2014; Malmberg-Heimonen 2015; Nothdurfter 2016; Solberg 2011; Van Ours 2004). Others have raised concerns that legislated disciplinary actions for non-compliance endanger clients' basic rights (Freedland and King 2003; Handler 2005; Nilssen and Kildal 2009), and these concerns are echoed in studies asserting that social workers face ethical dilemmas when exercising such punitive measures (Diop-Christensen 2015; Hjörne, Juhila, and Van Nijnatten 2010; Kjørstad 2005).

In general, social work research has considered use of personalised support to enable clients and exertion of professional authority to make clients adhere to activation requirements as separate lines of enquiry. Scholars who investigate personalised support as chiefly enabling, have usually either investigated social workers or clients' experiences (Foot 2015; Heinsch, Gray and Sharland 2016; Jessen and Tufte 2014). Studies raising ethical concerns often have a social policy point of departure (Freedland and King 2003; Handler 2005; Nilssen and Kildal 2009), echoed in studies examining social workers' experiences (Diop-Christensen 2015; Hjörne, Juhila and Van Nijnatten 2010; Kjørstad 2005).

Social workers must adapt potentially paradoxical policy rationales into coherent practices. They simultaneously enact potentially contending objectives in enabling clients to seek employment and enforcing contractual obligations. So far, few studies have investigated how paradoxical rationales of activation policy shape concrete activation processes or the scope of discretion they make available. Moreover, studies have examined activation either from a normative vantage point or through social workers' and clients' opinions, views and experiences. Consequently, we lack knowledge about how activation policy rationales create premises for day-to-day practice . The changing dynamics of policies towards the unemployed and the ethical concerns of researchers and practitioners indicate the importance of

understanding how potentially contending policy objectives influence clients' activation trajectories.

Drawing upon case file and interview data for 16 participants in a Norwegian activation scheme, I seek through this dissertation to contribute to our understanding of how objectives of activation policy are merged and practiced in clients' trajectories towards attempted employment. The activation scheme is distinct in that it combines strict activation requirements with close monitoring, and emphasises the need for personalisation of activation measures to clients' needs. Thus, the programme emphasises both enabling and coercive rationales inherent in activation policy and practice. Through case-files and interview data, my dissertation goes beyond investigating the 'what' as asserted in social workers' and clients' accounts, to the investigating 'how policies manifest in individual practices.

1.3. The aim of the dissertation

The research question for this dissertation is:

> *How do enabling and coercive rationales of activation policy interact in social work practice within individual activation processes?*

The dissertation is comprised of three research papers, each focusing on the manifestation of paradoxical policy rationales in clients' activation trajectories, which serve to address my broad, comprehensive research question.

The first research paper examines enabling rationales through an investigation of how personalised support encompasses both clients' challenges (the grounds for reduced work capacity) and measures to assist labour-market entry. The research paper's aim is *to investigate social workers' rationales for personalising activation services when assigning clients to courses or work placements.* Policymakers uphold personalised support as a way to address clients' needs and to reinforce their capabilities in order to avoid risk of sanctions for non-compliance; consequently, punitive actions result when inadequate discretion is used in provision of support. This paper illuminates social workers' decision-making in personalisation of support and how that personalisation might counteract punitive actions.

The second research paper examines the complexity of practicing coercive and enabling rationales of activation policy through the dual nature of the social worker's professional mandate: Social work has an inherent professional obligation to seek the emancipation of clients and a mandate in activation settings to facilitate labour-market entry, including potential coercive measures. This research paper investigates how these two mandates appear

throughout activation trajectories and are integral to activation policy. Specifically, the paper's aim is *to investigate how social work's emancipatory objective and activation policy, which emphasises client obligations and acquisition of employment, may intersect to create requirements for clients.*

The third research paper examines contractualism as the principle that underpins activation policies and serves to systematise enabling and coercive practices within the Norwegian activation scheme. The paper investigates enabling and coercion as interacting in detailed activation processes, capturing both prerequisites inherent in successful enabling towards employment and ways in which coercion affects these enabling processes. The aim of the paper is *to critically investigate how the contractual design of services shapes social workers' and clients' practices towards attempted employment.*

1.4. Concepts

In this section, I clarify some central concepts and explicate how they are utilised in the study.

1.4.1. Neoliberalism

Neoliberalism commonly refers to the resurgence of classic liberal ideas in public policy development, for instance, resulting in privatisation of public services, reduction in public expenditures and tax deductions, as well as deregulation in trade and wage structures to accommodate economic flexibility (Esping-Andersen 2002; Giddens 1998). Although most apparent in Anglophone countries through the Reagan Administration in the US and the Thatcher Administration in the UK, neoliberal ideas have rendered more moderate restructurings of public service provision and legislation in all Western European countries within already existing social-democratic or conservative policy traditions (Lødemel and Moreira 2014).

Scholars describe the motivation for neoliberal alterations in welfare governance as the desire to pull back state authority and promote individual freedom within the marketplace (Esping-Andersen 2002; Taylor-Gooby 2008, 2011); however, some offer the nuanced view that although classic liberal ideals advocate reductions in state governance, neoliberal ideals seek to appropriate state governance to accommodate market structures and individual choice (Wacquant 2012). Thus, neoliberalism effectively reshapes state governance, making it more potent and making individuals and market structures interact more efficiently (Rose 1999; Rose, O'Malley and Valverde 2006).

Rose (1996) characterised such alterations as advanced liberalism, described as the transformation of government to which he ascribed three core characteristics : The marketisation of expert services, as both the political rationality for governance and the means to govern individual lives, resulting in multifaceted systems of auditing as control; a decentralisation of state governance to include civil society and individual agency; and finally, specifying the governed individual within market rationalities, such as a client described as a consumer of services (Rose 1996).

Activation of the unemployed reflects such characteristics as neoliberal approaches are lauded as 'positive welfare' (Giddens 1998), 'new welfare' (Taylor-Gooby 2011)) and 'the active welfare state' (Esping-Andersen 2002). Welfare services are described as a 'trampoline' rather than a 'safety net' that employ 'empowering' and 'preparative', rather than 'passive' or 'reparative' strategies (Lødemel and Moreira 2014). Measures and policies emphasise skills and human capital development as well as the enhancement of individual choice and responsibility (Lødemel and Moreira 2014).

Following Giddens (1998), welfare policies are commonly described as improving individual autonomy and well-being, while simultaneously ensuring individual responsibility. Examples of human capital developments include reform elements such as life-long learning and flex-security to enable people to live productive lives (Fejes 2008; Klitgaard, Baggesen, and Nørgaard 2014). Neoliberalism not only promotes individual responsibility, but directs controls through paternalism at those who appear to shirk their responsibilities. Soft paternalism is exercised through control measures such as counselling toward proper behaviour, whereas hard paternalism includes loss of benefits (Dean 2009; Whitworth 2016).

The response to neoliberal activation policies has reflected the mixed nature of these developments. Critics note that neoliberal activation policies shift the focus from maintaining social protection to improving personalised support in order to ensure efficiency, thus appropriating the rhetoric of social inclusion to justify control of benefit recipients (Taylor-Gooby 2011). As activation language emphasised social inclusion, reciprocity and deservingness, policies also may reflect the use of 'creeping conditions' as a strategy for control (Handler 2005; Lødemel and Moreira 2014).

My research investigates how neoliberal policies are enacted within the tension between enabling individuals through the provision of support and emphasising individual responsibility and exertion of control. My dissertation does not investigate neoliberal policy, but how the potentially divergent rationales of such policies towards the unemployed

influence professional social work practice. In this dissertation, I employ the term neoliberalism to refer to neoliberal alterations in general and the terms neoliberal paternalism and advanced liberalism only when the specifications above are appropriate.

1.4.2. Rationales: Investigated as the nexus of policy and practice

My theoretical approach and use of empirical data on individuals include both welfare policy objectives and how people enact them. Therefore, I use the term rationales to designate the interrelations between policy objectives and practice. Here, the term 'rationales' signifies the underlying objectives of (activation) policy, the bureaucratic arrangements of activation schemes and how these are enacted by social workers and clients. Therefore, my focus is the practice of simultaneous enabling and coercive components of Norwegian activation policy in the activation scheme as rationales rather than policy objectives.

1.4.3. Discretion

Discretion is conventionally divided into two analytical categories: structural and epistemic (Molander and Grimen 2010). Structural discretion is described as a space left open by an authority, which has delegated certain responsibilities to another social actor, who then has the liberty to make certain decisions, ideally in accordance with the delegating authority's standards (Molander and Grimen 2010). Epistemic discretion refers to how the social actor reasons and makes judgements within the space the authority allows and in accordance with the specified goals and aims (Molander and Grimen 2010; Wallander and Molander 2014).

Social work research includes schematic depictions of how professionals may exert their epistemic discretion (Wallander and Molander 2014), modelling the boundaries and components of the epistemic space (Palinkas 2014; Wallander 2012,). Factorial surveys also may be used as a research tool to explore judgments in the epistemic space (Daniel 2000; Wallander and Molander 2014). Similarly, Taylor (2006, 2012; Killick and Taylor 2012) utilised models of judgement in cognitive psychology and schematics to quantify different factors of a case to suggest procedures for discretion.

Qualitative studies primarily have investigated social workers as street-level bureaucrats who must negotiate potentially contradictory organisational rules and objections as they exercise discretion (Brodkin 2011; Lipsky 2010; Thorén 2008), although street-level bureaucrats nuance this view and describe themselves as trouble-shooters rather than policy enactors (Evans and Harris 2004; Preston-Shoot 2010; Preston-Shoot, McKimm, and Thurnham 2013).

My view of discretion differs from both of these approaches. First, the structural-epistemological distinction of discretion presupposes that professionals exercise logical and autonomous conclusions based on asserted facts and organisational regulations, whereas my research presumes that rationales of policy shape discretionary practice and are integral to it. Second, street-level bureaucracy research situates discretion within complex, contradictory regulations that may cause unintended practices or limitations. My research goes beyond examining social workers' decisions as caught within or between conflicting regulations to investigate them as integrated in decision-making processes. Therefore, I investigate discretionary processes rather than isolated decisions, which the structural-epistemological approach fosters, and rather than situated in organisational practices, which is the street-level bureaucracy approach. The premise of my research is that policy objectives and regulations are incorporated in the production of meaning within a case, and according to Foucauldian theory, are enacted in the clients' and social workers' actions and discretionary processes.

1.4.4. Social worker and client

In this dissertation, I describe the two parties of the professional relationship as the social worker and the client. In the social work literature, the term 'social worker' is widely used, although literature on welfare administration may use case-worker and street-level bureaucrats (Taylor 2013; Thorén 2008). Because I investigate social work processes that involve close, long-term monitoring, and thus, the presumed application of social work knowledge and skills, I use the term social worker to designate the professional.

The term 'citizen' is widely used to designate those affected by social policies ((Newman, Glendinning, and Hughes 2008; Nothdurfter 2016), drawing primarily on Marshall's (2006) political notion of citizenship. The idea is that basic public goods, such as healthcare, education and social rights, are integral to citizenship in an advanced society (Marshall 2006). Consequently, severe activation requirements can be seen as a threat to citizen rights. As a conceptual tool, citizenship has been deployed to investigate socio-political developments and to reveal how policymaking may condition citizens' lives (Belda-Miquel, Boni Aristizábal, and Sañudo Pazos 2016; Gerbaudo 2017; Kramer 2016; Winter 2016). The concept has also been used in a more performative way to explicate how society shapes the citizens by gender (Bakhru and Rogers 2016) or ability (Haigh 2016; Ignagni et al. 2016).

I use the term citizen only when referring to the debate regarding activation policy and citizenship rights. Elsewhere in this dissertation, I choose to use the term 'client' to designate

an unemployed person because my study examines unemployed people as part of professional practice, which is what my data contains about them.

The two terms most commonly used in the literature to designate those subject to a professional relationship in social work are client or service user (Hübner 2013). Case files also may designate them as participants, a term I avoid because it is little utilised in research literature. I also avoid 'service user' because this term may imply that the unemployed person has a choice of whether to use welfare services. Consequently, I designate unemployed people as clients and regard the term as accurately designating these persons as part of the social work relationship.

2. Activation policy—from debates in social economy to Norwegian social work practice

From an international perspective, Norway is often exemplified as a welfare state that emphasises the importance of social rights, redistribution of income and universal benefits (Esping-Andersen, 1990). In this chapter, I provide a description of activation policy ideas, contextualising the area of research. I then elaborate on recent developments in Norwegian activation policy and how international ideals have come to be adopted. Finally, I describe the Norwegian activation scheme used in my research, which targets those far outside the labour market and emphasises both highly personalised service provision and rigid activation requirements, alongside consistent sanctions for non-compliance.

2.1. From a safety net to a stepping stone, as indicative of international welfare policy objectives

The conceptualization of welfare benefits as ensuring basic human rights such as food and shelter is generally attributed to political visionaries and theorists, Marshall and Titmuss (Marshall 2006; Titmuss 2000). In the post-war era, these theorists offered perspectives that proved significant in the expansion of welfare benefit structures across Europe (Danforth 2014; Esping-Andersen 1990). The growing emphasis on citizens' individual rights to material security contributed to the expansion of welfare benefit structures consisting primarily of various insurance schemes for those who lost employment and the severely disabled and, in some instances, temporary insurance for people with caregiver responsibilities (Danforth 2014; Esping-Andersen 1990). Gradually, policymakers recognised a need to **control** welfare expenditures and minimise unintended consequences of benefit dependency, which introduced reconfigurations and moderations of benefit structures to sustain cost efficiency.

At the outset of activation reforms, scholars discussed whether ensuing policy developments should strengthen welfare recipients' opportunities (give more) or should curtail their rights (give less) (Lødemel and Trickey 2001). My data derives from an activation program targeting social assistance recipients, an important distinction because recipients of social assistance benefits are reliant on the welfare state's lowest safety net. By contrast, a conditional activation program for the insured unemployed could mean that non-compliance would result in loss of unemployment benefits, but the claimant potentially still draw support from social assistance. Attaching requirements to the lowest safety net creates a strong asymmetry of power between the individual and welfare authorities because there is no option

for financial support in cases of non-compliance. Therefore, the change in the relationship between the welfare state and the individual is greater when activation is attached to the receipt of social assistance.

However, activation schemes promise more than curtailment of rights. Their objective is to enable clients to enter the labour market (Lødemel and Moreira 2014). Conditions attached to benefits have the potential not only to curtail the right to support, but also to provide new resources that may improve clients' chances for employment. An activation scheme, albeit conditional and equipped with potential sanctions, may prove to help clients as they strive towards self-reliance. If so, activation policies, which also are reflected in expanded service provision, extend entitlements and the rights of benefit recipients, thereby offering 'more'.

Therefore, activation schemes involve a complex mix and balance of coercive and enabling elements. Although curtailing clients' rights and enforcing sanctions for non-compliance are coercive elements that force clients to carry out activation requirements, services may also enable clients to approach the labour market (Ervik, Kildal, and Nilssen 2015; Lødemel and Moreira 2014). Thus, activation schemes cannot be regarded as promoting either the coercive or the enabling approach toward benefit recipients, but as a combination of both. Policies vary greatly within these two approaches, between nations (Lødemel and Moreira 2014), over time (Danforth 2014) and between national regulations and local implementation (Thorén 2008). Whether activation services are perceived to enable or coerce depends on the characteristics of service provision and each benefit recipient's perceptions. The combination of the two in activation processes comprises my point of investigation.

Contractualism—the conjoinment of rights and duties directed at benefit recipients—emerged as a principle in the development of benefit systems targeting the working-age unemployed in several European countries (Ervik, Kildal, and Nilssen 2015). In the 1990s, British and American neoliberal theorists—such as Elwood (1998), Mead (1986) and Murray (2006)— also advocated the concept. Although these theorists explicated the conjoinment of rights and duties differently, they upheld contractualism as fulfilling two purposes: to provide opportunities for the unemployed to enter the labour market and to justify a demand for reciprocity between welfare recipients and society at large (Ervik, Kildal, and Nilssen 2015). Although these arguments arose from the deregulated American economy, their basic principles have been incorporated in different ways into European welfare policies.

The debates on conditionality of benefits revolved around how the labour market and social protection systems interacted to create both positive and negative incentives for the

unemployed. Murray (2006) argued that social protection schemes, especially for single parents, should be kept to a minimum to provide economic incentives for seeking employment. Although rooted in the highly deregulated wage structure of the American economy, this argument has been upheld as crucial to moderations in benefit levels in several European welfare states (Bonoli 2010; Danforth 2014).

Moving away from purely economic rationalities for conditionality of benefits, Mead (1986) argued that benefit recipients had certain fundamental obligations to society and that benefits should be conditional upon recipients' making every effort to gain employment. He argued for the notion of shared citizenship in which all citizens are obliged to contribute to society, and those unwilling or unable to fulfil this obligation are subject to coercive action, such as withdrawal of financial support (Mead 1986). Within this line of argument, receiving benefits without fulfilling specific obligations constitutes neglect, or a lacking awareness of obligations. Subsequently some scholars have termed this view neoliberal paternalism (Schram et al. 2010; Soss, Fording and Schram 2011; Whitworth 2016).

Rather than coercive approaches towards the unemployed, Elwood (1988) emphasised the importance of availability of public or private employment, arguing that conditional benefits could be reasonable if the recipient had the opportunity to fulfil activation requirements and had certified opportunities to gain employment. Activation measures such as legislation against discriminatory practices, subsidised public employment and services to match recipients' skills with employers' needs are based on this argument.

In Europe, arguments for similar reconfigurations of benefit structures have been most strongly advocated and contested in Britain, reiterating the view that requirements attached to benefits might provide opportunities to enter the labour market (Giddens 2013). Moreover, political rhetoric has upheld benefit dependency as exemplifying free-riders or the socially maladjusted, who may need coercive incentives such as conditionality of benefits and moderate benefit levels to spur them to pursue labour market participation (Dean and Taylor-Gooby 2014; Taylor-Gooby 2004; White 2000).

In political and academic debates, the argument of shared citizenship is the foundation for much of the criticism facing contractual welfare policy and practice. The notion of free-riders among welfare recipients and the idea that dependency involves an element of choice that can be directed through coercion (White 2000, 2003) have sparked reactions from academics and practitioners. Counteracting these arguments, feminist critics have stated that the obligations of shared citizenship also should encompass such contributions as caregiver responsibilities,

and that shared citizenship involves the interdependence of all members of society (Segall 2005; Smith 1990). These scholars claim that the [presumably] male breadwinner model and paid employment is given greater value than familial responsibilities (Segall 2005; Smith 1990). Other critics have asserted that benefit dependency as a phenomena of social maladjustment has little empirical evidence (Taylor-Gooby 2004, 2008; Fletcher et al. 2016). From a normative vantage point, the consequences welfare recipients encounter if they fail to meet activation requirements have raised much concern (Ervik, Kildal, and Nilssen 2015; Freedland and King 2003; Handler 2005; Newman, Glendinning, and Hughes 2008; Nilssen and Kildal 2009; Wright 2012). In recent studies on social policy developments, scholars have questioned whether the Nordic model of a universal welfare benefit system is eroding, as recent welfare reforms have reconfigured benefit structures based on the contractual model (Anderson 2014; Johansson 2001; Jørgensen 2009; Kananen 2012; Kvist and Greve 2011). Some Nordic and international studies also raise concerns that coercive practices are indeed likely to disproportionately harm those hardest to employ (Diop-Christensen 2015; Fletcher 2011; Wright 2012).

Despite these concerns, most European welfare states have employed contractual ideas to restructure benefit systems that promote activation of the unemployed with great similarity (Card, Kluve and Weber 2010; Christensen, Fimreite and Lægreid 2007; Clasen and Clegg 2006). In essence, these reforms involve bureaucracy retrenchment, which usually yields the administering of benefits and activation measures based on the one-stop-shop model, in which one agency, often a 'job centre', grants and coordinates benefits and activation measures to increase personalised support (Berthet and Bourgeois 2014; Bonoli 2010; Toerien et al. 2013). These alterations have reconfigured benefits and services and extended legislated coercion towards benefit recipients with increasingly poor labour market attachment.

Compared with those in Anglo-American countries, activation reforms in Scandinavia and continental Europe have placed greater emphasis on the efficiency of bureaucracy retrenchment, facilitating personalisation as well as cost efficiency (Cinalli, Giugni and Graziano 2013; Clasen and Clegg 2006). Policymakers state that a principal intention behind these alterations is to increase clients' influence, allowing for personalised support (Djuve and Kavli 2015; Toerien et al. 2013; Valkenburg and Van Berkel 2007). Thus, some scholars have emphasised that contractual activation policies involve a complexity of rationalities that aim to make clients self-sufficient while these policies also appropriate bureaucracy adjustments to control how financial security is provided, for whom and the extent and content of the

services (Dean 2014; Newman, Glendinning, and Hughes 2008; Whitworth and Carter 2014). The complexities of policy objectives also render different logics that complement and contradict each other in front-line work (Dean 2014; Newman, Glendinning, and Hughes 2008; Whitworth and Carter 2014).

Lødemel and Moreira (2014) characterised current developments in activation policy as moving towards the enabling aspects of contractualism through greater personalisation of activation measures involving a wide scope of discretion. Moreover, measures that seek to enhance and potentially strengthen the role of benefit recipients and help them gain employment resound with social work's emancipatory objectives (Hyslop 2012; IFSW and IASSW 2014; Marston and McDonald 2012; Turner and Maschi 2015). Yet, the merger of enabling and coercive rationales also pose conflicting expectations on social workers and clients.

Contractualism, then, represents a spectrum of enabling and coercive activation policy rationales within which social workers must practice. In this dissertation, I examine social work practice throughout activation processes, contextualised within this spectrum of policy rationales. Activation policies emphasise both the neoliberal ideals of freedom of choice for benefit recipients as 'consumers' of services and of personal responsibility to approach the labour market, if necessary, through coercion (Mead 1986; Wright 2012). However, these facets of social work in activation settings generally have been investigated separately. So far, few studies have examined social work contextualised within the ambiguous policy rationales that interact and shape practice throughout clients' activation trajectories.

2.2. Recent developments of Norwegian activation policy

Studies of activation policies in mature welfare states have employed the dichotomy of enabling and coercive measures, and researchers have examined how countries incorporate these rationales of policy in programs for the unemployed (Cinalli, Giugni, and Graziano 2013; Clasen and Clegg 2006; Danforth 2014; Jingjing, Nelson, and Stephens 2008; Kluve 2010). European countries usually adapt policies into activation strategies along three main dimensions: the kinds of activation measures available to different segments of the unemployed population, the level of benefits and the structure of benefit systems and the severity of punitive practices (Cinalli, Giugni and Graziano 2013; Clasen and Clegg 2006; Danforth 2014; Jingjing, Nelson and Stephens 2008; Kluve 2010).

