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Integration of immigrant women in Norway: How policy guidelines, barriers and use of empowerment affects integration.

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Abstract

This thesis has examined one aspect of integration in Norway, namely integration of female immigrants through employment or education. The focus of the thesis, however, has been on the service providers', or *street-level bureaucrats*', point of view. Through a case study of one Jobbsjansen project, the thesis aims to answer three research questions.

Immigrants are more often outside the work-life than the rest of the population. In addition, immigrant women often experience more obstacles than immigrant men. Immigrant women, therefore, have a larger need for customized programs and aid than immigrant men. It is therefore valuable to document experiences with what works in targeted programs such as Jobbsjansen who have a high goal attainment of helping women into work or education. High employment rates benefit both society as a whole and the individual. Being unemployed can lead to outsidership, social differences, and child poverty, to name some. On the other hand, employment can increase feeling of inclusion in society, more freedom and independence, and will in turn have a positive effect on children living in poor households. Service providers in the welfare system therefore play an important part in contributing to integration through helping immigrant women (and men) find a job or start an education. However, many experience not receiving the help they need and want. It is therefore important to look at successful programs such as Jobbsjansen, what contribute to their achievements and what barriers they experience when working with immigrant women.

The main research questions examine how official policy guidelines affect street-level bureaucrats' work with immigrants. This thesis argues that policy guidelines play a big role in the quality of offers immigrants receive. It affects the time and resources street-level bureaucrats have available. Furthermore, poor policy guidelines can affect service providers' attitudes towards immigrants, as well as how much effort they are willing to put into their work with them. *The second research question* looks at what some of the main barriers to integration are, according to the service providers interviewed in this thesis. The focus here is both on obstacles related to the individual and on their encounters with the system. *The last research question* explores street-level bureaucrats' use of empowerment in their work with immigrant women. The argument is that when service providers focus on empowering women, they are more likely to obtain a secure attachment to work-life and therefore become integrated, according to the street-level bureaucrats.

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PART 1

1. Introduction

The main challenge in the integration-politics is that too many immigrants, especially refugees and women, are outside the work-life (Kunnskapsdepartementet [KD], 2018). According to Kunnskapsdepartementet (2018, p.7) immigrants are generally further from work-life in terms of lower employment and less secure job attachments such as non-temporary contracts and part-time positions, than the rest of the population. The lack of the formal competence required by the Norwegian working life is one of the main causes of the low employment, and the Norwegian integration strategy is failing in closing this gap as of now. One of the reasons for this is the great variations in the results from the Introduction Program both when it comes to how many are in education or work after completing the program, and the differences in results between men and women (KD, 2018; Djuve et al., 2017). Many immigrants also live a long time in Norwegian society without reaching a satisfying level of Norwegian, getting a job, or starting an education, which can make it even harder to become integrated later. It is thus a need for more services that aim to help immigrants into work life.

Aim of the study

How well the integration of immigrants in Norway is going is an ongoing topic of debate. There are constant discussions on how well immigrants are being integrated, where we are failing, and where we can improve. In the Norwegian Integration Strategy for 2019-2022 (KD, 2018) there is extensive focus on getting more immigrants into work or education. Furthermore, the introduction program is not working as well as it should because of differences between programs, both when it comes to structure and results. On the other hand, NAV offers several different services for immigrants, but many of the service users seem to be in the system for a long time without getting integrated into the Norwegian work life. Since there is a great focus on integrating immigrants but still so modest results, this thesis aims to find out what the people working with immigrants, the *street-level bureaucrats*, see as the greatest barriers and the best way to achieve results. Moreover, the thesis looks at how policy guidelines governing the work of street-level bureaucrats affect their work with immigrants. Lastly, how do street-level bureaucrats use empowerment in their work with immigrants, and

what does a