Research studies categorise activation policies in different ways, but mainly as adhering either to a work-first model or a human resource development model (Card, Kluve and Weber 2010; Van Berkel and Van der Aa 2012). Put broadly, the work-first model emphasises negative economic incentives through moderate benefit levels, strict sanctions for non-compliance, and activation measures that target the clients' own efforts, such as job-seeker activities (Card, Kluve, and Weber 2010; Lødemel and Moreira 2014). In contrast, the human resource development model aims to enhance the qualifications of the long-term unemployed or those with reduced work capacity (Card, Kluve, and Weber 2010; Clasen and Clegg 2006). Scandinavia seems to adhere to the human resource development model, although no pure model exists (Card, Kluve, and Weber 2010; Clasen and Clegg 2006).

During the post-war era, Nordic labour-market policies were developed primarily from a Keynesian vantage point to stimulate the demand for labour and facilitate economic growth (Jochem 2011). Esping-Andersen (1990) described Nordic welfare states as characterised by universal benefits targeting large segments of the population. Subsequently, Nordic welfare policy gained legitimacy among the population as a whole (Johansson 2001). To sustain cost efficiency, Nordic welfare states sought to maintain a high level of employment among the working-age population (Jochem 2011), and subsequently developed comprehensive strategies to monitor and support the unemployed in close conjunction with labour market policy (Danforth 2014). As examples, the Norwegian welfare state regulates the demand side of the labour market through a dense wage structure and strong employee rights (Bergene and Hansen 2016), and the Danish 'flexicurity' model (flexibility plus security) facilitates hiring and firing of employees while providing a compensation rate for the unemployed that supersedes the Norwegian benefit in proportion to previous income (Oorschot and Abrahamson 2003).

Traditionally, the activation measures Norway has offered have included shorter skill-training courses and job-seeker activities for those temporarily out of work, and vocational rehabilitation for those unable to work because of illness or accidents (Halvorsen and Stjernø 2008). People with reduced work capacity also may be offered suitable training, either within or outside the ordinary education system (Halvorsen and Stjernø 2008). Activation measures for those with undetermined or severely reduced work capacity also have included a combination of skill enhancement in sheltered work with training in ordinary job settings, a trend that has yielded increased subsidies for employers who hire persons with reduced work capacity in ordinary jobs (Askim et al. 2010).

Since 2006, the Norwegian welfare benefit system has undergone an administrative reform to emphasise client activation and bureaucracy retrenchment (Department of Work and Inclusion 2006). These changes corresponded with activation reforms in several European countries during the same time period (Christensen, Fimreite and Lægreid 2007; Christensen and Lægreid 2011). Predominantly following the contractual model, these reforms were characterised by bureaucracy retrenchments, increased legislated activation requirements and non-compliance sanctions for larger segments of the unemployed population (Ervik, Kildal and Nilssen 2015; Jingjing, Nelson, and Stephens 2008; Jochem 2011). The objectives of the Norwegian activation reform were to enhance personalised support and to increase the number of benefit recipients entering the workforce (Department of Work and Inclusion 2006).

The first stage of this reform was a consolidation of the municipal social service agencies, the national unemployment agencies and the national administration of health and family benefits (Askim et al. 2010). In the second stage, various health-related benefits were consolidated into a single benefit, rendering a more comprehensive legal framework for those unable to work due to certified health reasons, but simultaneously legislating activation requirements for this entire group (Department of Work and Inclusion 2006). Similarly, benefits for single mothers with caregiver responsibilities were restricted in duration and tied to activation requirements (Halvorsen and Stjernø 2008). These alterations were substantiated by increased flexibility in service provision (Breimo 2016). Significantly, they involved a deregulation of the clients' stipulated rights to activation measures. Where activation measures previously had been tied to specific benefits, these reforms widened the scope of professional discretion available to determine suitable activation requirements for benefit recipients (Røysum 2012; Breimo 2016).

Aligning with international trends in activation policy literature, research on Nordic activation policies has concentrated on the increase in legislated sanctions for non-compliance and changing benefit structures. In particular, scholars have examined whether the Nordic welfare model as a whole can be assessed to have changed because of recent activation reforms. For instance, Kananen (2012) found that Finland legislates stricter sanctions for non-compliance than Sweden and Denmark, increasing social disparities. Similarly, Kvist and Greve (2011) used Denmark as an example to assert that the universality of benefits inherent in Nordic welfare policy is eroding, as labour market attachment increasingly is a condition for benefit eligibility.

As activation of the unemployed has been a continual component of the Norwegian welfare apparatus, research has focused increasing attention on the prevalence of targeting groups who have particularly poor labour-market attachment and may have substantial difficulties both fulfilling activation requirements and gaining a stable footing in the labour market. To counteract the concern for ill effects of non-compliance sanctions, policymakers have upheld that the contractual model combines personalisation of support to enable benefit-recipients to become self-reliant and coercive rationales (Ervik, Kildal, and Nilssen 2015). My research draws on data from an activation scheme that targets hard-to-employ clients through such a combination: personalised support, rigid activation requirements and sanctions for non-compliance.

2.3.   The qualification programme as the principle activation strategy for social assistance recipients in Norway

This dissertation is a qualitative study of social work in activation settings that draws upon data from 16 clients enrolled in a Norwegian activation scheme—the qualification programme—which was launched as part of the country's recent activation reform. The programme's main objective is to facilitate labour-market entry for long-term unemployed people with reduced work capacity who are ineligible for other welfare benefits (Social Services Law 2009). Other welfare benefits primarily include unemployment benefits, which usually have a duration of at least 80 weeks after loss of employment, and benefits pertaining to illness or caregiver responsibilities. Due to the exclusionary criteria, the target group is residual in the welfare system and largely consists of social assistance recipients; however, it is important to note that the activation scheme is not limited to social assistance recipients as long as all eligibility criteria are met (Social Services Law 2009).

The Social Services Act of 1991, the first Norwegian law to legislate the conditionality of benefits for this client group, signified the onset of legislated coercive measures for groups of benefit recipients throughout the 1990s and 2000s (Kildal 1999). This activation scheme was launched as part of the recent Norwegian activation reform to systematically obligate eligible clients to follow activation requirements and also obligate social agencies to offer close monitoring and tailor-made support (Department of Work and Inclusion 2006).

The qualification programme offers consecutive personalised support primarily for one year, with a maximum duration of 2.5 years (Social Services Law 2009). An example of the human resource development model, the qualification programme emphasises continual participation

in activation measures and focuses on clients' personal resources through skill training, usually short-term courses to prepare for unskilled labour or internships with ordinary employers (Circular on Social Services Law 2012). Potential activation measures also may include services aimed at enhancing clients' motivation and self-efficacy, for instance, through sheltered work, as well as treatment for health problems or substance abuse; however, training within the ordinary education system is not permitted, and similarly, language classes for immigrants usually are not provided (Circular on Social Services Law 2012).

Potentially eligible clients must document their work capacity through a procedural assessment in cooperation with the social agency. The social worker then assigns the client to personalised activation measures, ideally in close cooperation with the client. The corresponding benefit is paid as a monthly salary based on attendance, which implies a sanction of reduced pay proportional to unwarranted absences (Social Services Law 2009).

This activation scheme is well suited for investigating how social workers adapt enabling and coercive activation policy rationales for at least three reasons: First, the social services law was designed as a framework, yielding significant discretionary power to the social worker (Social Services Law 2009). Legislated within municipal social services, official regulatory documents emphasise the need for professionals with social work skills, implying the desired utilisation of social workers' decision-making and problem-solving strategies (Circular on Social Services Law 2012). Second, the programme was created to facilitate personalised support with rigid sanctions for non-compliance in order to encapsulate comprehensively each client's challenges and capabilities (Department of Work and Inclusion 2006), and thus, embodies both the enabling and coercive rationales and practices. Data from this activation scheme are likely to be well suited for examining how potentially contending policy rationales are enacted in social work with activation of hard-to-employ clients. Third, because the client group is residual in the welfare state and not considered temporarily unable to work due to certified health reasons, which would constitute eligibility for other benefits, the clients ability to become self-reliant through personalized support is an attainable objective.

3. Research on social work in activation settings

I have contextualised my study within three strands of recent research on activation of social assistance recipients: studies of how social workers adapt to activation policies, studies of factors that may influence social work discretion and theoretical studies that explicate decision-making in social work. I emphasise the studies cited in my three research papers comprising this dissertation, which implies greater attention to Nordic studies and a review that will not be exhaustive of the entire body of research in these areas.

Further, I have contextualised my dissertation within research on activation of clients receiving social assistance benefits and theoretical studies of social work discretion for two reasons. First, nations differ widely in how they categorise people outside the labour market as ill, disabled or unemployed (Card, Kluve, and Weber 2010), and activation requirements and benefit systems vary accordingly. Activation requirements are continually converging to gradually streamline both available services and obligations across groups of benefit recipients (Lødemel and Moreira 2014), yet, a review that includes significantly different categorizations of benefit recipients risks being too simplistic or arbitrary.

Second, and more important, I have narrowed my inclusion of studies to social assistance recipients because this client group exists in all welfare states and is primarily characterised by ineligibility for other benefits. Consequently, people who receive social assistance benefits fall into this category due to rights and characteristics they lack, rather than those they have. They subsequently constitute a residual group of beneficiaries whose rights, needs and obligations are not clearly defined or regulated and who justify, and perhaps necessitate, the social worker's considerable discretion. As these features of the client group and the subsequent scope of discretion is a significant reason for my research on clients in the qualification programme, my study's contribution also will be limited to activation of those in this target group. For these reasons, I omit research studies on social work discretion specific to related fields, such as child protection, elderly care or activation of those receiving disability or unemployment benefits.

My dissertation shares perspectives that often are ascribed to street-level bureaucracy research, which developed during the past three decades around the argument that policy is, in fact, implemented through day-to-day practices of street-level staff (Lipsky 2010). An important researcher in this arena, Michael Lipsky (2010), asserted that across different kinds of organizations and in different professions, street-level bureaucrats often operate under remarkably similar conditions, developing similar coping behaviours as they manoeuvre

vague legislation that often contradicts organisational or policy objectives. My research shares the premise that social work in activation settings involves adapting and merging potentially contending rationalities into coherent practices; however, unlike traditional street-level bureaucracy research, my work delimits the analytic perspective to an examination of how activation policy rationales are implemented rather than paying great attention to elements of the organisational context, such as organisational routines or staff members' coping behaviour (Thorén 2008).

In an American activation context, Evelyn Brodkin conducted several studies employing the street-level bureaucracy perspective (Brodkin 2011; Brodkin and Kaufman 2000; Brodkin and Majmundar 2008). She discovered that objectives of services may be neglected due to lack of resources, and bureaucrats may elicit coping behaviours that contradict policy objectives to comply with parameters of organisational achievement. Also, investigating values of street-level practice, Weaver and Hasenfeld (1997) utilised the street-level bureaucracy perspective to suggest that informal norms and values operating in organisations may reflect the public's moral assumptions about client groups.

Recent studies of social work in activation settings follow related lines of enquiry, exploring social workers' experiences in implementing activation policies and the influence of the organisational context on discretionary practices, though usually focusing on either of these perspectives. A strand of research concentrates on social workers' experiences in determining and enforcing activation requirements, following the restructuring of welfare objectives from income provision to facilitating self-sufficiency. This research focuses particular attention on social workers' experiences and opinions about enforcing sanctions and promoting acquisition of employment rather than taking a presumed holistic view of clients' needs.

Some studies within this research conclude that social workers have ethical reservations about promoting work-related incentives for disadvantaged clients (Caswell and Høybye-Mortensen 2015; Kjørstad 2005; Røysum 2012). According to these studies, social workers find having to determine rigid activation aims and enforce sanctions as ethically challenging, particularly with clients who may have difficulties fulfilling rigid obligations. In addition, social workers report that a focus on activation for this group may impair their follow-up with these clients, which social work training ideally emphasises as comprehensive (Caswell and Høybye-Mortensen 2015; Kjørstad 2005; Røysum 2012).

These studies align with research that juxtaposes the foundational arguments of political/organisational objectives with the professional values of social work, which can be

contradictory and may constitute paradoxes for front-line workers (Caswell and Høybye-Mortensen 2015; McDonald and Marston 2006; Fernandes 2015). Finding that social workers may experience a lack of autonomy due to organisational mandates, Marston and McDonald (2012) argued that social work theory and literature should better acknowledge that organisational constraints usually tend to restrict the social worker's ideal helper role. Similarly, Fernandes (2015) found that activation schemes for immigrants and people with reduced work capacity in Norway, as outlined in policy documents, may contradict social work's inherent empowering intentions. Correspondingly, Van Berkel, Van der Aa and Van Gestel (2010) found that activation work requires a reconsideration of the competency and skills that professionals should possess in order to enhance clients' labour-market entry. In different ways, these studies assert uncertainties as to whether social workers' values, competence and skills are coherent with and can be exercised within the means and ends of activation practices.

Other scholars have examined social workers' attitudes towards the client group, assuming that attitudes may influence encounters between clients and professionals, as well as service outcomes. Both Nordic and international studies exploring social workers' attitudes towards long-term unemployed clients assert that a majority of social workers view this client group as holding great responsibility for their situation (Dunno 2013; Kallio, Blomberg, and Kroll 2013; Meeuwisse, Scaramuzzino, and Swärd 2011;). These studies, primarily employing written questionnaires as data sources, suggest fatalistic attitudes incoherent with studies that have found that social workers experience ethical qualms about posing activation requirements and administering sanctions towards the same client group.

One reason for this dissonance in the literature may be that the strengths and weaknesses of the studies' data sources—interviews versus questionnaires—may have influenced the results. For instance, social workers may reflect more thoroughly on their attitudes in interviews, or conversely, they may express less politically correct attitudes in anonymous questionnaires. In addition, the studies asserting social workers' fatalistic attitudes towards clients generally are more recent, suggesting that ethical concerns relating to enforcement of activation requirements may be giving way to cynical attitudes as a coping behaviour.

We may contextualise these diverging conclusions with studies that examine the influence of organisational norms on discretionary practices. Within this strand of research, sanctions for non-compliance are a recurring concern, and studies assert that organisational culture influences social workers' leniency toward their clients. For instance, Liljegren (2012)

compared two agencies dealing with similar clients in the same Swedish municipality, with only slightly different organisational objectives. The study found that social workers were more approving of sanctions if they were integrated into their organisational objectives and practices.

According to Raeymaeckers and Dierckx (2012), a supportive work environment increased social workers' confidence and autonomy in decision-making. Confident social workers in a supportive environment stated that they often sought to enable clients and were lenient in exerting sanctions, whereas those who lacked such support exercised a more disciplinary, fatalistic approach with rigid sanctions for non-compliance. Therefore, we may infer that clients may receive different treatment depending on their social workers' organisational culture. To provide a different systemisation of the influence of attitudes on practices, Djuve and Kavli (2015) employed Le Grand's (2003) typology of case workers as rule-oriented or client-oriented. These typologies cohere with results from a UK study by Fletcher et al. (2016) asserting that bureaucrats subscribe to the dichotomous narratives of clients as either victims of society or holding great responsibility for their reliance on welfare benefits. Similarly, Nybom (2013) found that social workers' normative assumptions about client groups were related to service outcomes: Younger clients more often received courses aimed at quick labour-market entry, whereas older clients more often received training, and men faced stricter activation requirements than women.

A few UK studies examine personalisation of activation measures contextualised within organisational objectives. Both Fletcher (2011) and Carter and Whitworth (2015) express concerns that personalisation of services may allow differentiation of clients on terms contrary to clients' personal needs. Both studies assert the risk of discriminatory treatment toward hard-to-employ clients, as those closer to successful employment receive priority. As a nuance to this assertion, a UK study investigating personalisation of services through recorded social work conversations concluded that social workers also deploy conversational techniques to match clients' skills with activation measures (Toerien et al. 2013). Ulmestig and Marston (2015), comparing the significantly different benefit structures and activation measures of Sweden and Australia, found that young social assistance recipients in both welfare states were unknowledgeable about their rights and obligations, implying that flexible service provision may make it more difficult for clients to adequately express needs or wishes for personalised support, and affirming the potential for discriminatory practices. Together,

these studies call for a continued investigation of both appropriate and inappropriate differentiation of clients in personalisation of support.

Despite social works' emancipatory ideals, research in the field so far has paid limited attention to the emancipatory potential inherent in enabling clients towards labour-market inclusion through personalised support. Some studies assert that increased participation through activation processes may enhance self-efficacy, and in some cases, employability (Cheung 2016; Malmberg-Heimonen 2015; Natland and Celik 2015; Rønsen and Skarphamar 2009), although the three Norwegian studies also point out that that the rate at which clients transition to employment is low, and suggest the need for improved understanding of how activation processes develop to enhance client outcomes.

Finally, a strand of theoretical studies articulate the underpinnings of decision-making in social work. Usually researchers theorise about decision-making within a rational choice paradigm, for example, by means of analytical models that depict various influential factors in the decision-making process that may be weighed rationally against each other. Some have discussed risk assessment and intervention, such as threshold decisions on whether or not to intervene (for example, see Graham et al. 2015; Graham et al. 2016; Killick and Taylor 2012).

Similarly, scholars have devised theoretical models to consider various options for intervention that may yield suitable or undesirable outcomes (Taylor 2012; Taylor and McKeown 2013; Wallander 2012). Palinkas (2014) discusses social workers' causal understanding of a client's problem complex, arguing for a quantitative model that social workers could use to make causal inferences about events and outcomes in problem-solving strategies. Depicting idealised realities, these studies imply the continual need for investigating decision-making in social work and for aligning theoretic and empirical studies on this topic to increase our understanding of discretionary practices.

Investigating social workers' exertion of coercive practices, several studies found that social workers differ in their attitudes towards clients as being responsible for their own situations and in their views about punitive practices. A more modest body of research examining how personalised support in activation processes may enable clients asserts that personalisation may yield both desired and unintended consequences. Room for personalisation of support may involve the potential for discriminatory practices and may contribute to clients' insecurities about their rights and duties. However, personalisation also employs social workers' motivational skills to involve clients in expressing their needs and determining comprehensive support and taking advantage of activation measures.

So far, coercive and enabling aspects of social work in activation settings have been primarily studied separately; however, I seek to augment our understanding of the nuances that may arise from the interaction of coercive and enabling policy rationales within the clients' activation processes.

Within the literature examining social workers' discretionary practices, scholars repeatedly advocate for explicating these practices to heighten our awareness of what they may entail (Daniel 2000; Evans and Harris 2004; Hyslop 2012; Jordan, Stråth, and Triandafyllidou 2003; Taylor and White 2001; Yalli and Albrithen 2011). Yet so far, rational depictions of ideal decision-making, with the social worker's individual agency as the point of departure, dominate theoretical discussions of discretionary practices. Empirical studies on what might influence discretionary practices generally draw upon social workers' experiences and opinions, either through interviews or questionnaires. These studies pay particular attention to the social workers' organisational context as influencing discretionary practices. Although these research methods and focal points provide insight into social workers' views and experiences regarding their agency, the studies are inclined to dichotomise social workers' practices at the borders of divergent policy rationales. Thus, they provide limited information about how social workers adapt to and merge these divergent rationales in activation processes. By concentrating on clients' consecutive activation trajectories as my analytic point of departure, I seek to go beyond social workers' experienced agency to investigate how enabling and coercive policy rationales merge to shape activation processes.

4. Methodological design and description of data collection

This dissertation is a qualitative study of social work practice. Depending on the line of investigation, qualitative methods are predominantly employed to yield in-depth descriptions of personal experiences or narratives regarding perceptions of phenomena (Dorner 2014; Gilgun 2015; Holstein and Gubrium 1997). These methodologies are equally salient in investigations of the social relations or contexts in which feelings and experiences are embedded and given meaning (Dorner 2014; Gilgun 2015; Holstein and Gubrium 1997). Because my aim was to investigate political rationales as manifest in activation processes, I needed methods of enquiry that could provide insight into activation processes as they evolve. Therefore, I chose to examine case files and to interview the social workers in charge of each case as two supplementary datasets. In this chapter, I describe my professional experience and relationship to this field of study, explain the processes for choosing the methodological design and selecting the cases and discuss how I prepared for and conducted the interviews. I provide a description of the general characteristics of each of the two datasets and account for limitations of the methodological design. Finally, I elaborate on the challenges to research ethics that arose during data collection and the communication of results.

4.1. Policy and practice—the macro- and micro-analytic trajectory

As a researcher investigating my own field of study and practice, it is methodically sound to clarify my own relationship to this subject matter (Kvale 2008; Probst 2015; Smith 2004). Trained as a social worker, I initially worked as a course provider, offering short, standardised courses purchased by the Norwegian Labour and Welfare Administration, similar to those offered to clients in the qualification program. I then worked in a social agency where I administered social assistance benefits to the client group targeted by the activation scheme this research investigates. Finally, I worked in the head department of the Norwegian Labour and Welfare Administration, where I participated in issuing governing documents for municipalities and counties regarding social assistance, assisted to develop legislative documents and prepared information for county administrations on developments in social assistance, among other duties. My analytic focus derives from a range of personal experiences in various aspects of this field, spanning working with clients, administering benefits and participating in policymaking. I seek to delineate practical implications of rationales that underpin policy developments to gain a better understanding of how they manifest in social work practice .

Conducting research in the field of one's own professional practice implies an insider's perspective with strengths and limitations. I discuss the implications for data collection in the section on conducting interviews below. Concerning conducting an analysis, particularly from the vantage point of the theoretical approaches I have employed, my professional background means that I am a part of the discourses I am investigating, which has implications for my position as a researcher (Andersen 1999). For instance, elements of practice such as routines and procedures—such as the quantity or regularity of social benefits or the content of application forms—remain unquestioned. Also, other underlying assumptions are taken for granted, such as which aspects of peoples' lives are revealed in the role of client. Although the social workers in fact would have given me information on topics relevant to such experiences that may have differed from my own views, such questions remained unasked. I also know how the values and theories of the social work profession are integrated in activation practices, and again, though potentially fruitful, such questions also remained unasked. A researcher with a background outside this field might gain insight into different aspects of how clients are addressed and monitored.

My experience from various areas of the field might counteract some of the limitations to this insider position. For instance, I do not assume that social workers generally hold a set of common values that underpin their practice, as some scholars seem to imply (Clark 2012; Gitterman and Knight 2013). I also am unlikely to assume the routines of my own social agency as the norm. Most significantly, my experience in policymaking has provided a bird's eye view of the interrelations between policy and practice, which has inspired this research. This perspective may entail a greater focus on social workers' reasoning, rather than, for instance, experiences and personal accounts. As this delineation from a macro to a micro perspective characterises my analysis in this dissertation, I will briefly explicate this analytic focus before going on to describe the data collection.

Some sociological methodologies examine the interrelations between macro- and micro-processes. For instance, intersectionality examines socially categorised aspects of individual identities as potentially oppressed and interrelated with hierarchies of power in society (Hancock 2007; Yuval-Davis 2006). In this dissertation, I sought to employ a methodical and theoretical design that would enable an investigation of micro-processes of social work practice as embedded in the macro-processes of socio-political developments in Norway. My literature review includes both comparative studies exploring developments of activation policy, as well as studies of client-centred practices of social work in activation settings. My

methodical and theoretical design examines client-centred practices as integral to discourses that contextualise and validate clients' and social workers' actions and decisions. Thus, both my choice of research methods and theoretical approaches are based on this premise.

4.2. Creating the methodological design

To capture activation processes as they evolved over time, I needed data sources that provided close insight into day-to-day work and the consecutive decisions made. I also needed insight into the social workers' overall accounts of their decisions in activation processes and their perceptions and views on each client's activation trajectory. Consequently, I created a design that included complementary data from clients' case files and interviews with the social workers in charge of each case. I selected 16 clients who were enrolled in the qualification programme between May 2011 and November 2012. My three research papers draw on these clients' case files and interviews conducted with the social workers assigned to these clients, a total of seven.

Qualitative data from case files and interviews occasionally has been utilised in social work research. Scholars have generally employed such methodological designs in the investigation of two main areas of practice: first, in researching institutional patterns of documentation as well as inherent presuppositions that institutions employ as significant to their work, and second, in research on child-protective services to gain insight into long-term developments of individual cases.

Studies of institutional logics and relevant bureaucratic practices used this methodological approach to assert that the bureaucratic tasks of documentation and recording the fulfilment of performance parameters may be prioritised at the expense of continual day-to-day care responsibilities (Novotná 2014; Taylor 2013). Others utilised similar data to explore conceptualisations of phenomena that are crucial to institutional perceptions of the client group and which are considered as vital to the delivery of services. For example, the design was used to examine the perception of 'adult protection' within adult safeguarding services in England (Sherwood-Johnson 2014), and also was employed to examine how social workers arrive at constructions of 'factual' incidents from accounts of clients and other involved parties in emergency social services (Räsänen 2012). Similarly, case files and interviews with social workers were used to explore how social workers accentuate and employ the cultural background of families in child protective services (Sawrikar and Katz 2014). These studies focus primarily on employing professional documentation and social workers' accounts to

uncover taken-for-granted logics that influence service delivery, but as a whole, they do not investigate consecutive, long-term developments in individual cases.

In research on child-protective services, a few studies utilised similar methods to explore long-term consequences of out-of-home placements, after children were placed in care (Farmer 2009). In a similar way, the design was used to uncover consequences for children and their families once children in out-of-home care were returned to their home environments (Farmer and Lutman 2014; Madden et al. 2012). These studies investigated long-term developments in individual cases, but focused less explicitly on professional discretion and practice.

As a methodological design, a combination of case files and interviews generally have been used to explore either discretionary practices or long-term developments in client trajectories. My research papers utilise this combination of methods to draw on elements from both. My intention was to exploit this design's potential to examine social work practice in a way that differs from most previous research. Although social work in activation settings has been explored through interviews and questionnaires with social workers and clients, the continual developments throughout clients' activation trajectories has been little explored. At the same time, I wanted to exploit the insight this design can provide into professional practice, both the continual decision-making processes and the consecutive interactions between social workers and clients in activation practices. Most significantly, because the design highlights both long-term developments in activation trajectories as well as professional decision-making and assessments, it is suited for gaining insight into how rationales of activation policy may shape social work practice.

4.3. Selecting cases

I conducted my study in conjunction with a cluster-randomised controlled trial evaluation of a skill development programme created by the Norwegian Labour and Welfare Administration and targeting social workers in the qualification programme (Malmberg-Heimonen 2015). Oslo and Akershus University College conducted the cluster-randomised controlled trial evaluation, which also had a qualitative part. The Norwegian Social Science Data Services approved the study as ethical, and provide permission to use fragments of the clients' case files and to interview clients and social workers. Because I wished to utilise case files for the entire period for which data could be collected, I requested and received permission from the Norwegian Labour and Welfare Administration to collect consecutive case file data.

The Norwegian Labour and Welfare Administration was responsible for implementing the skill development programme, and subsequently recruited agencies to the cluster-randomised controlled trial. Among Norway's 50 largest agencies invited to participate in September 2010, 18 accepted. In February 2011, all 103 social workers received the T1 (baseline) questionnaire and the consent form, and 99 responded. After social workers had completed the first questionnaire, the 18 agencies were randomised into experimental and control groups. Social workers recruited clients through written and oral information to take part in the study from April 2011 through November 2012. Altogether, 617 clients completed a quantitative baseline questionnaire and consent form. The questionnaire addressed participants' activities in the qualification programme, their unemployment and work history, their relationship with their social workers, and their views on the programme. Additional questions related to the clients' physical and mental health and self-efficacy beliefs (see Appendix 1). The cluster-randomised controlled trial is described in Malmberg-Heimonen (2015).

For this doctoral project, I selected two agencies from the nine in the control group, one in a large city and the other in a smaller rural town. My purpose in selecting two agencies was to avoid the disproportionate impact of a single agency's organisational culture on my results. I also wanted to ensure diversity in available activation measures and potential employers. I was careful to select agencies that received average scores on the initial questionnaires in order to strengthen the possibility that my analysis would draw on commonly occurring practices, and thereby reinforce the credibility and analytic generalisability of my results (Brinkmann and Kvale 2005; Kvale 1995). The cluster-randomised controlled trial already had designated a contact person at each agency, and I initiated contact in the summer of 2013, presenting my study in one to two phone calls. I then requested copies of case files for all consenting clients, which were sent by registered mail during the autumn of 2013. I stored the electronic case files on a bolted computer and the printed copies in a safe disposed by the cluster-randomised controlled trial, according to regulations.

I selected 20 cases from among the 44 case files I received. I included all cases in which the client had been enrolled in the qualification programme for at least six months during the appointed period, and one or two in which conflict situations had been salient or decisions had proven particularly complex, even if participation was shorter. I subsequently asked permission from the assigned contact persons to conduct interviews with the social workers responsible for each client, which they generously provided. Four clients had been monitored

by social workers who were no longer available; therefore, I reduced the study to include 16 clients with data consisting of both interviews and case files.

The 16 clients included five men and 11 women. Nine were between 30 and 40 years old, four were older than 40, and three younger than 30. Two out of three were first generation immigrants, most of them with a non-European origin. All immigrants had been in Norway for at least 10 years. Half of the clients had some short-term work experience, but none had been employed for longer than five years. All clients received social assistance benefits prior to attending the qualification programme.

Beyond long-term unemployment, few clients had characteristics indicating specific service needs. Two younger Norwegian clients had certified substance abuse issues, prompting the need for drug-related monitoring as part of their personalised activation programme. Language training was not permitted, which implied that immigrants in the programme would need sufficient communication skills to take advantage of courses, participate in sheltered work or take on ordinary internships. Except for the two clients with substance abuse issues, only three had medical problems contributing to their reduced work capacity. One of these was the only client in the study who worked part-time. None had education beyond high school accredited in Norway, and those with previous work experience had done unskilled labour. The primary reasons for granting eligibility for the qualification programme were poor labour market attachment, low certified skills and general difficulties entering the labour market.

4.4.   Utilising case files and conducting interviews

4.4.1. Utilizing case files

The selected case files were approximately 20 to 124 pages each. Two files were less than 20 pages, 11 were 25 to 35 pages; two were approximately 60 pages and one was 124 pages. Altogether, the case files included 579 pages, although these were electronic files in which the layout may have been somewhat compressed. The three larger case files also included periodical grants of social assistance benefits, which contained approximately one page of computer-generated standard text each. Grants for eligibility of participation in the activation scheme—a maximum of three per case—also contained about one page of standard text. Otherwise, the case files consisted of dense text written by the involved professionals. The 124-page case also contained some grants for stays at a homeless shelter paid by the social assistance agency. The clients' hand-written applications for social assistance benefits and

attached documentation, such as receipts, doctors' notes or account statements, were not included. To ensure confidentiality, I did not seek such documentation. Hand-written Post-its and other notes made by social workers were included.

I transcribed three recorded interviews myself, and left the remaining four to a transcriber who signed a declaration of confidentiality. The transcripts were word-for-word, including conversational indicators such as 'well', 'uh' or long pauses. The interview transcripts spanned 145 pages. I deleted the recordings and stored the transcripts on a bolted computer.

After selecting the cases, I carefully read each case file and made anonymous notes, summarizing the entries by month and referring to the client with first name initials and to work placements with nondescript labels. In these notes, I paid particular attention to assessments and conclusions. I was careful to include any clients' statements that were discussed, all assignments and tasks the clients had received through activation measures and the conclusions of all assessments, as well as all meetings and reports. I included page references to entries with longer passages referring to meetings or client conversations. For instance, my notes might read:

> January: Several absences, particularly on Mondays. Work placement at bakery terminated because of poor attendance. Entry regarding this (page x) states the main purpose of this placement as experience with solving work-oriented tasks and following routines (see entry page x). A conversation with client (page x) states that poor attendance is due to marijuana use. Follow-up meeting with sheltered work placement and client 17.01 is not recorded. Entry late January from conversation with client, client must re-establish contact with out-patient drug therapy if the program is to continue.

> February: Social worker notes client has poor attendance and will not receive pay. Notes attempts of trying to contact the client.

The summarizing notes structured the interview guide for the client-specific interview segment.

I approached the data as describing activation processes that developed chronologically, which provided direction both to my analytic strategy and my application of theory. This approach is distinct, and expresses some underlying presuppositions about the treatment of qualitative data. Qualitative researchers argue for carefully systematising data, for instance through coding software, to uncover frequently discussed topics (Aamland, Malterud, and

Werner 2012; Malterud, Siersma, and Guassora 2016). This way of treating qualitative data is well suited for thematic analysis, and may require several informants to gain credibility (Aamland, Malterud, and Werner 2012; Malterud, Siersma, and Guassora 2016). Yet, scholars also have argued that this approach may obscure individual experiences and social processes (Juritzen et al. 2017; Gilgun 2015). My analytic purpose was to examine developing activation processes rather than unique experiences; therefore, I chose to address both case file data and client-specific interview data as entire entities describing activation processes. I regarded the two as supplementary data sources for each case, with the general interview segment providing contextualising descriptions of practices.

The careful review of the case files gave me an in-depth knowledge of the occurrences and consecutive decisions throughout each case and a detailed overview for the initial analytical stages in the three research papers. Analysing the data, I continually went back and forth between the two data sources on each case. In the third research paper, I provided the anonymous notes of four cases to my co-author based on our discussions on which cases most explicitly exemplified enabling and coercive rationales. I then provided him with anonymised excerpts from specific cases.

4.4.2. Conducting interviews

I interviewed seven social workers in two separate agencies, who were in charge of between one and three clients each. I conducted the interviews in December 2013 and March 2014. The interviews, which were recorded, were approximately one and a half to three and a half hours in duration. Three interviews lasted approximately one and a half hours, two interviews lasted for about two and a half hours, and the remaining two interviews had a duration of approximately three hours and 15 minutes. The length of the interviews depended on how many clients the social worker had been responsible for, how closely the social worker had monitored each client, and how concise or elaborate they were in their accounts.

I divided each interview into two separate segments: a general segment and a client-specific segment. I conducted two pilot interviews by telephone, which included only questions not pertaining to specific clients. I interviewed two interviewees at separate agencies, which also participated in the cluster-randomised controlled trial. Some questions, such as whether the social agency differed from other agencies, were eliminated because social workers were not knowledgeable about those topics. Similarly, formulations such as 'how do you collaborate with the clients' proved confusing; therefore, I revised these formulations into statements such

as 'tell me about your cooperating with clients when you choose an activation measure'. The pilot interviews have been deleted.

The general interview segment consisted of questions intended to cause the interviewees to expound on how they conducted activation processes, particularly their decision-making (see Appendix 2). For example, the questions asked how the interviewees cooperated with clients to establish goals and what they emphasised when suggesting relevant activation measures. The interview guide also included some questions designed to illuminate what social workers emphasised in clients' activation processes, such as what they found most important about their work. This segment also included some questions about the social worker's case load and previous experience. These questions were primarily included in case interviewees with different professional backgrounds who proved to exercise their work differently. Most interviewees had a background in administering social assistance benefits and had worked at the same agency prior to the launch of the qualification programme. The few exceptions did not differ significantly in their answers either to the general interview segment or the client-specific questions.

The general interview segment had a twofold purpose: I wanted to explore both the social workers' ideals and goals in their work, as well as what they emphasised in cooperation with clients and what they considered significant to their decision-making in activation processes. I also tried to allow room for the social workers to discuss their work difficulties, but I did not prepare specific interview questions concerning dilemmas or difficult situations. As such topics often are more accurately explicated through concrete examples (Kvale 2006) and as such questions might cause the interviewees to feel uncomfortable or criticised, I concluded that these topics would be better addressed through the client-specific segment. The general interview segment provided insight into the interviewees' everyday practices and their priorities with clients throughout activation processes. I also found that the general interview questions made the interviewees more comfortable, and they may have felt criticised or invaded if I had asked only client-specific questions, which may have caused them to speak less freely. Therefore, the general interview segment is likely to have enriched the client-specific interview segment as well.

I utilised each client's case file as a foundation for the client-specific interview segment. My main purpose in this segment was to enquire about lines of reasoning behind conclusions and decisions, which usually were not expounded on in the case files. I also wanted explanations of any instances that left too much room for interpretation.

In order to understand how the social worker viewed the case, I always introduced this segment by enquiring how the social worker would describe the client's overall activation trajectory. To my surprise, this question tended to initiate a semi-structured narrative on the case, and the occurrences, considerations and assessments involved. I usually quietly kept track of the points of enquiry in the interview guide, ensuring that the social worker included them. In some instances, I brought up activation measures or decisions that the social worker had not touched upon; otherwise I maintained a passive role.

Holstein and Gubrium (1997) describe the interview as an interaction or conversation between interviewer and interviewee. To me, this means being conscious of how I facilitate the interview as a conversation partner, and thus, I set up the conversation to avail as comprehensive and detailed information as possible. As a social worker, I have experience in administering social assistance benefits, and as I interacted with the interviewees, I chose to indicate that I could relate to their views or statements. When introducing each interview, I briefly explained my background. I explained that I examined discretionary practices in activation work and I wished to extend my knowledge about their monitoring the clients beyond what was recorded in the case files. The interviewees appeared to recognise that they were speaking to a fellow social worker . For instance, they might remark, 'In the old days we wrote social reports, didn't we', or 'You and I have good self-awareness' [as opposed to clients], or 'You know how the rules for [that benefit] work'.

With my expressed purpose of producing knowledge for the field of social work and explicating the reasoning involved, I found the shared context advantageous to encouraging the interviewees to expound on their actions. I employed my experience to make the conversation as in-depth as possible about the details of follow-up conversations with clients, meetings with course providers, as well as the reasoning behind assessments and activation measures. This narrowed the conversation towards the specifics of the events discussed perhaps at the exclusion of the interviewees' general experiences and opinions and what they would have liked to communicate. For instance, in the general interview segment, interviewees were prone to give examples of success stories, a pattern established in related research (Thorén 2008). Although I did not interrupt such accounts, I also did not pursue them and directed the conversation back to more detailed descriptions of the social workers' everyday work. However, social workers who did not monitor their clients very closely were less elaborate and may have benefited from interviews focusing more on their general views .

The shared context for the conversation rendered two main practical implications: professional accuracy and professional subtext. Professional accuracy involved asking probing questions to explicate the social worker's retrospective line of reasoning. For instance, the interviewee might say:

> Interviewee [about the procedural form for assessing work capacity]: But I think it is an important document because it says something about…about the life situation, right, both health and the client's resources and—did you make them and do you know—

> Interviewer: Yes I did. But it would be useful if you explain in a bit of detail how you use them yourself.

> Interviewee: But we, we have been drilled in these assessment forms. Not to boast, but I think we make fairly good assessments. We have been helping out the temporary disability teams with these cases that are exceptions from the four-year rule. So they become good assessment documents.

> Interviewer: That I can believe. But you write them mostly for others, then, to be used later. You don't utilise them much in your work.

> Interviewee: My experience is, when I have a new client and we have had all these conversations and are done with this assessment form, and I read it to the client. Things can be, it's sensitive. It won't, it shan't, it shouldn't be put emphasis on. It contains things that are negative to the client, right. It's like how it's…but I still think it shows 'Yes this is me', and 'this is what I need', because that's in the summarising question at the end, right?

> Interviewer: They recognise themselves and it's a way of making their situation systematic?

> Interviewee: And I always ask if it's okay if I send it to the course provider to give them the basic information…But it's also for the clients, not just for us, because they tend to think we have covered a lot when we go through the form.

This exchange demonstrates both the strengths and limitations of the precision that characterised my interview interactions. I did not focus on the forms themselves because I had

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used them and did not need the social worker to explain them to me. A strength of my experience was that I could pose quite focused enquiries; a clear limitation was that these enquiries structured the social workers' explanations. If I had needed to ask about the form itself, a different conversation would have ensued, potentially yielding useful information through an outsider perspective. However, I was clearly focused on the function of the assessment forms in the work: On how they informed the social worker's decisions, shaped the working situation between client and social worker, and were utilised as a tool in the activation process.

Similarly, when a social worker said a client was sent to 'Work and Opportunities', I knew she was referring to a short course focused primarily on job-seeking activities. Therefore, I could ask about why the client was sent there and the clients' participation, rather than asking for an explication of the course content.

The second implication of my social worker background on the interview data-gathering was professional subtext. For instance, I could sense when the social worker might be omitting something potentially informative because of professional etiquette, and I could pose a probing question to clarify the issue. For example, a social worker described cooperating with a client with uncertified alcohol issues:

> Interviewee: She said [her current work load] was enough, that she couldn't take on a tighter schedule. And then I say, that it is important, that if she feels that she is ill and needs help—she wouldn't admit that she had an alcohol problem. She wouldn't. But she has been observed, right, like, she has been observed. Drinking.
>
> Interviewer: Yes, by you [employees at the agency]?
>
> Interviewee: Yes.
>
> Interviewer: Mmm.
>
> Interviewee: But she—
>
> Interviewer: Outside of working hours sort of?
>
> Interviewee: Yes.
>
> Interviewer: Elsewhere.

Interviewee: Yes. So then I talked about temporary disability benefits, right, that she may be eligible for that, if she is ill. Because I think it was very important that [client] had someone to talk to; there is so much history there, so much in her home life also.

Having worked in a social agency, I intuitively recognized similar ways in which social workers referred to alleged events and information. Trying to be unobtrusive, I chose to make some assumptions clear and invite the interviewee to confirm or refute them, rather than explicate where, by whom and in what state the client had been observed. An interviewer with a different background might have had a more intrusive manner or might have missed these indications altogether, and therefore may have failed to uncover the effect of potential alcoholism on the case, which was not clearly specified in the file.

4.5. Accounting for characteristics of the two datasets; limitations of the design and credibility

For my analysis, I utilised case files and interviews as equivalent data sources; however, I must account for the characteristic differences in each and how they supplemented each other to inform my analysis. In this section, I describe these characteristics and discuss the limitations of my methodological design.

The case files had characteristics that sociologist Dorothy Smith, known for studying institutional discourse and practice, describes as significant to institutional texts (Smith 1993, 2005). In her investigations of how people's concerns are incorporated into institutional practice, Smith (1993, 2005) described the way in which professionals write texts to inform and coordinate professional behaviour and to include information need to keep appropriate stakeholders informed. Reading the case files, I soon discovered that some incidents were documented more thoroughly than others. Well documented entries referred to interactions with other professionals, such as meetings with course providers and potential employers, or instances in which legal action or reactions from superiors might have been required, such as rigid conflict situations. Incidents that might have yielded formal reactions, such as sanctions, were usually briefly noted. For instance, the number of times a social worker attempted to contact a client was usually documented, because clients could be sanctioned for not following up. Clients were required to complete monthly attendance forms, and failure to do so in a proper manner was documented.

A significant result of this pattern of documentation was that notes from conversations between the social worker and client were brief, often containing only conclusions. Case files

often provided little or no information about the views, wishes and reasoning that had led to decisions or conclusions, and very rarely included clients' views and opinions. As professional interactions always entail an asymmetric power relationship, social workers are likely to have greater opportunity to initiate proposals for action and steer the dialogues with clients in a particular way, possibly dismissing the clients' initiative. More detailed documentation of the clients' views would have had great importance for understanding the interviewees' immediate considerations. When I described the cases in my research papers, an institutional perception of the client informed my analysis; however, it is impossible to know the clients' wishes, views, behaviour and opinions beyond what the case files reveal or what the interviewed social workers stated. This clear limitation of the data was expected, but more extensive than I had imagined.

Some case files also included information that might at some point be relevant, but without any clarifications as to why. For instance, a procedural form at the termination of a programme in which a client had participated for the maximum time allowed, read: 'The oldest son has contacted the social agency and stated that she drinks a lot on the weekends'. Heretofore the client's drinking had not been documented throughout her entire programme.

In addition to such narrow or suggestive information, some case files also contained vague suggestions of relevant activation measures that were mentioned only briefly. A weekly schedule for a young client with current substance-abuse issues read: 'Following up with municipal ADHD team and curative out-patient drug therapy at least once a week. Participate at [sheltered work placement] every day. Cooperation meeting with all involved [tentative date].' At the back of this printed schedule, handwriting reads: 'Math adult secondary education [social worker] checks, dentist, general physician, [different work placement] start the middle of August, interview July?'

Similarly, another case file included one notation that the client seldom was present at his internship at a nursing home, an activity that also had not been recorded as part of his qualification program. The file subsequently stated that the client would be sanctioned accordingly, but also that his absences might indicate mental challenges or substance abuse. Earlier, the case file noted suspicions of both, although neither were certified. The internship was not mentioned again and sanctioning was not exercised.

The narrow or suggestive information in the case files had implications for my initial analysis and interview preparations. Because I was unsure of the case file's accuracy, any summarising notes had to be detailed and factual. Also, the client-specific interview guide contained only

factual cues such as 'nursing home?' rather than questions such as why the client had considered an internship at a nursing home. Thus, the social workers could explain any reasoning behind this decision, contextualize it as part of the overall activation trajectory and explicate any subsequent steps.

This way of utilising case file data to outline the interviews may have posed a limitation to the process. Although I allowed the social workers to narrate freely the incidents and developments of each case, I was restricted from preparing probing questions regarding their decisions and perspectives. A greater reliance on the accuracy of the case file data would have given me the opportunity to take a more active role when enquiring about decision-making, and in turn, may have yielded more comprehensive information about the social workers' reasoning. On the other hand, this limitation may have had the benefit of preventing my speculations from impacting the interview interaction. In the interviews, social workers often could contextualise narrow or suggestive information as I brought it up. Usually, activation measures mentioned only once were never realised, and social workers had little recollection as to why.

Although the client-specific interview-segments were based on the case files, which were the foundation for my analysis, my interpretation of the data moved back and forth between both datasets. A strength of the case file data was their detailed information on the activation trajectory from day to day. The strength of the interviews was their qualitatively rich, subjective descriptions of social workers' discretion. The interviews also illuminated the substantial elements in determineing goals and select activation measures and described the cooperation between client and social worker. Consequently, I believe the two data sources were highly complementary, within certain limitations.

4.5.1. Methodological limitations

My methodological design also brought some limitations to the study. The accounts social workers provided in the interviews coincided well with the case file data and were rich and apparently well-founded. However, the social workers were reconstructing their reasoning in retrospect. Although case file notations and case outcomes substantiated their explanations for their reasoning, considerations and questions that occurred during the course of each client's activation process could have been obscured.

Because I utilised case files as the basis for designating which social workers to interview, the number of interviewees was slightly lower than I initially had hoped. This limitation was

primarily due to my selecting two agencies and the fact that the social workers involved in four cases were no longer available for interviewing. I interviewed most of the social workers working with the qualification programme in the two agencies. An equal number of cases from three agencies might have yielded more interviews, either substantiating or nuancing my analysis.

A more significant, methodological limitation is that I did not interview clients. My goal was to investigate how policy rationales were manifested in social work in activation settings, and thus, I selected social workers and case files as my primary data sources. Originally, I had set out to interview clients, but ethical considerations and the fact that case files and social worker interviews provided a large body of data, led me to decide to omit client interviews. In retrospect, data from client interviews or focus groups would have nuanced my findings and also added new vantage points for my analysis.

4.5.2. Generalisability and credibility

The terms validity and generalisability are yardsticks of quantitative research, from which my project emanates (Malmberg-Heimonen 2015). In qualitative research, these concepts are often contested, and sometimes replaced by concepts like credibility and transparency (Gubrium and Holstein 2000, Kvale 2008). Qualitative researchers employing a discourse perspective may even seek to unsettle the premise upon which these terms rest: that there is a clear, objective relationship between an objective reality and how the research describes that reality (Hook 2007; Järvinen and Mik-Meyer 2003). My theoretical position implies that reality is understood through discourse, and thus calls for transparency in order for the reader to take a critical look at the analysis, including any biases.

To ensure credibility and transparency in my research, I have thoroughly described how data were created and collected, outlined my theoretical perspective and accounted for the analytic process. The epistemological vantage-point of qualitative research also calls for an explanation of my position as a researcher, to ensure credible and trustworthy assertions (Dorner 2014; Kvale 1995). I have addressed credibility and transparency in my choice of theoretical perspectives that may elucidate abstract rationales inherent in everyday practices, in my purposeful selection of agencies and cases from a larger sample and in the presentation of results in which I have attempted to show how the individual cases express different configurations of the overarching activation policy rationales. Therefore, seeking to ensure

credibility and transparency can be seen as part of the continuous choices made throughout the research process. Thus, I have assured the rigour of my research in a qualitative methodological tradition.

My research papers address practical ramifications of political rationales prominent in Nordic activation policy, particularly targeting hard-to-employ clients who receive close monitoring. Consequently, my study offers knowledge concerning activation services in which these rationales are salient. Because a rigorous sampling process was conducted before collecting data and because the rationalities I examined are an integral part of social work in activation settings, my results may be useful for understanding commonly occurring consequences of the interaction of coercive and enabling rationales in activation processes.

Ensuring credibility and transparency also includes reflections on ethical aspects, providing insight into whether and how such challenges may have influenced the data collection. The next section describes these concerns.

4.6. Ethical challenges conducting the research

Two ethical challenges were salient for this research project. The first challenge was to treat the social workers with respect while critically examining their practice, which arose during data collection, in the choice of analytic strategies and in the writing for publications. The second challenge was to present results in an illuminating manner without indiscreetly exposing social workers or clients. This ethical challenge was especially relevant because case file data include highly sensitive information and my research used the data in a context not originally anticipated when the information was recorded. I was particularly mindful of this challenge while writing research paper 3, which describes individual cases in detail. Neither social workers nor clients may have detailed knowledge or recollection of an entire case file, although either may recognize incidents recorded. In theory, a sequence of events may resonate with clients' experiences, and they may wonder if their own stories are being exposed. Although social workers are familiar with data being investigated, their day-to-day work should be re-contextualized in research in a manner which, although critical, would be experienced as adequate and unbiased.

I did my best to ensure that any information specific to individual clients, such as medical conditions or family details, were omitted. However, I chose to retain real cases in my three research papers because constructing 'dummy' cases may have been influenced by my

particular analytic interest. Moreover, I was careful to assure that the cases contained events, or sequences of events that I considered to be commonly occurring, particularly when selecting the cases for my third research paper. However, this process may cause activation participants in general to see the recorded experiences as familiar. The only way to address this issue was engage in a balancing act when publishing results: representing clients fairly and discretely, focusing on the social workers and wording case descriptions carefully to reflect the events and assessments without unnecessary disclosure. For instance, I refrained from using a word like 'unmotivated', even if the social worker described the client that way.

To describe further how I have addressed the ethical challenges in this research, I employ Guillemin and Heggen's (2009) concept of ethical mindfulness, which consists of four factors: (1) to be alert to ethically challenging moments during the research process; (2) to acknowledge uncomfortable feelings as indicative of an ethical dilemma; (3) to articulate the components of the particular challenge and (4) to reflect on how to ensure ethical rigorous research.

Researchers' ethical responsibility often has been conceptualised as moral and professional obligations towards informants during data collection. Researchers are expected to establish trust so that subjects experience data collection as less invasive and understand the purpose of the research (Brinkmann and Kvale 2005; Holstein and Gubrium 1997). During this work, I felt uncomfortable that the information I had gathered while behaving in a modestly encouraging and reassuring manner would be used in ways the social workers could not foresee. Thus, I identified my first ethical challenge: to provide transparency in the interviews while critically analysing the rationalities involved in the social workers' practices. Brinkman and Kvale (2005) emphasise that a researcher's attempt to make interviewees feel comfortable and gain their trust also holds ethical concerns because trust is required to uncover data while inflicting the least possible discomfort. However, the researcher attempts to elicit trust to gain access to richer data, and may thus give a misleading or incomplete impression of the intentions behind the research (Brinkman and Kvale 2005). Hammersley (2014) extends this line of argument to describe data collection in research that employs discourse analysis or related theoretical approaches. He argues that such theoretical approaches will not be transparent to the interviewees because they involve investigating taken-for-granted logics, perceptions and perspectives in the interviewees' accounts (Hammersley 2014). This critique is salient for my research.

During the interviews, I tried to make the interviewees comfortable through a withdrawn but sociable demeanour, showing recognition of the situation when appropriate. I might say that I recognised a certain challenge from the case file or a similar occurrence from my own work in administering social assistance benefits. On the whole, the interviewees appeared relaxed and comfortable, and it is unlikely that what came to be the critical aspects of my analysis was apparent to them, although my selection of cases that they probably viewed as complex may have elicited their concern. For instance, at the conclusion of one interview, a social worker, clearly dejected, stated: 'These were only the tough clients, these clients that I have not gotten anywhere'. I explained that I had selected cases spanning a long time period and involving several consecutive decisions, which possibly included clients facing particularly difficult situations. (To be fair, however, the cases I selected did not exclude clients with quick labour-market entry, as only three of the individuals among the pool of 44 cases gained short-term employment immediately following the qualification programme, and I included them all.)

The social worker repeated her statement as we walked to the next social worker's office for another interview, where her colleague reassured her. Another social worker had taken over a case in which the file indicated the client had not been monitored for a long period during her qualification programme. When I asked what had happened during that time, the social worker seemed uncomfortable as she remarked that this should not have happened. I replied with a smile that clients who avoid the agency may easily disappear in the crowd, and the interview continued in a friendly manner.

Despite my attempted assurances, my analysis was indeed critical, not towards each social worker, but towards how objectives and modes of governance within activation policy appear in everyday practices. To address this dilemma, I have attempted to convey the social workers' statements honestly and to contextualise them in a manner that is sensitive to their apparent intentions and the original context. I have carefully presented statements and actions within the context of overarching activation rationales, giving critique where critique is due.

Another ethical challenge was to protect sensitive data during analysis and communication of results. My data included records of sensitive, potentially difficult conversations and events. Moreover, professional documentation often describes tensions between client and professionals in detail, but may omit clients' views, opinions and behavior in interactions where conflicts are not salient. As my analysis indicated, clients' challenges in performing tasks may be emphasised, and their strengths and resources described in less detail. In my research papers, private case files were publicly exposed in ways that could not have been

predicted when they were written. Moreover, I have no control over the clients' awareness of how their activation trajectories were recorded in the case files. An analytic strength of the data is that we can assume that the files contain what the social workers considered to hold professional significance. Yet, the case files portrayed clients in a potentially disproportionate way that clients might not be aware of or even recognise were they to read them. In describing results, I have taken care to contextualise clients' behaviour within social work practice and not to expose details with no analytic importance, such as conflicts between social worker and client or the details of evasive client behaviour.

As I have noted in describing the limitations of this work, my original research design included client interviews, assuming they would provide richer data through the juxtaposition of different perspectives on the same activation trajectories. However, after collecting case file and interview data, I was advised that these data sets would be sufficient for my doctoral project, and I considered the implications of both strategies. Client interviews would have provided valuable insights, particularly concerning any possible contradictions or consistencies between clients' and social workers' views on case decisions and developments. Comparing and contrasting clients' and social workers' reasoning may have yielded insight into how each framed clients' needs and the aims of their activation trajectories, such as employability enhancement.

In the end, I chose not to pursue client interviews based on my analytical focus and subsequent ethical considerations, although that decision is worthy of criticism. My analytic perspective concentrated on discourses and rationales of social work, with particular attention to how social workers' professional views and decisions are embedded in discourses. Accordingly, social workers and data sources that could illuminate their practices were primary. Interviewing clients would likely have nuanced that analytic focus.

Social work being the primary object of analysis rendered ethical issues concerning whether to conduct client interviews. In particular, issues of informed consent influenced my decision not to interview clients directly. Clients provided formal consent to participate in potential interviews and for researchers to access their case files. However, scholars of qualitative research have discussed formal consent as an ethical warranty of the research, arguing that consent should be regarded as an ongoing concern throughout the data collection process and communication of results (Juritzen, Grimen, and Heggen 2011). Indeed, the increasing emphasis on user involvement in research projects may arise in part from researchers advocating these concerns (South et al. 2016).

In my case, clients received consent forms in the fall of 2010, and my final interview with a social worker occurred in early 2014. Clients were informed about the original research project by their social workers, within a professional setting in which lengthy documents containing intricate language are not uncommon. Thus, a consent form could easily meld into the lot. Even though I considered the clients to be fully informed, I realised that they could have limited recollection of the details of the consent three and a half years later.

Moreover, the social workers were interviewed in their professional capacity and were informed of the pending interviews through their workplace before I approached them. The clients would have been interviewed as ordinary people—although about their views and experiences as clients—and asked about highly sensitive information that had been communicated under professional, confidential circumstances in which the client should have had little concern about disclosure. I had no way of knowing whether the clients had read the information in their case files, but given my work experience in a social agency, I found it unlikely. This problem may have been solved by allowing clients to read my case file excerpts before consenting to an interview, but I feared that approaching them under those conditions would cause emotional distress, and doing so should require a solid foundation in the research design. As things were, I spared them from being faced with potentially quite intrusive interviews.

The other side of this argument, however, is that shielding vulnerable groups from participating in research may be counterproductive to gathering their insight. Those perceived as vulnerable , or those who find themselves in difficult life situations, may have limited resources at their disposal and fewer opportunities to voice their concerns. Moreover, their views and experiences may be little known, as they may differ from the commonplace. Consequently, the researcher's well-intended purpose of protecting presumably vulnerable people from potentially invasive processes may prevent us from drawing on their insights into their situations and what makes them vulnerable in the first place. In my case, clients' views may have been helpful for understanding how social workers conduct activation processes and could have informed well-founded critiques on social work in activation schemes. This limitation of my study is particularly valid because little research has been conducted with a design that combines these three sources of data; however, in the presumed best interest of my informants, I considered the sensitive nature of the data and the potentially intrusive interview process to carry more weight.

5. Theoretical approaches

In my dissertation, I investigate the governing of clients and social workers in individual activation trajectories from the epistemological vantage point of post-structuralism. Post-structuralism, an intellectual movement developed in Paris in the late 1960s, emphasises language as the expression of social dynamics and relations of power (Andersen 1999; Rose 1999). A comprehensive elaboration of this viewpoint, the Foucauldian theory of discourse, (explained below as an analytic strategy) comprehensively elaborates this view of language to include categorisations of people, social structures and what we rely on as knowledge (Andersen 1999; Foucault 1999). These matters are not static, but evolve through continual dynamics of power relations in society, and discourses expressed through language continually change through the refuting, affirming and reproduction of statements (Andersen 1999; Foucault 1999).

The post-structuralism position, then, entails a social science epistemology based on expressions of the discourses, and any scientific enquiry will rely on what is legitimised as knowledge within a given discourse (Andersen 1999; Foucault 1999). A purpose of research within post-structuralism is to destabilize and question taken-for-granted presuppositions and relations of power that give meaning to actions, statements and reasoning (Dean 2010a).

In addition, I employed Bakhtinian theory of dialogism, which also contextualises individuals' reasoning and actions within overarching ideas and rationales of a society or social environment, regards language as crucial to expressing these interrelationships and regards power structures as creating dynamics that develop these rationalities (Bakhtin and Holquist 1981). The theory of dialogism shares much of the post-structural scientific ethos, although it originated in a different scientific epoch. Two scholars who influenced the adoption of dialogism into post-structural enquiry are literary theorist Roland Barthes (2002) with his essay, *Death of the Author,* and Julia Kristeva (1986) with her concept of intertextuality.

I utilised the theory of dialogism in my first research paper in an attempt to explicate underlying legitimising and repressive forces within social workers' acts of discretion, as expressed through their language. In the second and third research papers, I utilised Foucault's concept of governmentality as the main theoretical approach, supplemented by his concept of discourse in my second research paper.

In the next sections, I expound on Bakhtinian theory of dialogism, including the concepts of centrifugal and centripetal forces. I then describe the Foucauldian theory of governmentality, supplemented by his theory of discourse analysis.

5.1. Bakhtinian analysis

Mikhail Bakhtin (1895–1975) was an interdisciplinary theorist who primarily influenced literary and linguistic theory. Because his theory of language encapsulates social aspects, his work has increasingly been utilised within the social sciences (Bell and Gardiner 1998; Smith 2001). In my first research paper, I employed the Bakhtinian concept of dialogism, as well as his related concepts of centripetal and centrifugal forces as analytic gateways for understanding decision-making in social work.

5.1.1. Dialogism—an exploratory pathway into decision-making in social work

Dialogism begins with the notion that any statement is a social product, and whether written or spoken, always has a dual social function (Bakhtin and Holquist 1981). On one hand, a statement expresses a complex social reality; on the other, as a social actor, it caters to different readers or listeners (Bakhtin and Holquist 1981). Sociologist Dorothy Smith used the latter perspective to underpin her research method, institutional ethnography (Smith 2005). With her notion of text as institutional actor (which I use to characterise my data in the description of my research methods), she utilised Bakhtin's concept of dialogism to describe the text as dialogic that serves a social function to communicate with various professionals and clients or patients (Smith 2005). However, the other aspect of dialogism—the statement or text as communicating a complex social context (Bakhtin and Holquist 1981; Todorov 1984)—is the analytic perspective I employ in my analysis.

Dialogism conceptualises a statement not as a pure reflection of a subjective experience, a viewpoint or a fact, but rather as an expression of subjective opinions or views as much as the social context in which it is embedded (Bakhtin and Holquist 1981). Bakhtin describes the dialogic aspects of any unit of language as follows:

> All words have the 'taste' of a profession, a genre, a tendency, a party, a particular work, a particular person, a generation, an age group, the day and hour. Each word tastes of the context and contexts in which it has lived its socially charged life; all words and forms are populated by intentions. Contextual overtones (generic, tendentious, individualistic) are inevitable in the word. (Bakhtin and Holquist 1981, 293).

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This viewpoint entails a concept of language as continually saturated with socially charged perspectives, presuppositions and assumptions. This conceptualisation allows for investigations into any unit of language as an expression of socially embedded views, professional judgements and presumptions, and as both contextualising and advancing lines of reasoning. Dialogism as analytic perspective starts from a concrete investigation of social practices, and utilises language as a means of accessing and examining different socially embedded views and presuppositions inherent in these practices. Dialogism then goes on to explore how different aspects of the socially embedded lines of reasoning and practices interact, as if in a dialogue, to continually develop the views and actions of the people who exercise these lines of reasoning and related practices. In my examination of social workers' reasoning in activation processes, the stratifying forces that continually drive any dialogic context or line of reasoning (described below) provided a way to extrapolate how clients' needs and capabilities interacted to continue to develop the social workers' decision-making throughout activation trajectories.

5.1.2. Centripetal and centrifugal forces, identifying processes of signification

The dialogue that comprises the social aspects of any unit of language continually develops through stratifying forces, equally visible in society at large and in delimited units of analysis, such as practices, texts or statements (Bakhtin and Holquist 1981; Todorov 1984). Any social context or line of argument within a social context is both structured and challenged through these stratifying forces (Bakhtin and Holquist 1981) and has several components that are either structured and substantiated by centripetal forces or disrupted by centrifugal forces. As we view social workers' decision-making processes through these conceptual lenses, we can uncover rationalities that act as these centripetal and centrifugal forces, shaping how decision-making develops.

Centripetal and centrifugal forces both structure and disrupt lines of reasoning. Centripetal forces designate whatever has normative or social credence in a society or social context, and also has authority to structure seemingly coherent lines of reasoning. As centripetal forces ascribe significance to some aspects of a situation, statement or context, they inevitably obscure whatever does not have such authority (Bakhtin and Holquist 1981). However, the obscured aspects remain to challenge, confuse or disrupt reasoning, and Bakhtin termed these as centrifugal forces (Bakhtin and Holquist 1981). He described their dynamic as follows:

At any given moment of its evolution, language is stratified not only into linguistic

dialects in the strict sense of the word (…), but also—and for us this is the essential point—into languages that are socio-ideological: languages of social groups, 'professional' and 'generic' languages, languages of generations and so forth. (…) Alongside the centripetal forces, the centrifugal forces of language carry on their uninterrupted work; alongside verbal-ideological centralization and unification, the uninterrupted processes of decentralization and disunification go forward. (…) Every concrete utterance of a speaking subject serves as a point where centrifugal as well as centripetal forces are brought to bear. The processes of centralization and decentralization, of unification and disunification, intersect in the utterance. (…) It is possible to give a concrete and detailed analysis of any utterance, once having exposed it as a contradiction-ridden, tension-filled unity of two embattled tendencies in the life of language. The authentic environment of an utterance, the environment in which it lives and takes shape, is dialogized. (Bakhtin and Holquist 1981, 271–72).

The concepts of dialogism and of centripetal and centrifugal forces allow us to explore how activation policy rationales as well as professional knowledge and views may saturate social workers' decision-making. Moreover, as centripetal and centrifugal forces may create certain dynamics in the social workers' reasoning, I drew upon Bakhtin's conceptualisation of such forces to explicate how social workers addressed the complexity of their clients' situations. Consequently, these forces illuminate the things to which social workers ascribed significance or insignificance in decision-making processes, and how different aspects of clients' needs and capabilities became significant and insignificant. Thus, my first research paper is quite descriptive of the aspects of clients' needs and capabilities that were considered significant or insignificant to the enabling activation processes.

Using the theory of dialogism, my analysis did not start from the question of how activation policy rationales shaped social work practice, but rather from the question of which rationalities underpinned social workers' decision-making. Rather than looking for specific instances of enabling or coercive decisions in the data, I investigated the activation processes as a series of decisions in which certain unknown rationalities provided structure and substantiated conclusions, and as a consequence, certain aspects of clients' needs and capabilities would be considered confusing or might be obscured. I found the theory of dialogism to be a fruitful analytic tool for investigating the complexity of decision-making and the social workers' rationalisation of their decisions, particularly the nuances and contradictions in their reasoning.

5.2. Foucauldian analysis

The Foucauldian theory of governmentality involves drawing on his analysis of power as productive. Power is not primarily a way of oppressing a natural human subject, but a way to direct the conduct of free subjects (Foucault and Faubion 2002; Foucault et al. 2007). My purpose in employing concepts of governmentality, supplemented by the concept of discourse, was to analyse how contending activation policy rationales are manifest in and produce social work practice and activation processes. Foucault summarised the essence of his analysis of power as productive in this way:

> I would like to say, first of all, what has been the goal of my work during the last twenty years. It has not been to analyse the phenomena of power, nor to elaborate the foundations of such an analysis. My objective, instead, has been to create a history of the different modes by which, in our culture, human beings are made subjects. My work has dealt with three modes of objectification which transform human beings into subjects. The first is the modes of inquiry which try to give themselves the status of sciences; for example, the objectivizing of the speaking subject in *grammaire générale*, philology, and linguistics. Or again, in this first mode, the objectivizing of the productive subject, the subject who labours, in the analysis of wealth and of economics. Or, a third example, the objectivizing of the sheer fact of being alive in natural history or biology. (…) Finally, I have sought to study—it is my current work—the way a human being turns himself into a subject. (Foucault 2000e, 326–27).

5.2.1. Theory of governmentality and pastoral power—analysing modes of governance in the exertion of welfare policy

The theory of governmentality, which describes a way of perceiving present forms of political governance, encompasses the interrelations between policy objectives and how they are institutionalised and practiced by individuals, such as professionals and people who are considered target-groups of political strategies (Cruikshank 1999; Dean 2010a). Governmentality theory has been used in a wide variety of research studies (see section 5.3), which take a similar viewpoint of political governance as shaping individual and group behaviour as people appropriate their own aims, capacities and knowledge (Dean 2010a, Foucault 2000a), thus facilitating a '…government of individuals by their own verity' (Foucault and Faubion 2002, 312). Foucault and his successors' descriptions of modes of

governance are salient in neoliberal policy discussions and can be utilised to analyse the interrelationship between the rationales of activation policy and practice.

Foucault began his research by conducting genealogic analysis to examine how institutional practices subjectified and controlled deviant groups (Foucault 1967; Foucault 1977/2012). He examined modes of power legitimised through reasoning and knowledge and manifest in social institutions such as prisons and psychiatric care (Foucault 1967; Foucault 1977/2012). Although his examination of the categorisation of certain states of mind and persons as mentally ill evolved, his work was equally an investigation of how rationality and sanity develops in continual contrast to phenomena categorised as mental illness (Foucault 1967).

Foucault's early investigations primarily examined modes of disciplinary power (Foucault 1967; Foucault 1977/2012). Although not the predominant analytic tool of this dissertation, my literature review demonstrates how research problematizes disciplinary power both as integral to neo-liberal governance and activation policies, a focus taken up in my third research paper. In the military, school, hospitals, workhouses and prisons, individuals are exposed to practices such as observation, examination and correction, which produce various responses, including resistance (Foucault 1977/2012). Much more commonly, however, institutional practices yield docile reactions, indicating individuals' willingness to subjugate themselves and to adapt to institutional demands (Foucault 1977/2012). Foucault (1983) did not regard power as concentrated in specific locations or certain actors, but rather, he argued for understanding power as being at play in any social relation or dynamic. He maintained that power should be analysed as relational, extending this analysis to the capillary nature of power where its effect is displayed:

> What is needed is a study of power in its external visage, at the point where it is in direct and immediate relationship with that which we can provisionally call its object, its target, its field of application, there—that is to say—where it installs itself and produces its real effects. Let us not, therefore, ask why certain people want to dominate, what they seek, what is their overall strategy. Let us ask, instead, how things work at the level of on-going subjugation, at the level of those continuous and uninterrupted processes which subject our bodies, govern our gestures, dictate our behaviours, etc. (Foucault 1983).

Foucault extended his investigations of power into the evolution of the human sciences, examining how researchers may subjectify human beings as having certain characterisations

(Foucault 2002). According to Foucault, the human sciences developed through including and excluding certain knowledge, subsequently shaping modes of control in society. For instance, both the disciplines of medicine and law have relied on evolving understandings of acceptable knowledge and feasible procedures (Foucault 2002). These analyses explicated power as a force producing processes of normalisation, regulating people's knowledge of themselves as subjects and their societies (Foucault 1980, 2002).

Foucault introduced his theory of governmentality through his concept of bio-politics (Foucault et al. 2007), which describes how scientific advances in the 1800s allowed authorities to consider the population and practices in new ways. For instance, statistical methods allowed monitoring of fertility and mortality rates, agricultural practices and management of natural resources (Foucault et al. 2007). In his lecture on governmentality, Foucault explicates how such advances coincided with a Machiavellian reconceptualisation of governance that framed the population not as an asset but as subjects whose well-being and economic capabilities were a concern to the exercise of political rule (Foucault 2000a; Foucault et al. 2007). Consequently, knowledge about behaviour and how to appropriate it through individual guidance became crucial to political governance (Foucault 2000a; Foucault et al. 2007).

Political power shapes individuals' fields of action and how individuals conduct themselves; therefore, Foucault demonstrates how the modern, autonomous individual and the political structures of the modern state compel each other's emergence (Foucault 2000a; Lemke 2002). Modes of governance arise in conjunction with the growing conceptualisation of people as free, governed subjects (Foucault and Rabinow 1997). This viewpoint yields a reconceptualisation of political power, not as primarily restricting governed subjects, but as producing the way in which governed subjects conduct themselves (Foucault 2000a).

Governmentality theory entails an augmentation of Foucault's investigations of power, complementing both the disciplinary and the normalising forms of power he previously analysed (Foucault 1977/2012). In his 1978–1979 lectures, Foucault designated a continuation of political governance from classic Greek modes of political rule to contemporary neoliberal bureaucracies, which rely on governed subjects to manage their own conduct in ways cohesive to political ends. He termed the way in which individuals produce desired conduct as 'technologies of the self' (Foucault 1977/2012). He particularly elucidated the essence of his analytics of governance through his concept of policing, in which responsibility for nurturing productive individuals is regarded as a public rather than a private concern:

> The police (...) is what enables the state to increase its power and exert its strength to the full. On the other hand, the police has to keep the citizens happy—happiness being understood as survival, life, and improved living. He perfectly defines what I feel to be the aim of the modern art of government, or state rationality, namely, to develop those elements constitutive of individuals' lives in such a way that their development also fosters the strength of the state. (Foucault 2000a, 322)

The political reliance on individuals' well-being and efficiency contextualises Foucault's view of modern, neoliberal forms of governance as reliant on individuals' responsibility and willingness to conduct themselves according to their own verity (Foucault and Rabinow 1997). Such objectives were in part achieved through guidance that he termed 'pastoral power', and which operates today as expert knowledge (Rose 1999). Foucault described pastoral power as evolving through Christian forms of systematic control, emerging as care directed at individuals and guiding their behaviour and aspirations (Foucault 2000c). Pastoral power, manifest through affirmative dialogue to determine how individuals may best improve themselves, relies on detail knowledge of individual behaviour to give subtle guidance toward deliberated objectives (Foucault et al. 2007). Conversational professional practices also rely on this method of governance in various forms of counselling (Karlsen and Villandsen 2008).

Although far from a comprehensive description of Foucault's theoretical ethos, this description is an outline is suggestive of his evolving analysis of power, from its disciplinary through to its normalising capabilities. The theory of governmentality designates power as appropriating individuals' self-conduct through modes of governance and technologies of the self and elucidates the Foucauldian conceptualisation of power as relational and as intrinsic to the functioning of social institutions and political rule.

Modern political governance, then, strikes an intermediary relationship between individuals as they exercise technologies of the self and the policies that shape individuals' fields of action toward society's political objectives (Foucault and Rabinow 1997). This way of wielding power does not appear dominant (Foucault 2000a). Consequently, this perspective does not analyse advanced liberal forms of governance as a binary opposition between the state and the market, as an incapacitating of state power to allow market-based forms of governance (Rose 1996; Rose, O'Malley, and Valverde 2006). Rather, governmentality theory regards neoliberal governance as a prolongation of state governance that involves a transformation of society's modes of governance from formal to informal. This perspective does not contest the socio-political description of neoliberalism, but holds that neoliberalism entails more than the economic and political. Governmentality theory replaces the neoliberal understanding of freedom from control (Rose 1999) with one of reliance on individuals to act to enhance their

lives, with all the knowledge and self-management that such action entails (Dean 2010a, 2010b; Lemke 2002).

Drawing on this understanding of neoliberal forms of governance, Rose (1996, 1999) examined how advanced liberalism shapes different social spheres of everyday lives, not through strategies of policy but through individual self-governance. According to Rose (1996), neoliberal governance promotes a dual interrelation of rights and duties, with the freedom to exploit these rights involving corresponding responsibilities: the right to education and the responsibility to develop aptitudes of self-realisation; the optimisation of the market for employment and the responsibility to develop related skills; the availability of counselling and the responsibility to exercise technologies of the self to maintain functional relationships. From this theoretical perspective, street-level bureaucrats promote policy objectives through exertion of their pastoral power (Rose 1996).

Although pastoral power manifesting in the use of individual support appears beneficial, emphasising dialogue-based interventions and promotion of individual aims, scholars have asserted the inherent paternalistic elements in such forms of governance. Cruikshank (1999) utilised governmentality theory to show how social policies construe target groups at the fringes of society as powerless, thus demarcating them for empowering interventions (self-esteem building or substance-abuse management) to aid these vulnerable people to become well-adapted, responsible members of society. The studies cited in section 5.3 demonstrate in various ways how groups that receive political attention are prompted to take responsibility for achieving prescribed aims, an apparent benign intervention that nevertheless puts high demands on the individuals' capabilities, which represents a wielding of power in which state governance is not absent, but insipid.

5.2.2. Foucauldian theory of discourse analysis

Foucault conceptualised discourse as the processes through which an utterance is accepted as meaningful or valid in a given historical epoch (Hook 2007). Expounding on his questioning of reason and truth, Foucault investigated the emergence of structuralism and the development of the human sciences (Foucault 2002). For him, reason and knowledge do not reflect a tangible reality, but are produced by historical developments and continually evolved (Foucault 2002). A relational conceptualisation of power is intrinsic to the production and evolution of legitimised knowledge (Hook 2007). Discourses do not merely denote what is said, but the conditions that give credence to an utterance.

The historicity through which discourses evolve, entails the continual inclusion and exclusion of knowledge and truth (Foucault 1999). Power, both productive and repressive, is inherent in all social practices, and therefore, intrinsic to the processes that produce or repress discourse (Andersen 1999; Lemke 2002). Because we cannot speak from a position outside the discourse, we perceive truth as it appears through the processes of inclusion and exclusion of statements, which fosters the development of discourses within which we think, speak and act (Andersen 1999; Foucault 1999). Discourses are comprised of statements which associate with other statements, and thus, refer to already established understandings, either confirming, modifying or refuting them. What is considered true within a discourse is at the same time both reproduced and modified through other associated statements (Andersen 1999; Foucault 1999).

Discourses are fields of accepted statements, including the conditions that determine what is recognised as true and the reasoning through which these truths are established, reproduced and through which other statements are excluded or included (Foucault 1999). Power is intrinsic to legitimising or delegitimising statements as discourses are developed (Hook 2007), and therefore, the term discourse does not signify the statement itself, but the conditions under which the statement is given a certain meaning and potency (Andersen 1999).

From the Foucauldian theoretical perspective, reasoning and experience arise from and are substantiated by discourse (Foucault 1980, 2000c). Andersen described discourse as a field of statements that associate themselves to themselves, and constitute abstract systematic entities within which statements are reproduced and modified (Andersen 1999). Within these entities, words and statements will be situated as lines of reasoning and will contain inherent perceptions of the subject—both the subject spoken of and the subject making the statement (Foucault 2000b). The speaker is always part of the discourse, and thus reproduces and develops how persons are subjectified within it (Foucault 1999). At the same time, the speaker is subjectified within a discourse, and therefore, the subject who speaks and the subject discussed are perceived and assigned meaning through the perceptual lens of the discourse (Foucault 1999).

In this dissertation, I utilise the Foucauldian understanding of subject, defined in relation to discourse and the relational perception of power. Within a discourse, people are given a subject position through the categorisations, validations and reasoning that the discourse allows (Allen 2002; Foucault 2000b). These processes and the dynamics of power they

involve, position the individual as a subject who is perceived and who perceives through discourse. Speaking subjects must participate in a discourse for their statements and actions to be assigned meaning. The Foucauldian analysis of a subject implies that the subject position within a discourse involves possibilities of utterances and actions, including how these utterances and actions are interpreted (Foucault 1999).

Similar to the investigations of discourse, governmentality theory conceptualises the subject as the subject of government, or the individual whose conduct is to be governed (Foucault 2000a; Rose 1999). This clarification is significant because it shifts the focus away from how the subject experiences such processes or power relations, and thus, does not consider subjective phenomenological experience, which often is the empirical foundation of qualitative research (Kvale 2008). Foucauldian theory frequently has been criticised for analysing relations and dynamics of power at the expense of the experiences and agency of the individual within these developments (Allen 2002; Gubrium and Holstein 2000). This criticism may be warranted, as Foucauldian theory dissolves the conventional notion of a unified subject of analysis and instead considers humans as subjectifying themselves and being subjectified within discursive processes (Foucault 1983; Dean 2015). The theory can be applied to investigate governed subjects to the extent that they enact rationales of government, but not predominantly to address the subject as an individual, for instance through exploring personal experiences.

5.3. Foucauldian studies on governance of infringed populations in Nordic countries

My dissertation, which takes a Foucauldian perspective to investigate the activation of long-term or hard to employ persons, can be situated within other research studies that have employed these theories to understand governance of marginalised groups in Nordic countries. As Foucauldian theory encompasses the spectrum of policy developments, from how street-level bureaucrats enact policies to how targeted groups experience them, relevant studies differ accordingly in their choice of empirical data. In Finland, Pyykkönen and Associates used governmentality theory to investigate the integration of immigrants (Pyykkönen 2007, 2011). The 2007 study found that immigrant associations were invariably viewed in policy documents as a means to achieve certain policy objectives, such elimination of ethnic conflicts and the happiness and productivity of the immigrant population. The study investigated these associations as governing immigrants, but also as governed by policy regulations. Similarly, Pyykkönen (2011) studied how policy documents governed the

immigrants' identity development as they became integrated into society. (Unfortunately, several studies are published in a first language, which is a barrier to this examination.)

Other studies have examine individual encounters between people and bureaucrats within the welfare state. Both Born ane Jensen (2010) and Karlsen and Villandsen (2008) examined how seemingly open conversational techniques, such as motivational interviewing, shape how people assume responsibilities and obligations. These individualised forms of governance cast social workers as helpers who carefully induce clients to articulate means and ends that coincide with policy objectives for the particular population. Thus, these policy objectives operate in the professional setting, although those participating in the dialogue appropriate these objectives in order to govern themselves. Villandsen (2007) also conducted a genealogic analysis of social work, employing a variety of policy documents, service manuals and academic literature. Operating under the presupposition that the independent, autonomous client is confined by poverty, drug-abuse or other obvious difficulties, the study concludes that current developments in Danish social work emphasise helping clients to appropriate their capabilities for independence and exploiting their own potential towards normalised living situations.

Employing similar datasets, Villandsen also elaborated on paradoxes in the political governance of practices towards the unemployed (Villadsen 2012). The major paradoxes included provision of personalised support to achieve universal aims, viewing the client as both unique and standardised (the paradox of universality), asking clients to specify their own truth while simultaneously recognising authorised perceptions of the situation and objectives as the clients' own (the paradox of truth) and aiming to empower clients on their own terms, which results in clients' seeking to realise the objectives of political governance on their own behalf (the paradox of power).

In contrast, Andersen (2003) examined inconsistencies involved in the paradoxical nature of contractual developments in welfare provision. This means of governance involves the potential of both individual emancipation and authoritative power in institutions such as schools, social agencies and child protective services. Similar to studies of conversational methods, Andersen concluded that measures that appear to induce clients to govern their own lives also obligate them to take responsibility for self-improvements and may involve submission to disciplinary and punitive reactions that the client may appear to have accepted, under the contractual form of governance. A more recent Foucauldian analysis of the

classification of welfare-recipients in Denmark and Australia involves categorisation of clients as risks, appearing as categorisations of clients' needs (Caswell, Marston, and Larsen 2010).

The above studies primarily draw on policy documents as their empirical base, examining how the documents outline premises for people's field of action, particularly the opportunities, boundaries and expectations assigned to infringed populations. Relevant Swedish studies differ slightly in the object of the research and the empirical scope, more inclined to examining a combination of such documents and relevant practices that address target groups. Dahlstedt (2008) examined policy documents and asserted that social policies presuppose that government of infringed populations stress individual responsibility for enhancing their life-situations on their own terms, thus improving the efficiency of society as a whole. This study particularly discussed social issues in suburban areas with large immigrant populations. Extending this argument, Dahlstedt found that policy documents seem to subjectify immigrant adults—whether parents of school-children or as residents of charged neighbourhoods—as needing to learn Swedish values and behaviours, presumably so they will be more apt to assume the required responsibilities. Fejes' (2006) study of life-long learning is coherent with Dahlstedt, arguing that continued education is closely related to perceptions of the responsible, independent adult, and therefore constitutes both an obligation and a benefit. Fejes (2008) also affirmed findings similar to the Danish studies, that guidance of adult learners to outline their educational trajectories takes the shape of an assistive dialogue. Thus, the adult learner is induced to take responsibility for realising his or her own potential, at the same time improving societal developments.

Additional studies examine the alignment between policy objectives and micro-practices. Exploring employability enhancement schemes for vulnerable adults, Fejes (2010) found that interviewed employers believed employability enhancement was achievable through individual improvements, a view also reflected in policy documents. Similarly, Vesterberg (2013, 2015) examined activation schemes targeting long-term unemployed people including those with a non-European background. The 2015 article suggests a discrepancy between the political aims of personalised support to enhance immigrants' employability and practices that result in 'othering' certain groups, based on their presumed views regarding gender equality and social competency. The study suggests that the objective of intervention was individual development rather than, say, enhanced skills.

In different ways, these studies uncover alterations in the power structures of welfare policies, centring policy measures and service provision on the clients' abilities to improve their lives, skills and behaviour. The research identifies an emphasis on taking active responsibility for shaping their communities, and thus safeguarding their own welfare. The Danish research on the governance of welfare recipients aligns with this assertion of individual responsibility, particularly through investigations of dialogues as modes of governance. The studies unanimously indicate that those receiving help obligate themselves to appropriate their capabilities toward self-improvement in ways coherent with policy objectives, and point out the paradoxes involved in wielding power in order to induce clients' self-governance. In particular, Andersen and Dahlsted discuss the modes of control that target those unable to shoulder their presupposed responsibilities; however, official documents cited only suggest how this power may be manifest in individual practices. The Swedish studies, which also include individual data, indicate that this inducement toward individual responsibility, may manifest in 'othering' practices and in perceptions of the unemployed as lacking necessary resources.

My research focuses on individual practices within an activation scheme with similar inducements for clients' responsibility and personalised support to improve employability, with disciplinary reactions for non-compliance. The activation scheme I studied echoes the dialogue-based, contractual interventions targeting the responsibility and efforts of the governed individual. My study investigates how social workers wield power to govern individual activation processes, and thus adds to this strand of research.

5.4. The application of dialogism and discourse theory on clients' activation trajectories

In my first research paper, I employed dialogism to explicate how lines of reasoning affected activation trajectories. In his theoretical works, Bakhtin analyses literary works by Dostoevsky or Shakespeare as dialogic, expressing social milieus or situations, but also subtle sentiments such as irony, by communicating social aspects of speech (Bakhtin 1984; Bakhtin and Holquist 1981). He demonstrates how text and utterances are shaped by centripetal and centrifugal forces, legitimising what is recognized and delineated as true to society's norms and what disrupts these norms forces (Bakhtin and Holquist 1981). Differing from discourse theory, centrifugal forces are present and tangible, not excluded from the dialogue, even though they express what is not clearly legitimised by the social situation or environment.

As I collected data, I was struck by how clients were regarded as needing certain activation measures that appeared to be substantiated not by facts but by perceptions and assertions beyond the clients' situation. I decided that the theory of dialogism and the concepts of centripetal and centrifugal forces would be helpful to investigate further, and it was a small step to re-contextualise the Bakhtin's reading of literature to my reading of case files and interviews.

I read each case and noted central facts about the client such as age, health, substance abuse, non-European origin, dependent children and any previous employment. I then carefully noted the reasoning behind each activation measure throughout each case, including the goals of activation measures that might be relevant to future measures. I discovered that certain facts were accentuated and that lines of reasoning reinforced each other. I then applied the concepts of centripetal and centrifugal forces to these lines of reasoning in each activation process, noting what was conducive to each choice. I noted that components in the cases that were not followed up on often re-emerging as difficult or irrelevant, such as previous employment or attempted job applications, and read these as centrifugal forces. I could then compare these centrifugal forces to those elements I had noted as centripetal forces in the same case. Thus, each case constituted a dialogue between centripetal and centrifugal forces, which became the analytic foundation of my first research paper.

My second research paper draws upon the Foucauldian theories of governmentality and discourse and the subject position. Rather than arising from the data, this analytic strategy emerged from my research question of how rationales of activation policy are enacted, shaping clients' activation trajectories. As governmentality theory encompasses this interrelationship, I considered it a suitable analytic strategy. The literature on activation policies and practice emphasises potentially contradicting rationales of enabling clients towards employment and enforcing responsibility through sanctions (Diop-Christensen 2015; Handler 2005; Hjörne, Juhila, and Van Nijnatten 2010; Whitworth 2016). Enabling measures were particularly salient in the qualification scheme, which emphasises self-efficacy, motivation and personalisation to clients' complex needs (Askim et al. 2010, Malmberg-Heimonen 2015).

In the case files, I noted all communications between social workers and clients or other involved parties such as course providers, which included activation measures, assessment-forms, informal performance assessments, next steps, sanctioning decisions and clients'

reactions, if recorded. I applied a governmentality perspective as I reviewed how social workers enacted the rationales of enabling clients and exercising coercion.

During the analysis, I discovered inconsistencies in how clients were addressed, which tasks they were given, and how their actions were interpreted. I needed an additional theoretical approach to understand these inconsistencies, which proved systematic and appeared to relate to the stage of the activation trajectory. I decided to employ the Foucauldian theory of discourse to understand these deviating perspectives that seemed to someone familiar with this theory, to arise from different discourses inherent in the social work. I also employed the concept of subject position to investigate how clients were given varying requirements throughout the activation process. In the final analytic step, I related the identified discourses to rationales of activation policy, and thus, I was able to encapsulate some practical implications they entail.

In these first two research papers, I investigated activation trajectories as they evolved and the discretionary practices they contained. Yet, these modes of analysis failed to yield more detailed insight into how social workers and clients enacted enabling and coercive rationales in individual cases . To gain a deeper understanding of the micro-processes involved, my co-author of my third research paper and I carefully selected four cases where either enabling or coercion was significant to the activation trajectory, and decided to investigate two cases in detail.

To examine the micro-processes of the enabling rationale, we selected a case in which client was able to use activation measures to move towards employment. As contrast, we also selected a case that clearly revealed control and coercion, not to the extent that support was withdrawn, but that kept coercion within the client's field of action. Consequently, we chose to view sanctioning as a form of power rather than a force that renders material risks, as most researchers view it. Employing a governmentality perspective, our analysis discusses how the social workers and clients in these two selected cases interacted with the coercing and enabling rationales and how these rationales interacted with each other, with one being the more potent.

5.5. Strengths and limitations of the theoretical perspectives

The main theoretical perspectives in this dissertation—the Bakhtinian theory of dialogism, the concepts of centrifugal and centripetal forces and the Foucauldian theory of governmentality, supplemented by Foucault's concept of discourse—produce different insights into the

interrelationship between activation policy rationales and social work practice. From an exploratory vantage point, dialogism facilitates investigating lines of reasoning used to enable clients throughout consecutive decision-making processes. In contrast, governmentality theory permits an explicit investigation of the influence of policy rationales on social work practice. Therefore, these theoretical perspectives address the interaction of coercive and enabling rationales from two complementary points of departure.

Both the Bakhtinian concept of dialogism and the Foucauldian concept of discourse have discursive, or socially and rationally embedded, aspects of language as the object of analysis. Both arise from the epistemological view that our utterances contain reasoning, views and presuppositions that are embedded, legitimised and given meaning by the social context. The Bakhtinian concept of dialogism frames an utterance as an expression of both the reasoning and established 'truth' it adheres to and the way that 'truth' is contested (Bakhtin and Holquist 1981). Language consists of contending forces that respectively create and disrupt our cohesive lines of reasoning, and significantly, these forces reflect social inferences and presuppositions (Bakhtin and Holquist 1981). Equally significant, these forces also shed light on elements considered confusing or obscured within the same social context or line of reasoning (Bakhtin and Holquist 1981). Thus, Bakhtin's theory of dialogism can explicate nuances in the reasoning behind decision-making in social work from the bottom up, without forcing the data into preconceived analytic structures.

Whereas dialogism has limited ability to capture specific analytic objects, such as linkages between specific rationales of policy and individual practice, governmentality theory can explicitly make such linkages (Foucault 2000b, 2000c). Through its focus on how people enact rationales of policy, governmentality sharpens the analytic gaze towards the enabling side of the spectrum, which my research seeks to investigate. Several studies have discussed the disciplinary aspects of activation policy and practice, but a strength of governmentality theory is that augments insight into both enabling and coercive rationales. However, to ensure coercive rationales were encapsulated, I utilised the Foucauldian concept of discourse in my second research paper.

Two critiques of Foucault's work are particularly relevant to the limitations of my enquiry and analysis. To gain a better understanding of the knowledge and logic we rely on, Foucault argued for questioning and augmenting our awareness of the views and reasoning we consider rational and obvious (Foucault 2000e). Consequently, some critics have questioned the role he assigned rationality. For instance, Habermas (1987) considered Foucault's ideas as a rejection

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of the possibility for rational and ethically sound argument. Following Habermas' criticism, my investigation could be described as merely questioning the implications of rationales of activation policy, rather than asserting absolute, certified findings. This critique is appropriate and addresses a consequence of my choice of theoretical approach.

The second relevant criticism of Foucauldian analysis emanates from feminist theory, which argues for the [female] subject's experience as the point of departure for new knowledge (Smith 1987; Turner and Maschi 2015). Critics have noted that Foucauldian theory views experience as contextualised within the discourses and rationalities through which the subject acts (Smith 1987), and therefore directs the focus away from the acting subject's agency. This objection could apply to my analysis because I examined the processes and discourses through which social workers and clients acted and investigated practices as contextualised within policy rationales rather than the social workers' and clients' agency and potential experiences themselves.

6. Summary of the three research papers

In this chapter, I summarise the three research papers comprising this dissertation. As I have presented the relevant research, methodological design and theoretical approaches in the previous chapters, I emphasise the results and conclusions of each paper.

6.1.   Research paper 1: 'Discretionary Approaches to Social Workers' Personalisation of Activation Services for Long-term Welfare Recipients'

This paper contextualises the research topic within Nordic welfare policy's changing objectives toward increased conditionality of benefits, which has elicited an academic and political debate about the consequences of sanctioning clients who might have difficulties fulfilling activation requirements. Policymakers uphold personalisation of services to meet clients' individual needs as a crucial means to ensure client involvement, thereby securing clients' basic rights, efficient service provision, and clients' ability to exploit their potential as they strive to become self-reliant. However, I argue that we lack knowledge on how social workers personalise activation measures, and in this paper, I aim to investigate social workers' rationales for personalising activation services when assigning clients to courses or work placements.

This research paper draws upon recent welfare policy developments and empirical studies of social work in activation settings, which asserts that Nordic social workers experience ethical dilemmas when enforcing sanctions for clients' non-compliance. The paper also refers to studies on social workers' discretion, which primarily involve theoretical analyses of rational assessments in social work and empirical studies concerning the influence of factors such as attitudes towards the client group or organisational culture.

In describing the methodological design, I draw upon other studies that have utilised data from a combination of case files and interviews. I then present Bakhtin's theory of dialogism, explicating the concepts of centripetal and centrifugal forces as tools to discern how social workers in their decision-making processes may ascribe significance or insignificance to various components of the client's complex situation.

According to my analysis, social workers employed two distinct perspectives as they sought to enable clients through personalisation of activation measures. These perspectives underscored different aspects of the clients' needs and capabilities, ascribing them significance as centripetal forces and structuring which services clients received. Each perspective was continually reinforced through the choice of activation measures. Some

aspects of the clients' situations were not coherent with centripetal forces, and hence with the reasoning behind personalisation of activation measures. These aspects acted as centrifugal forces in the social workers' reasoning, as confusing elements that complicated the cases but did not play a significant role in social workers' decisions.

This study's results uncovered two distinct approaches to personalisation of services. For some social workers, the clients' personal challenges became grounds to engage in enabling problem-solving strategies, as the social workers sought to improve clients' self-efficacy through available activation measures. In these cases, clients were often assigned to sheltered work to focus on life skills, such as trusting others or gaining self-confidence. This 'needs-oriented approach' tended to obscure resources relevant to clients' employability. Employing the second discretionary approach, social workers focused on the clients' previous work experience or skills relevant to short-term employment goals. Subsequently, clients were often assigned to short-term activation measures, usually internships, aimed at improving their chances for employment. With this 'employability-enhancement approach', mental or physical health problems could be obscured, leading some clients to drop out.

The discussion section explicates the strengths and weaknesses of the two approaches, paying particular attention to the blind spots that acted as centrifugal forces within each. Although social work and activation policy share the aim of enabling clients to enter the labour market through personalised support, my analysis suggests that social workers pursue this goal in opposing ways. I suggest that this polarisation of approaches emanates from how professional perspectives are institutionally embedded through the availability of activation measures. Individual social workers found it difficult to resolve clients' complex situations requiring multifaceted help with the paradoxical policy rationales reflected in institutional arrangements

Concurring with Lipsky's (2010) research on street-level bureaucracy, I conclude that social workers employ similar problem-solving strategies towards clients with different needs and characteristics who might benefit from significantly different personalised support. I argue for institutional support to aid social workers to consider both clients' personal challenges and strategies for employability in their continual decision-making processes.

6.2.   Research paper 2: 'Consequences of Merging the Aims of Personal Emancipation and Gaining Employment in Activation Processes'

In this paper I introduce social work in activation settings as representative of a normative restructuring of Nordic political approaches towards inclusion of those with poor labour

market attachment, particularly through contractual service provision that presupposes clients as the protagonists of their activation processes. Citing previous studies, I argue that this restructuring of services may contend with social work's emancipatory mandate. The aim of this paper is to investigate how the social work's emancipatory objective may intersect with the activation policy framework that emphasises client obligations and rapid labour-market entry. I investigate the impact of that intersection on the requirements clients face.

Drawing upon Nordic research on social work in activation settings, I argue that the professional mandate of facilitating rapid labour-market entry introduces rigid activation requirements and legislated sanctions for non-compliance, but also allows clients to determine relevant activation measures. Yet, Nordic research on social assistance recipients' experiences asserts that long-term poverty yields a dearth of social and material resources, closely related to a low sense of personal agency. Consequently, studies indicate that social workers experience ethical dilemmas as they pose strict activation requirements on clients with challenges (such as poor health, substance abuse or caregiver responsibilities), and posing such requirements may contradict the social work's emancipatory mandate. I argue that we lack knowledge on how the dual character of the social worker's professional mandate is manifest in social work practice throughout clients' activation trajectories.

The research paper introduces the Foucauldian concepts of governmentality and discourse as theoretical perspectives and presents governmentality theory as a means to examine the interrelationship between policy rationales—also manifest in the mandates of the bureaucrats who implement them—and the ways these policy rationales are continually adapted in everyday practices. Subsequently, I draw upon the Foucauldian concept of discourse to uncover the requirements clients face throughout the activation process. Social workers' dual professional mandate is reflected in discourses related to their practice, and within a discourse, people are given subject positions that entail social workers' discursive perceptions of them. Consequently, clients are subjectified with different presupposed responsibilities according to the discourses inherent in the activation process. Discourses subjectify clients in different ways, hence ascribing them different responsibilities.

I describe my carefully examination of clients' responsibilities, focusing on how social workers addressed and described them as activation processes evolved. The results reveal three discourses that framed and determined the responsibilities clients received: The first was the deficiency discourse, arising from the clients' eligibility for the programme, which asserted these deficiencies as grounds for designating certain activation trajectories. The

second was the motivational discourse, which required clients to tap their personal motivation and aspirations and pursue their own aims, guided by the social worker and within the limitations of available services. The third discourse was the assessment discourse, which entailed a continual critical review of the clients' performance by social workers and other professionals in activation sites, such as courses, internships or sheltered workplaces.

Each discourse actualised different responsibilities for the client. The deficiency discourse necessitated disclosing challenges and barriers such as physical or mental health or poor education and skills. The motivational discourse required clients to determine relevant employment aspirations, guided by the social worker, and to sustain their motivation through perseverance and good performance despite any discouragements. Finally, the assessment discourse involved a critical view of clients' performance, which often was regarded as needing correction. Any shortcomings were viewed as obstacles to performance and continually accentuated as reasons for rejection for internships or paid employment.

In the discussion section, I suggest that although the dual character of the professional mandate may appear coherent, the emancipatory objective of social work and the objective of enhancing employability shape the activation process in disparate ways. While the emancipatory intentions of social work direct attention towards client deficiencies and service needs, they align with the mandate of enhancing employability in seeking to explicate the clients' relevant aims. Yet, highlighting deficiencies as the grounds for emancipatory service provision also underscores clients' undesirability as employees. The motivational discourse reinforces this dynamic by emphasising clients' agency as crucial to activation processes. Together, the two discourses initiate and re-enforce the appropriation of critical performance assessments disproportionate to their strengths.

In different ways, the discourses elicit individualised problem-solving strategies towards client behaviours, such as reflecting on motivation and correction of performance. Considering previous research that has found a low sense of agency among long-term social assistance recipients, I argue for utilising structural components of social work knowledge to better encapsulate structural labour market barriers in problem-solving strategies and thus enhance clients' opportunities for employment.

6.3. Research paper 3: 'Between Empowerment and Discipline: Understanding Contractualism as Social Work Practice through Clients in a Norwegian Activation Scheme'

My third research paper introduces contractualism as the political idea underpinning the reconfigurations of Scandinavian policies to increase opportunities for labour market participation among the unemployed. Contractualism in Scandinavia has increased activation requirements for hard-to-employ clients and legislated stringent sanctions for non-compliance, but also has allowed for personalisation of services to meet clients' needs. Both increased requirements and the personalised support are salient in the qualification programme I studied in order to understand how the contractual design shaped social workers' and clients' practices.

In the research paper, I employed Foucault's theory of governmentality to examine how individuals enact policy rationales. Drawing upon recent research on social work in activation settings and studies employing governmentality theory as the context, I argue that we lack knowledge on how contractualism operates in individual activation processes.

The research paper demonstrates contractualism as a mode of governance in social work practice through two cases selected from the data that represent potentially contending rationales of empowering and disciplinary measures. The first case depicts a client who is able to master first the demands of the activation scheme and then those of the labour market. She is able to pursue relevant aims relevant and deploy available services accordingly. In an internship with an external employer, she continually exceeds expectations. Measures of control and follow-up procedures are relaxed as she demonstrates her ability to direct her activation process, while adhering to limitations in service provision and following all procedures.

The second case describes a client who takes a docile position to fulfilment of activation requirements. She is unable to realise the motivation and diligence to designate relevant aims for her activation trajectory. As a result, she fails to become a contractual partner and is unable to take part in the dialogue of 'pastoral power' with social workers. She responds to activation measures as obligations to fulfil.

The analysis of these two cases reveals that the successful exertion of the contractual model relies strongly on the client's ability to assume and maintain the role of a contractual partner throughout the activation process, which makes punitive practices less salient. However,

when clients are unable to fulfil these prerequisites or adopt activation aims that match their aspirations and then diligently pursue them, coercion becomes the primary mode of governance. Subsequently, the client submits to professional authority. The research paper asserts that the potential of coercion may deteriorate the cooperation between client and social worker and weaken the client's autonomy and the premises for assuming the role of a contractual partner. Consequently, potential coercion reinforces disciplinary professional authority.

The research paper explicates how empowering rationales of contractualism indeed pose high demands on clients. Contractualism usually is viewed as emancipatory, enabling vulnerable groups to improve their circumstances through their own verity, and therefore, the associated forms of power are less often analysed. The research paper argues for paying greater attention to how power within contractualism is exercised towards reliant and vulnerable groups.

6.4. Schematic summary of the results

The table below summarises the main results of the research papers in this dissertation. The table may be utilised as a point of reference for the discussion that follows.

No. of research paper	Title	Aim	Main results
1	Discretionary Approaches to Social Workers' Personalisation of Activation Services for Long-term Welfare Recipients	To investigate social workers' rationales for personalising activation services when assigning clients to courses or work placements	Social workers utilised two distinct approaches: the 'needs-oriented approach', concentrating on clients' personal challenges, and the 'employability-enhancement approach', concentrating on short-term strategies for enhancing employability. The social worker's approach had significant impact on the client's activation trajectory.
2	Consequences of Merging the Aims of Personal Emancipation and Gaining Employment in Activation Processes	To investigate how the emancipatory objective of social work and the activation policy framework, which emphasises client obligations and the acquisition of employment, intersect to form requirements that clients face in activation processes.	The analysis identifies three discourses as salient in all activation processes: the deficiency discourse, which accentuates clients' labour-market deficiencies; the motivation discourse, which emphasises clients' motivations for employment; and the assessment discourse, which continually evaluates clients' performance and points out deficiencies.
3	Between Empowerment and Discipline: Understanding Contractualism as Social Work Practice through the Clients in a Norwegian Activation Scheme	To investigate how the contractual model of services shapes social work practice in processes towards attempted employment.	The contractual model of services necessitates clients' ability to determine and diligently pursue aims that are relevant to gaining employment and to the scope of available services. Punitive practices may impede or counteract this process, inducing docile fulfilment of obligations.

7. Complexities of practicing enabling and coercive rationales of activation policy

In this section, I first suggest how my three papers contribute to social work research, and then discuss how my analyses elucidate my research question: How do enabling and coercive rationales of activation policy interact in social work practice within individual activation processes? Finally, I outline the need for future research.

7.1. Contribution of the results to social work research

Research in social policy has established that diverging political rationales are at play in activation policies and practices, which seek both to enable the unemployed to approach the labour market and to legislate sanctions for non-compliance (Card, Kluve, and Weber 2010; Van Berkel, Borghi, and Newman 2007;). Previous research on activation policy and practice has predominantly concentrated on two main areas: examinations of policy developments, including comparative studies of the arrangements of activation policy (Bonvin 2008; Borghi and Van Berkel 2007; Jingjing, Nelson, and Stephens 2008; Lødemel and Moreira 2014), and studies on social workers' and clients' experiences of such developments (Marttila et al. 2010; Natland and Celik 2015; Nothdurfter 2016; Røysum 2012). As I have described, social policy research indicates that countries employ dichotomal approaches to activation: the human resource development model, which primarily emphasises skill enhancement through relevant support, or the work-first model, which seeks to expedite labour-market entry primarily through coercion and negative incentives such as moderate benefit levels (Bonoli 2010; Lødemel and Moreira 2014). Subsequent research on social work practice has largely examined enabling or coercive practices separately (Carter and Witworth 2015; Caswell and Høybye-Mortensen 2015; Cheung 2016; Hjörne, Juhila, and Van Nijnatten 2010; Kjørstad 2005; Natland and Celik 2015; Toerien et al. 2013; Valkenburg and Van Berkel 2007). Consequently, we have limited insight into the nuances these rationales create as they continually interact in social work practice throughout clients' activation trajectories.

Researchers following Michael Lipsky's (2010) analytics of bureaucracy argue that street-level practices should be investigated for potentially contending policy objectives. To investigate these interrelations, studies following this analytic trajectory predominantly rely on the professionals' accounts (Brodkin 2011; Evans 2011; Evans and Harris 2004; Thorén 2008). In my dissertation, I followed a similar analytic purpose as I sought insight into the implications of policy on social work practice, as exemplified through a Norwegian activation scheme. However, I utilised accounts of clients and social workers from case file and

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interviews, which concentrate on the 'how' of carrying out activation trajectories rather than the 'what'. Thus, I primarily employed the Bakhtinian theory of dialogism and the Foucauldian theory of governmentality.

Few studies have explicitly investigated how ambiguous political rationales interact and are manifest in activation settings. Similarly, few studies have examined the complexity of social workers' decision-making as they attempt to enable clients and yet have coercive means at their disposal. Also drawing on the Foucauldian theory of governmentality, Rose (1999) described how the contractual model frames benefit recipients as consumers of services, which entails new modes of governance in which social workers and clients cooperate to personalise support, determine relevant aims and assert clients' responsibilities. My dissertation examines the scope of discretion these modes of governance make available. From three distinct vantage points, my research papers examine how social workers sought to enable clients in activation trajectories, also elucidating how coercive rationales may have influenced these processes.

Foucauldian theory and ensuing research have been criticised for concentrating on the modes of governance and discourse of society while examining with less acuity the implications for individuals (Allen 2002; Dean 2015; Gubrium and Holstein 2000; McKee 2009). However, several Foucauldian-inspired Scandinavian studies have investigated neoliberal forms of governance directed at population segments through examining policy documents (Andersen 2003; Born and Jensen 2010; Fejes 2008; Karlsen and Villadsen 2008;). Fejes (2010) and Vesterberg (2013, 2015) discussed contrasts between policy objectives and the actions and views of practitioners and employers. By investigating these forms of power as they become capillary, my study illuminates the lack of transparency in the reflexive processes implicit in these client-centred practices.

My first research paper examines the personalisation of activation trajectories, which policymakers have upheld as crucial to counteracting the risk of coercive practices and sanctioning (Nilssen and Kildal 2009; Toerien et al. 2013). Previous Norwegian studies maintain that clients are likely to experience activation trajectories as enabling (Djuve and Kavli 2015; Malmberg-Heimonen 2015; Rønsen and Skarphamar 2009); however, my research indicates that enabling the client depended upon distinct notions of appropriate means and ends for the client group. Utilising the Bakhtinian perspective of dialogism, I found that social workers viewed distinctly different aspects of clients' needs and capabilities

as significant, yielding essentially different objects of discretion. Each perspective obscured certain aspects of clients' needs and capabilities that could have been relevant.

The research paper describes how social workers' initial perspectives were continually reinforced throughout activation trajectories, and suggests that the social worker's general discretionary approach directed their interactions with their clients, shaping the perceived field of action of both client and social worker. My research challenges the presupposition of personalisation as the free appropriation of activation measures to meet clients' apparent needs. Rather, social workers' discretionary approaches allowed clients to exercise their freedom when determining enabling activation trajectories in specific ways (Rose 1999). As professional perspectives shaped social workers' interactions with clients and directed the scope of discretion, these perspectives tended to distinguish rather than incorporate clients' needs and capabilities in decision-making processes.

My first research paper has three implications for understanding how personalised support can enable clients, particularly the hard-to-employ. First, viewing clients' needs and capabilities from essentially different vantage points, beyond the initial perspective, can widen the social worker's understanding of the client's employment capabilities and difficulties, and in turn sharpen relevant aims. Subsequently, the de-prioritising of hard-to-employ clients, which international research has established (Carter and Witworth 2015; Fletcher 2011), also may be influenced by social workers' initial perspectives, rather than neutral depictions of clients' needs and capabilities. Second, if the social worker's approach is directed at quick labour-market entry, the ethical concerns surrounding sanctions for non-compliance are intensified for clients who exhibit performance difficulties. I assert that social workers who concentrate on clients' potential for employment may de-emphasise barriers, such as the client's health, which may prevent the client from fulfilling requirements and result in withdrawal of financial support. Third, in several areas of Nordic welfare governance, Foucauldian research (Born and Jensen 2010; Fejes 2008; Karlsen and Villadsen 2008) has established the practice in which clients are expected to express their needs and capabilities freely, and thus initiate an obligation of self-governance. However, I found the professional perspective is crucial to how such dialogues are conducted and subsequent decisions are made.

Several studies have described social work's emancipatory objectives as oppositional to the activation mandate to facilitate rapid labour-market entry (Cheung 2016; Danso 2015; Hjörne, Juhila, and Van Nijnatten 2010; Kildal 1999; Kjørstad 2005; Røysum 2012). In my second research paper, I draw on this assertion to investigate how this dual mandate is manifest in

discretionary practices throughout activation trajectories, predominantly as enunciated through social work discourses. I assert that social workers tend to designate clients' service needs as barriers to employment, and to utilise clients' relevant aspirations to direct the activation process. Equating service needs with employment barriers underscores the need for clients to improve both their behaviour and performance at activation sites, and thus highlights their flaws.

My second research paper has two implications for social work. First, highlighting the individual client's needs through an emancipatory perspective may inadvertently direct the social worker's attention towards personal improvements at the expense of client motivation and skill enhancement. This practice is likely reinforced by coercive rationales that encourage discipline for poor performance. I argue for better incorporation of clients' motivation and resources in activation trajectories, making correction a more modest component in the process of employability enhancement. Second, I assert that the discourses in activation processes that address clients' personal deficiencies and motivation emphasise individual barriers to employment at the expense of examining—and potentially addressing—the structural barriers. As clients in my study generally performed sufficiently in activation sites, the characterisation of their performance and ability inadequately described the barriers to employment these long-term social assistance recipients faced; the merging of the two professional mandates prevented discerning and addressing processes that contributed to labour market exclusion. These conclusions concur with the body of research questioning the sustenance of social work values and objectives within activation policy (Hjörne, Juhila, and Van Nijnatten 2010; Kallio, Blomberg, and Kroll 2013; Kjørstad 2005; Nilssen and Kildal 2009). Yet, while previous research generally questions the principal legitimation of sanctioning as a threat to the social worker's professional obligation to safeguard the client's welfare, my study questions whether the merger of the two mandates may obscure potentially emancipatory aspects of activation processes, such as clients' skills and motivation, and weaken social work's perspective on the structural barriers.

Previous studies have been inclined to discuss coercive rationales of activation policy as endangering clients' material security (Caswell and Høybye-Mortensen 2015; Diop-Christensen 2015; Handler 2005; Nybom 2013). Rather than exploring coercion as a normative practice or as rendering material risks, my third research paper examines how coercion may affect the enabling of clients. The analysis suggests a dynamic between enabling and coercive rationales in activation processes and demonstrates activation as

heavily reliant on clients' goal orientation. Coercion becomes increasingly more prominent in proportion to the client's adherence to this goal-oriented prerequisite. In contrast, studies have found a low sense of agency among long-term social assistance recipients because of stigma and lack of social and material resources (Kildal 1999; Marttila et al. 2013; Marttila et al. 2010; Sandel 1998). Consequently, the client becomes subject to the social worker's professional authority through coersion, increasing the likelihood that activation measures will be fulfilled as obligations rather than as the means to secure employment. My research suggests that we must recognise coercive rationales not only as threats to clients' financial security(Caswell and Høybye-Mortensen 2015; Diop-Christensen 2015; Handler 2005; Nybom 2013), but also as complications to their autonomy, which is crucial to the continual exercise of personalised support in activation trajectories.

7.2. The interaction of enabling and coercive rationales in activation processes

7.2.1. Client-centred dialogue as the catalyst of self-realisation prospects

Governmentality theory regards neoliberal modes of governance as transforming relationships between authorities and governed subjects, shaping their field of action to appropriate their capabilities through specific reflexive processes in relation to policy objectives (Foucault 2000a, 2000b). Activation trajectories exemplify such governance as clients assert inadequacies as grounds for change and through professional dialogue, identify relevant actions and assume responsibility in realising activation outcomes. My three research papers discuss how this professional dialogue continually operated as a catalyst in the clients' activation trajectories.

The professional dialogue instigates a scope of action that differs significantly from the lack of agency traditionally associated with receiving social assistance benefits (Gubrium, Pellissery, and Lødemel 2015; Marttila et al. 2013). In line with the Fouculdian concept of police (Foucault 2000a), my papers assert that this form of agency allowed clients to determine how to become better adapted, more productive members of society. These neoliberal modes of governance also align with social work's emancipatory ideals, which the social worker is trained to act upon, and although both transpose authority from the professional to the client, they also entail exertion of power. These modes of power do not appear as control, but as measures that impel clients to become enabled to take advantage of their scope of action.

Despite the potential for differentiation of clients as an unintended consequence of personalised support (Carter and Witworth 2015; Fletcher 2011), researchers and policymakers generally have regarded personalisation as prolific. Allowing clients to exercise authority over their activation processes and to designate adequate help has been regarded as creating efficiency in service-provision and has been a salient argument for neoliberal activation reforms (Lødemel and Moreira 2014; Valkenburg and Van Berkel 2007). In line with Scandinavian Foucauldian-inspired research, my study illuminates how these practices, or modes of governance, which often take the shape of counselling (Born and Jensen 2010; Fejes 2008; Karlsen and Villadsen 2008), may appear transparent, benign and protective of clients' interests, in that clients have the decision-making power. Social workers must exercise these impelling forms of power alongside coercive practices if clients are unsuccessful. My research papers discuss these modes of power not as distinct, but as tensions which thus create ambiguous, contradictory grounds for social work practice, elucidating the complexities inherent in this double-edged scope of action.

My research asserts the client-centred practices at the surface of the interplay of ambiguous rationales that shape activation processes. Through the exertion of pastoral power, these dialogue-based practices induce client responsibility, which primarily emerges through 'technologies of the self'. Needs and aims are products of reflexive processes, which entail clients' adopting the goals of the activation scheme. My research exemplifies this governance most visibly through some clients struggling to exercise these technologies. Examples included clients who stated they would take any job or those who had trouble specifying concrete goals, which subsequently became an object of problem-solving in the activation process. Thus, the field of action was shaped for encounters between clients and social workers in a way that resonates with Cruikshank's (1999) assertions that empowerment involves demarcating certain groups as vulnerable in order to determine empowering interventions. Consequently, pastoral power in these dialogue-based practices emerged as a subtle form of control directed at making the client responsible through appropriating their capabilities.

The premise that clients conduct their lives in insufficient ways and require professional support may illuminate the ambiguities that my analysis uncovers in social workers' perspectives on how they enable clients. With this premise of insufficiency as the foundation of the reflexive dialogue, eliciting technologies of the self may overshadow enhancement of

employability. My research papers exemplify how social workers' attempts to enable clients emphasised either life skills, such as trusting others and having better eating habits, or improved skills and behaviour in activation sites. Similarly, clients' own aspirations were emphasized at initial stages of the activation process. Although they generally lost their momentum as the activation processes evolved, they were crucial to clients' assuming responsibility . As a result the unemployed persons' own efforts become central to their goal achievement; if they do not succeed, their efforts are diminished as flawed.

My study also suggests interactions between forms of control and clients' exertion of technologies of the self. Clients were not merely guided to fulfil obligations or acquire skills in activation sites, but to continually improve their behaviour and performance. They faced stricter monitoring or withdrawal of support if they failed to exert these technologies of self-reflexivity and self-improvement. Social workers' perception of clients' personal difficulties first as service-needs and then as obstacles to performance may have arisen from the tension between attempting to elicit clients' self-governance and conversely enforcing their responsibilities through the potential of punitive reactions.

My research explicates tensions in the encounters between social workers and clients, created by the interaction of enabling and coercive policy rationales. First, I found discrepancies between the goals of clients' exertion of technologies of the self and of facilitation of employment opportunities, which revealed a disparity between the emphasis on client motivation as governing activation trajectories and on client behavior as problematic in activation sites. Second, my data revealed that social workers were able to elicit from clients great efforts toward responsibility and self-governance, which Foucauldian studies have established as crucial to this wielding of power (Andersen 2003; Born and Jensen 2010; Fejes 2008; Karlsen and Villadsen 2008). Yet, potential punitive reactions to elicit submission may have obstructed the autonomy that the qualification programme seeks to enhance.

In cohesion with previous governmentality research, my analysis found that clients must be highly determined, goal-oriented and continually improving their performance to be considered successfully enabled. Clients generally fulfilled these expectations by pursuing every opportunity to gain work experience and to perform well, exploiting the scope of action they received. Yet, my analysis also suggests constraints to the clients' scope of action within the social work. For instance, my first research paper describes social workers' personalisation of support as delimiting the availability of activation measures, shaped by social workers' discretionary approach; my second paper asserts that as clients disclosed their

deficiencies as grounds for personalisation, these deficiencies were accentuated as obstacles that may have hindered adequately addressing employability; and my third paper demonstrates that coercion to induce compliance counteracted clients' autonomy, which activation processes emphasise. Thus, my analysis questions whether the contractual partnership involves inconsistencies which may complicate the acquisition of paid employment.

7.2.2. Client-centred practice in activation and neoliberal paternalism

Whereas neoliberal ideology asserts freedom from state intervention, its declarations of individual rights also entail corresponding individual responsibility to exercise those rights (Rose 1996; Rose, O'Malley and Valverde 2006). This argument is particularly emergent in neoliberal paternalism, which Dean (2009) described as encompassing both soft paternalism (enticement of governed subjects to improved their lives) and the hard paternalism of control. When individuals fail to assume perceived personal responsibility, soft paternalism may manifest as professional intervention and hard paternalism as withdrawal of financial support (Dean 2009). Whitworth (2016), discussing a recent UK activation scheme, noted that neoliberal paternalism contains paradoxical views regarding the long-term unemployed which arise from the internal fractures in the conceptual notions regarding this population as governed subjects. Specifically, neoliberalism views subjects as rational beings capable of making rational choices within the architecture of economic incentives (Dean 2009, 2014; Vesterberg 2013), and therefore, frames the long-term unemployed as irrational or incompetent persons who are unwilling or unable to fulfil shared obligations, and hence in need of coercion (Van Berkel, Borghi and Newman 2007). Yet, the softer elements of neoliberal paternalism involve perceptions of the unemployed as entrepreneurs who, through actualising their free agency appropriately, are willing and able to rise to a stable place in the labour market (Whitworth 2016).

These conceptual paradoxes of neoliberal paternalism are visible in how clients of the qualification programme were addressed in my studies: as entrepreneurial subjects designating their motivational aims; as inept subjects needing guided, reflective dialogue to mobilise their agency and adapt their self-perception and behaviour; and as docile subjects fulfilling obligations and submitting to potential coercion. What these paradoxes have in common, however, is the need for governed subjects to employ different technologies of the self to enhance their rational, entrepreneurial and obliging capabilities which activation

processes aim to develop. In so doing, neoliberal paternalism employs professional guidance, inducement of responsibility and discipline.

My research papers question whether the qualification programme subjectifies clients as both having and lacking the necessary agency to gain employment. This interplay resonates with the welfare paradox of power described by Villadsen (2012): Power is ascribed both to the client and to the authorities who shape the field of action in which to appropriate the client's capabilities. A consequence of the heightened emphasis on the need for clients to enhance their autonomy and improve their behaviour is the assumption that labour-market entry will be an achievable result. However, targeting client behaviour and aspirations results in clients' assuming greater responsibility as job-seekers, but not necessarily in achieving paid employment. Thus, this approach may elicit inadequate support for achieving labour market entry.

However, the qualification programme also contains presuppositions of clients as governed subjects which significantly complement those of neoliberal paternalism. The human resource development approach emphasises addressing clients' personal barriers to employment and underscores skill enhancement to overcome such barriers (Lødemel and Moreira 2014). This approach can subjectify the client as the problem, and closely associate personal deficiencies with unemployment, a presupposition that underpins the current activation scheme.

Even as the qualification programme emphasises guided appropriation of clients' capabilities as a means to achieve employment (Rose 1999), many clients also lack relevant skills and education to enter the labour market. The human resource development approach can potentially address such barriers (Lødemel and Moreira 2014) with greater attention to the nature of the client's reduced work capacity and how labour market credentials may be attained. That shift in focus would extend the client's field of action and enhance opportunities for achieving the activation policy objectives, which the current focus on client responsibility appears to delimit.

7.3. Suggestions for future research

My research papers suggest several needs for future research. The first research paper asserts that clients encounter, and are viewed through, two distinct professional approaches that direct enabling activation trajectories in distinct ways, and that each approach may obscure relevant service needs. Further research is needed to investigate how clients and social workers reach agreements on appropriate activation measures within these discretionary

approaches. A limitation of my study was that it did not include first-hand data from clients, which points to the need for research on the cooperation between social workers and clients. Researchers should pay particular attention to any blind spots that might appear in decision-making processes, and whether and how aspects of the client's situation may be obscured.

The second research paper describes how clients' individual deficiencies are a continual focus throughout the activation process and how this focus fosters the view that long-term unemployment is an individual client problem. Consequently, I argue for a re-actualisation of the social work profession's pronounced emancipatory mandate to address both individual and structural barriers to social inclusion, which indicates a need for more research into marginalising processes in the labour market that strongly affect people with poor labour market attachment and reduced work capacity. Further research could be helpful in identifying measures to counteract these processes, and in turn, to improve clients' employment opportunities.

Finally, the third research paper describes how activation processes rely strongly on clients' adopting of relevant activation aims as their own and on their assuming responsibility for their activation processes and for their excellent performance in pursuit of these aims. However, all three research papers identify several constraints on clients' presumed agency that arose from ambiguities inherent in policy and practice. First, social workers' discretionary approaches may shape clients' scopes of action. Second, clients are expected to focus on their deficiencies, which also may impede their ability to designate and realise relevant aims. Third, the threat of coercion may encourage docile fulfilment of duties. These constraints suggest a need for research into how clients' agency may be enhanced in activation processes.

8. Conclusion

In mature welfare states, bureaucracy retrenchments and more flexible provision of activation services have been developed with the intention of improving clients' influence and opportunities for labour-market participation. The contractual model that underpins these alterations and facilitates personalised support, positions clients as consumers and social workers as helpers who also may exercise coercion. The changing modes of governance reconstitute the social workers' and clients' responsibilities, and my analysis of these modes of power elucidates how clients and social workers exercise them.

Findings from my study of 16 individual client cases in a Norwegian activation scheme, using case file data and social worker interviews, show how social workers enact contending rationalities, which draw on both enabling objectives and coercion to induce clients to approach the labour market. I employed the Bakhtinian theory of dialogism, as well as the Foucauldian theories of discourse and governmentality to investigate how contending activation policy rationales are adapted in social work practice. The analysis suggests that social workers employ distinctly different perspectives to enable clients through personalised support, concentrating on personal challenges or short-term employment strategies, and that these perspectives might obscure relevant objects of discretion. The results also assert that social work practices presuppose that the client who can successfully fulfil activation trajectories is a highly determined, goal-oriented client, and these presuppositions contradict our knowledge of the psycho-social consequences of long-term benefit dependency. Significantly, the client autonomy necessary to realise enabling activation trajectories is complicated by the threat of coercive practices, which induce submission to professional authority. Finally, the results suggest that activation processes entail enabling of clients by fostering their autonomy, asserting their responsibilities and improving their performance. But when clients' responsibilities and performance are framed as the problem, structural barriers to employment may be insufficiently addressed and may continue to create labour market exclusion.

Enabling clients in activation processes, which aligns with social work's emancipatory ideals, transposes authority from the professional to the client; however, activation processes also entail modes of governance and forms of power. My analysis demonstrates the importance of investigating these practices, not merely as supportive and benign, but as pervasive in governance in new ways.

The second research paper describes how clients' individual deficiencies are a continual focus throughout the activation process and how this focus fosters the view that long-term unemployment is an individual client problem. This suggests a need for research into marginalising processes in the labour market that strongly affect people with poor labour-market attachment and reduced work capacity. In addition, this research should investigate more closely what clients' reduced work capacity entails and how these barriers can be addressed in a labour market perspective.

Finally, the third research paper describes how activation processes rely strongly on clients' adoption of relevant activation aims as their own, and on their assuming responsibility to direct activation processes and to display excellent performance in the pursuit of these aims. However, all three research papers identified several restraints on clients' presumed agency in activation trajectories arising from the ambiguities inherent in activation policy and practice, which suggests a need for more research into how clients' agency may be enhanced in activation processes.

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Appendix 1: Norwegian questionnaire created by the cluster-randomised controlled trial

Spørreskjema til brukere som deltar i prosjektet "Helhetlig Oppfølging av Brukere i Kvalifiseringsprogrammet (KVP)"

1a. Dato: _____/_____2011 **b. Nav-kontor:** _____ **c. Navn på din KVP-veileder:** _____	**2. a. Ditt fødselsår:** 19_____ **b. Ditt kjønn:** ☐ Mann ☐ Kvinne
3. Sivilstatus: ☐ Gift/registrert partner ☐ Samboer ☐ Skilt/separert ☐ Ugift/ikke samboende ☐ Enke/enkemann	**4. Har du barn?** ☐ Nei ☐ Ja Hvis ja: antall barn under 18 år _____
5a. Er du, din mor eller din far født i Norge? Jeg Mor Far ☐ Ja ☐ Ja ☐ Ja ☐ Nei ☐ Nei ☐ Nei	**5b. Hvis du ikke er født i Norge, hvor mange år og måneder er det siden du kom til Norge?** _____ år _____ måneder
6. Hva er din høyeste fullførte utdanning? ☐ Har ikke fullført grunnskole ☐ Grunnskole ☐ Videregående skole ☐ Høgskole eller universitet, mindre enn 4 år ☐ Høgskole eller universitet, 4 år eller mer ☐ Annet, spesifiser_____	**7. Har du begynt på utdanning som du ikke har fullført?** ☐ Nei ☐ Ja, grunnskole ☐ Ja, videregående skole ☐ Ja, høgskole eller universitet ☐ Ja, annet_____

Spørsmålene under handler om arbeid og økonomi:

8a. Har du tidligere hatt inntektsgivende arbeid? *(ikke praksisplass)* ☐ Ja ☐ Nei Hvis du har hatt inntektsgivende arbeid: **b. Hvor lenge har du hatt inntekstsgivende arbeid?** (ikke praksisplass) _____ år _____ måneder **c. Hvor lenge varte det siste arbeidsforholdet?** _____ år _____ måneder	**9a. Hvor lenge har du totalt vært arbeidsledig i løpet av de 5 siste årene?** _____ år _____ måneder **b. Søker du arbeid for tiden?** ☐ Ja ☐ Nei
10. Hva var grunnen til at det siste arbeidsforholdet tok slutt? ☐ Arbeidet var midlertidig ☐ Jeg sa opp stillingen ☐ Jeg ble sagt opp ☐ Annen grunn:_____	**11. Hvordan er din økonomiske situasjon for øyeblikket?** ☐ Svært bra ☐ Ganske bra ☐ Tilfredsstillende ☐ Ganske dårlig ☐ Svært dårlig
12. Hvis du ikke søker du arbeid for tiden, hva er grunnen til det? (*Du kan sette flere kryss*) ☐ Jeg har allerede et innteksgivende arbeid ☐ Jeg er i kvalifiserinsprogrammet ☐ Jeg venter på avgjørelsen om uføretrygd /pensjon/arbeidsavklaringspenger ☐ Jeg ønsker ikke arbeid fordi jeg har små barn	☐ Jeg venter på at arbeid/tiltak skal begynne ☐ Det fins ikke noe passende arbeid der jeg bor ☐ Jeg kan ikke arbeide på grunn av helseproblemer ☐ Jeg ønsker ikke lønnet arbeid ☐ Annet, spesifiser_____

Spørsmålene under handler om kvalifiseringsprogrammet:

13a. Deltar du i kvalifiseringsprogrammet nå?	14. Hva gjør du nå i kvalifiseringsprogrammet?
☐ Ja ☐ Nei	*(Du kan sette flere kryss)*
b. Hvis du deltar i kvalifiseringsprogrammet, hvor lenge har du vært i programmet?	☐ Praksis i ordinær virksomhet
_____år _____måneder _____ uker	☐ Praksis i arbeidsmarkedsbedrift
	☐ Kurs
c. Hvor lang tid har du igjen i kvalifiseringsprogrammet?	☐ Fysisk aktivitet/sosial trening
_____år _____måneder _____ uker	☐ Ingen tiltak
15. Hvor mange timer i uken er kvalifiseringsprogrammet?	**16. Hvor ofte har du den siste måneden hatt møte med veileder?**
_____ timer i uken	_____ ganger den siste måneden

Nedenfor finner du utsagn som beskriver måten du og KVP-deltakere jobber sammen på. Til høyre for hvert utsagn er det en 5 punkts skala. Denne angir i hvilken grad utsagnet gjelder for deg. For eksempel hvis det aldri gjelder for deg, setter du en ring rundt 1. Hvis det derimot alltid gjelder for deg, setter du en ring rundt 5. Er det et sted mellom disse to ytterpunktene, setter du en ring rundt et av de andre tallene som du synes passer best. Vi vil be deg svare mest mulig åpent om hvordan du opplever forholdet til KVP-veileder. Når du leser setningene, så tenk på hvordan du oftest opplever og føler i forhold til KVP-veileder. KVP-veileder vil ikke få se hva du har svart på disse spørsmålene.

17. De neste spørsmålene handler om relasjonen mellom deg og KVP-veileder.

		Aldri	Sjelden	En del ganger	Ofte	Alltid
A	KVP-veileder og jeg samarbeider om å sette mål for min KVP deltakelse.	1	2	3	4	5
B	Jeg føler at KVP-veileder setter pris på meg.	1	2	3	4	5

		Aldri	Sjelden	En del ganger	Ofte	Alltid
D	Jeg mener at det jeg gjør sammen med KVP-veileder vil hjelpe meg til å oppnå de forandringene som ønskes.	1	2	3	4	5
E	Det jeg gjør i møter med KVP-veileder gir meg nye måter å betrakte mine problemer på.	1	2	3	4	5
F	KVP-veileder og jeg respekterer hverandre.	1	2	3	4	5
G	KVP-veileder og jeg arbeider mot mål som vi er blitt enige om.	1	2	3	4	5
H	Jeg tror KVP-veileder liker meg.	1	2	3	4	5
I	KVP-veileder og jeg har kommet frem til en god forståelse av hva slags forandringer som vil være bra for meg.	1	2	3	4	5
J	Jeg tror at den måten vi arbeider med problemene mine på er riktig for meg.	1	2	3	4	5
K	Et resultat av møtene med KVP-veileder er at jeg er mer klar over hvordan jeg kan forandre meg.	1	2	3	4	5
L	Jeg føler at KVP-veileder bryr seg om meg selv når jeg gjør ting som KVP-veileder ikke liker.	1	2	3	4	5
M	KVP-veileder virker forbered til møtene med meg.	1	2	3	4	5
N	I møtene kommer vi frem til klare konklusjoner og avtaler om hvem som skal gjøre hva og når.	1	2	3	4	5
O	KVP-veileder legger vekt på å anerkjenne min situasjon.	1	2	3	4	5
P	KVP-veileder samtaler med meg på en slik måte at jeg kan fortelle om min situasjon.	1	2	3	4	5
Q	I samtaler med KVP-veileder får jeg tenkt over det jeg har sagt.	1	2	3	4	5
R	KVP-veileder viser til mine tanker og følelser for å sikre at hun/han har forstått meg riktig.	1	2	3	4	5
S	Når jeg snakker om å forandre noe, så støtter KVP-veileder det.	1	2	3	4	5

		Aldri	Sjelden	En del ganger	Ofte	Alltid
T	Jeg opplever at KVP-veileder viser interesse og følger opp, når jeg snakker om å forandre noe.	1	2	3	4	5
U	Jeg opplever at veileder fokusere mer på mine styrker og ressurser enn på mine hindringer og begrensninger.	1	2	3	4	5
V	Jeg er aktiv i utarbeiding og gjennomføring av min plan og mitt kvalifiseringsprogram.	1	2	3	4	5

18. Spørsmålene under handler om samarbeidet med andre aktører om din KVP-deltakelse.

		Aldri	Sjelden	En del ganger	Ofte	Alltid
A	Jeg og hjelpeapparatet (f eks KVP-veileder, lege og tiltaksarrangør) jobber mot et felles mål for min KVP-deltakelse.	1	2	3	4	5
B	Mine meninger vektlegges i beslutninger som tas i samarbeidsmøtene (med f. eks. KVP-veileder, lege og tiltaksarrangør).	1	2	3	4	5
C	Jeg har en aktiv rolle i samarbeidsmøtene.	1	2	3	4	5
D	KVP-veileder kartlegger mitt sosiale nettverk når vi skal lage plan og program for meg.	1	2	3	4	5
E	KVP-veileder involverer mitt private nettverk i oppfølgingsarbeidet.	1	2	3	4	5

19. Spørsmålene under handler om dokumentasjonen for ditt kvalifiseringsprogram.

A Har du en skriftlig plan? ☐ Ja ☐ Nei ☐ Vet ikke

5

		Aldri	Sjelden	En del	Ofte	Alltid	Vet ikke/ikke aktuelt
B	KVP-veileder tar utgangspunkt i mine behov og ønsker når vi lager skriftlige planer i KVP.	1	2	3	4	5	6
C	KVP-veileder oppdaterer og justerer min KVP-plan etter faktisk fremdrift.	1	2	3	4	5	6
D	KVP-veileder skiller tydelig mellom fakta, sine egne vurderinger og mine vurderinger i dokumentasjonen.	1	2	3	4	5	6
E	Jeg deltar aktivt sammen med KVP-veileder i utarbeidelse av planen for mitt kvalifiseringsprogram.	1	2	3	4	5	6
F	KVP-veileder og jeg bruker arbeidsevnevurderingen min når vi utarbeider skriftlige planer.	1	2	3	4	5	6

20. Spørsmålene under handler om nytten av, hensikten med og gjennomføringen av ditt kvalifiseringsprogram.

		Aldri	Sjelden	En del ganger	Ofte	Alltid	Vet ikke/ikke aktuelt
A	KVP er nyttig for meg for at jeg skal komme i inntektsgivende arbeid.	1	2	3	4	5	6
B	KVP er nyttig for meg for å komme i annen aktivitet enn inntektsgivende arbeid.	1	2	3	4	5	6
C	KVP er nyttig for meg for at min livskvalitet skal bli bedre.	1	2	3	4	5	6
D	KVP er nyttig for å avklare mine trygderettigheter.	1	2	3	4	5	6
E	Mitt kvalifiserings-program og tiltakene jeg deltar i er nøye tilpasset mine ønsker og behov.	1	2	3	4	5	6

		Aldri	Sjelden	En del ganger	Ofte	Alltid	Vet ikke/ikke aktuelt
F	Kvalifiseringsprogrammet mitt dreier seg mer om at jeg skal komme i arbeid og aktivitet enn om at min livskvalitet skal bli bedre.	1	2	3	4	5	6
G	KVP-veileder har god nok kunnskap til å kunne bistå meg i å nå mitt mål om arbeid.	1	2	3	4	5	6
H	KVP-veileder har god nok kunnskap til å kunne bistå meg i å oppnå bedre livskvalitet.	1	2	3	4	5	6
I	KVP-veileder har god nok kunnskap til å kunne bistå meg i å komme i aktivitet.	1	2	3	4	5	6
J	KVP-veileder har god nok kunnskap om arbeidsmarkedet til å kunne bistå meg i komme i jobb.	1	2	3	4	5	6

21. Hva tror du er viktig for at du skal nå målene dine om <u>arbeid, aktivitet og/eller bedret livskvalitet?</u>

Spørsmålene under handler om sosial støtte, helse og livskvalitet:

22. Hvor mange personer står deg så nær at du kan regne med dem hvis du får store personlige problemer? ☐ Ingen ☐ 1-2 personer ☐ 3-4 personer ☐ 5 eller flere	**23. Hvor stor interesse viser folk for det du gjør?** ☐ Mye ☐ Noe ☐ Usikker ☐ Lite ☐ Ikke i det hele tatt
24. Hvor lett er det å få praktisk hjelp fra naboer om du skulle trenge det? ☐ Veldig lett ☐ Lett ☐ Mulig ☐ Vanskelig ☐ Veldig vanskelig	**25. Hvordan vurderer du din egen helse sånn i alminnelighet?** ☐ Svært god ☐ Ganske god ☐ Verken god eller dårlig ☐ Dårlig ☐ Svært dårlig
26. Har du en kronisk sykdom eller lidelse? Med "kronisk" menes en sykdom/ lidelse som er medfødt, har vart i minst 6 måneder eller som du tror kan bli varig. ☐ Ja ☐ Nei Hvis nei, g*å direkte til spørsmål 30.*	**27. I hvilken grad påvirker sykdommen/ lidelsen hverdagen din?** ☐ I stor grad ☐ I noen grad ☐ I liten grad ☐ Ikke i det hele tatt

28. Nedenfor er en liste over noen problemer eller plager. Har du i løpet av de siste 2 ukene vært plaget av noe av dette? *(Sett ett kryss ved hver plage).*

		Ikke plaget	Litt plaget	Ganske mye plaget	Veldig mye plaget
A	Plutselig frykt uten grunn?	1	2	3	4
B	Stadig redd eller engstelig?	1	2	3	4

8

C	Matthet eller svimmelhet?	1	2	3	4
D	Følelse av å være anspent, oppjaget?	1	2	3	4
E	Lett for å klandre deg selv?	1	2	3	4
F	Søvnproblemer?	1	2	3	4
G	Nedtrykt, tungsindig?	1	2	3	4
H	Følelse av å være unyttig?	1	2	3	4
I	Følelse av at alt er et slit?	1	2	3	4
J	Følelse av håpløshet med tanke på fremtiden?	1	2	3	4

29. Nedenfor kommer en rekke påstander om hvordan du forholder deg til ulike sider ved livet. Hvor riktige er de når du tenker på deg selv for tiden?

		Ikke riktig	Litt riktig	Nokså riktig	Helt riktig
A	Jeg klarer alltid å løse vanskelige problemer dersom jeg forsøker hardt nok.	1	2	3	4
B	Hvis noen motarbeider meg, finner jeg måter for å få det som jeg vil.	1	2	3	4
C	Det er lett for meg å holde meg til mine planer og nå mine mål.	1	2	3	4
D	Jeg er trygg på at jeg kan mestre uventede hendelser.	1	2	3	4
E	Takket vare mine resurser, vet jeg hvordan jeg skal takle uforutsette situasjoner.	1	2	3	4
F	Jeg kan løse de fleste problem, dersom jeg går inn for det.	1	2	3	4
G	Jeg er rolig når jeg møter vanskeligheter, fordi jeg går inn for det.	1	2	3	4
H	Når jeg møter et problem, finner jeg vanligvis flere løsninger.	1	2	3	4

		Ikke riktig	Litt riktig	Nokså riktig	Helt riktig
I	Dersom jeg er i knipe, finner jeg vanligvis en vei ut (av knipen).	1	2	3	4
J	Samme hva som hender, er jeg som regel i stand til å takle det.	1	2	3	4

---

30. Hvor ofte har du den SISTE måneden drukket så mye alkohol at du følt deg beruset?

☐ Daglig eller nesten daglig

☐ 2-4 dager i uken

☐ En gang i uken

☐ Omtrent 2-3 ganger i måneden

☐ En gang den siste måneden

☐ Aldri

31. Hvor ofte har du den SISTE måneden brukt narkotiske stoffer? *(også cannabis, metadon, vanedennande medikamenter mm.)*

☐ Daglig eller nesten daglig

☐ 2-4 dager i uken

☐ En gang i uken

☐ Omtrent 2-3 ganger i måneden

☐ En gang den siste måneden

☐ Aldri

---

32. Hvor fornøyd er du alt i alt med livet ditt nå for tiden?

☐ Svært fornøyd

☐ Ganske fornøyd

☐ Både og

☐ Misfornøyd

☐ Svært misfornøyd

33. Hva tror du at du gjør om et år?

☐ Inntektsgivende arbeid

☐ Utdanning

☐ Aktiviseringstiltak

☐ Trygdet

☐ Annet_____

34. Vi vil også be deg om å svare på to påstander om denne undersøkelsen.

		Helt uenig				Helt enig
A	Dette spørreskjemaet var i det store og hele lett forståelig.	1	2	3	4	5
B	Dette spørreskjemaet var i det store og hele relevant for mitt arbeid.	1	2	3	4	5

Er det noe mer du vil si om deltakelsen din i KVP, som vi ikke har spurt om, eller har du tanker om dette spørreskjemaet som du vil dele med oss, så kan du skrive det inn her:

Skriv inn:

TAKK FOR AT DU SVARTE PÅ SPØRRESKJEMAET!

Du får tilsendt et gavekort når vi har mottatt det utfylte spørreskjemaet og samtykkeskjemaet.

Appendix 2: Norwegian interview guide, the segment not pertining to specific cases

Appendix 2: Norwegian interview guide (not client-specific)

Intervjuguide [NAV-kontor]

introduksjon: undersøker kvp både basert på journaler og intervjuer med veiledere.

Først litt generelt om hvordan du typisk jobber med kvp. Så mer spesifikt om hvordan du samarbeider med de brukerne du har eller har hatt tidligere.

Generell del

> Hvor mange brukere har du i KVP?
>
> Kan du si noe om hvilke brukergrupper du har, utfordringer og hovedmål dere har i KVP-arbeidet?
>
> Hvordan rekrutterer dere brukere?
>
> Se for deg en ny bruker du får inn i KVP. Hva slags avklaringsarbeid er gjort på forhånd? Hvordan jobber du videre fram til dere setter opp en plan?
>
> Begynner dere med kortsiktige eller langsiktige mål? Hvordan kommer dere frem til dem? (om nødvendig)
>
> Vet brukerne ofte hva de ønsker, eller anbefaler du tiltak for dem? (Oppfølge hvordan vurderer tiltakene du anbefaler? Om nødvendig)
>
> Fortell om når dere lager tiltaksplan?
>
> Hva gjør du når du synes det er vanskelig å avklare hvilke tiltak og mål som er egnet for brukeren? Hvordan samarbeider dere?
>
> Hvis dine mål og brukerens mål er forskjellige: Hva er som oftest forskjellene? Hvordan håndterer du det?
>
> Hva ser dere etter når dere evaluerer tiltaksplanen? Hvis nødvendig: Fortell om når samarbeidet i slike møter? (bruker skjønn på bakgrunn av forløp)?
>
> Hvordan synes du samarbeidet med andre aktører fungerer (hvilke involveres, hvordan følges de opp)?

HvorDan (lager)/ bruker du arbeidsevnevurderinger?

Er det annen dokumentasjon du synes er viktig, hvordan bruker du den? (Ira, jeg har ikke sett annet enn arbeidsevnevurderinger i journalene)

Hvis du skal anslå grovt, hvor går brukerne videre når KVP er over? Ser du noe mønster i hvem som går hvor?

Er du involvert i brukernes sosialsaker? Hvordan? Hvis ikke, hvordan samarbeider dere?

Er det noen viktige sider ved arbeidet med brukerne, som jeg ikke har spurt om (utfordringer, styrker som bør tas tak i etc)?

Hva synes du er det viktigste med ditt arbeid som KVP-veileder?

mellominformasjon

Klientspesifik del

Eksempel-case

Hva var bakgrunnen for at Eksempel begynte i KVP.

Hvordan vil du beskrive hans KVP-løp?

Hva var det viktigste dere prøvde å oppnå?

Fortell om samarbeidet deres?

[statlig tiltak] var foreslått sommeren 11. Hva slags arbeidsoppgaver og mål var tenkt der?

Jeg ser at Eksempel til tider har vært vanskelig å få kontakt med – han har ofte ikke møtt til avtaler etc. Har du noe inntrykk av grunner til det? Hvordan håndterte du det (hvilke konsekvenser?)?

Jeg ser at arbeidsevnevurderingen i Eksempels sak både peker mot AAP, og at han/hun kanskje kan klare seg uten hjelp. Hvordan har den blitt brukt i etterkant?

Appendix 3: Ethical approval of the HPMT project from the Norwegian Centre for Research Data

Norsk samfunnsvitenskapelig datatjeneste AS
NORWEGIAN SOCIAL SCIENCE DATA SERVICES

Ira Malmberg-Heimonen
Avdeling for samfunnsfag
Høgskolen i Oslo
Postboks 4 St. Olavs plass
0130 OSLO

Vår dato: 07.12.2010   Vår ref: 25275 / 3 / LMR   Deres dato: Deres ref:

TILRÅDING AV BEHANDLING AV PERSONOPPLYSNINGER

Vi viser til melding om behandling av personopplysninger, mottatt 15.10.2010. Meldingen gjelder prosjektet:

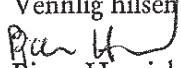|	
25275	*Helhetlig oppfølging av brukere i Kvalifiseringsprogrammet*
Behandlingsansvarlig	*Høgskolen i Oslo, ved institusjonens øverste leder*
Daglig ansvarlig	*Ira Malmberg-Heimonen*

Personvernombudet har vurdert prosjektet, og finner at behandlingen av personopplysninger vil være regulert av § 7-27 i personopplysningsforskriften. Personvernombudet tilrår at prosjektet gjennomføres.

Personvernombudets tilråding forutsetter at prosjektet gjennomføres i tråd med opplysningene gitt i meldeskjemaet, korrespondanse med ombudet, eventuelle kommentarer samt personopplysningsloven/-helseregisterloven med forskrifter. Behandlingen av personopplysninger kan settes i gang.

Det gjøres oppmerksom på at det skal gis ny melding dersom behandlingen endres i forhold til de opplysninger som ligger til grunn for personvernombudets vurdering. Endringsmeldinger gis via et eget skjema, http://www.nsd.uib.no/personvern/forsk_stud/skjema.html. Det skal også gis melding etter tre år dersom prosjektet fortsatt pågår. Meldinger skal skje skriftlig til ombudet.

Personvernombudet har lagt ut opplysninger om prosjektet i en offentlig database, http://www.nsd.uib.no/personvern/prosjektoversikt.jsp.

Personvernombudet vil ved prosjektets avslutning, 31.12.2016, rette en henvendelse angående status for behandlingen av personopplysninger.

Vennlig hilsen

Bjørn Henrichsen

Linn-Merethe Rød

Kontaktperson:Linn-Merethe Rød tlf: 55 58 89 11
Vedlegg: Prosjektvurdering

Avdelingskontorer / *District Offices:*
OSLO: NSD. Universitetet i Oslo, Postboks 1055 Blindern, 0316 Oslo. Tel: +47-22 85 52 11. nsd@uio.no
TRONDHEIM: NSD. Norges teknisk-naturvitenskapelige universitet, 7491 Trondheim. Tel: +47-73 59 19 07. kyrre.svarva@svt.ntnu.no
TROMSØ: NSD. SVF, Universitetet i Tromsø, 9037 Tromsø. Tel: +47-77 64 43 36. nsdmaa@sv.uit.no

Appendix 4: Permission from the Norwegian Labour and Welfare Administration to access case files

Bekreftelse på utvidet tillatelse for innhenting av journaldata

On 29.04.2013, 09.32, ▓▓▓▓▓▓▓▓ <Knut.Brenne@nav.no> wrote:

>Vi viser til vårt vedtak av 21.2.2012 og spørsmålet nedenfor om å
>"endre tiden sånn at vi får tilgang til journaldata-hendelseslogg
>mellom T1
>(1.4.2011) og T2 (18 måneder senere), istedenfor en måned ved hvert
>skjema?". Hensikten er da å se på noen få saker i et lengre perspektiv,
>heller en flere saker i et kortere perspektiv.
>
>Vi finner at den omspurte utvidelsen ligger innenfor rammen for
>samtykket og godkjenner at undersøkelsen for de som har gitt samtykke
>utvides til å omfatte journaldata/hendelseslogg mellom T1 og T2. For
>øvrig gjelder samme vilkår som i vedtaket av 21.2.2012.
>
>Kopi av din epost av 29.4.2013 og av dette svaret pr e-post blir
>skrevet ut, registrert og lagt inn vår fysiske saksmappe nr 11/12988.
>
>
>Med vennlig hilsen
>Knut Brenne
>Seniorrådgiver // Arbeids og Velferdsdirektoratet // IKT-avdelingen //
>Sikkerhetsseksjonen //
>Telefon: 21 07 06 87
>E-post: knut.brenne@nav.no
>
>www.nav.no
>
>
>
>-----Opprinnelig melding-----
>Fra: Ira Malmberg-Heimonen [mailto:Ira.Malmberg-Heimonen@hioa.no]
>Sendt: 29. april 2013 08:49
>Til: Brenne, Knut
>Kopi: Ida Merete Solvang
>Emne: Dispensasjon fra taushetsplikt 11/12988: journaldata
>
>Hei Knut,
>
>Vi er altså nå i gang med å planlegge innhenting av journaldata,
>kontakt med kontorer og så videre. I samband med dette har vi nøye
>vurdert vår konsesjon i forhold til de foreløpige funn vi nå har fra studien.
>Undersøkelsen viser at brukerne i tiltakskontor har er kommet seg i
>arbeid i høyere grad en brukere fra sammenlikningskontor, noe som gjør
>det viktig å studere prosessen mellom det første og det andre
>spørreskjemaet.
>
>I søknaden til dere har vi søkt om uttak fra journal-hendelselogg ved
>T1

>(1 måned) og uttak fra journal-hendelseslogg ved T2 (1 måned). Er det
>mulig å endre tiden sånn at vi får tilgang til
>journaldata-hendelseslogg mellom T1 (1.4.2011) og T2 (18 måneder
>senere), istedenfor en måned ved hvert skjema? Vi skulle då se på noen
>få saker i et lengre perspektiv, heller en flere saker i et kortere
>perspektiv. All annen informasjon som den var i søknaden til dere.
>
>Utvidet tidsmessig tilgang til journaler vil ikke ha konsekvenser for
>brukerne, ettersom de allerede har gitt samtykke til bruk av
>journaldata uten tidsbegrensning for journaldataene. Legger ved brukersamtykket.
>
>Då er mine spørsmål til deg
>a) er en slik endring mulig?
>b) hvis ja, hvor lenge tar det for å få godkjent en slik endring?
>
>Vi håper dere er positive til dette!
>
>Med vennlig hilsen
>
>Ira Malmberg-Heimonen
>
>Ira Malmberg-Heimonen Leder for Sosialforsk Førsteamanuensis, Docent i
>socialt arbete Høgskolen i Oslo og Akershus, Institutt for Sosialfag
>Postboks 4, St. Olavs Plass
>NO-0130 Oslo
>Tlf. 22453646/mobil +47 9363328
>
>Ira Malmberg-Heimonen Associate professor Oslo and Akershus College of
>Applied Sciences Social welfare research centre P.B. 4, St Olavs Plass
>NO-0130 Oslo, Norway
>Ph. +47 22 45 36 46/mobile +47 936 33 283
>
>
>
>
>
>
>>-----Original Message-----
>>From: Brenne, Knut [mailto:Knut.Brenne@nav.no]
>>Sent: Tuesday, April 09, 2013 12:56 PM
>>To: Ira Malmberg-Heimonen
>>Subject: SV: Dispensasjon fra taushetsplikt 11/12988
>>
>>Vi har ikke her tilgang til de aktuelle dataene. Journaldata (innen
>>rammen av
>>samtykket) må hentes ut fra det enkelte NAV-kontoret. Det er opp til
>>NAV- kontoret å vurdere hvordan/når/ de kan gi denne assistansen til
>>prosjektet uten at det fortrenger andre oppgaver kontoret er pålagt.
>>Eventuelle utgifter i denne forbindelse bæres av prosjektet.
>>
>>Den nye prosjektmedarbeideren pålegges taushetsplikt jf vårt vedtak av
>>21.2.2012.

>>
>>
>>Med vennlig hilsen
>>Knut Brenne
>>Seniorrådgiver // Arbeids og Velferdsdirektoratet // IKT-avdelingen //
>>Sikkerhetsseksjonen //
>>Telefon 21 07 06 87
>>E-post: knut.brenne@nav.no
>>
>>www.nav.no
>>
>>
>>
>>-----Opprinnelig melding-----
>>Fra: Ira Malmberg-Heimonen [mailto:Ira Malmberg-Heimonen@hioa.no]
>>Sendt: 8. april 2013 10:22
>>Til: Brenne, Knut
>>Kopi: Ida Merete Solvang
>>Emne: Dispensasjon fra taushetsplikt 11/12988
>>
>>Hei Knut,
>>
>>Jeg står ansvarlig for søknad gjeldende dispensasjon fra
>>taushetsplikt for prosjektet "Helhetlig oppfølging av brukere i
>>kvalifiseringsprogrammet" referanse 11/12988. Vi er blitt bevilget
>>tillatelse for analyser basert på journaldata fra NAV.
>>Det hele er basert på aktivt samtykke fra brukerne i prosjektet.
>>
>>Vi har nå fått en stipendiat, Ida Solvang (cc) som skal analysere
>>journaldataene i sin avhandling og jeg er hennes veileder. Mitt
>>spørsmål til deg er hvordan vi praktisk skal gjøre for å få ut
>>journaldata? Dette handler jo om spesifikke brukere (de som gitt
>>samtykke) i spesifikke NAV-kontorer (kontor som deltar i undersøkelsen).
>>Registerdata har vi fått direkte fra NAV, statistikk og analyse ved
>>Ola Thune, men jeg antar at det ikke er de som leverer journaldata.
>>Skal vi kontakte kontorene direkte eller får vi journaldata fra dere?
>>
>>Har du noen hos dere som kunne hjelpe oss med dette?
>>
>>Vh Ira Malmberg-Heimonen
>>
>>Ira Malmberg-Heimonen, Leder for Sosialforsk Førsteamanuensis, Docent
>>i socialt arbete Høgskolen i Oslo og Akershus, Institutt for Sosialfag
>>Postboks 4, St.
>>Olavs Plass
>>NO-0130 Oslo
>>Tlf. 22453646/mobil +47 93633283
>>
>>Ira Malmberg-Heimonen, Associate professor Oslo and Akershus College
>>of Applied Sciences Social welfare research centre P.B. 4, St Olavs
>>Plass
>>NO-0130 Oslo, Norway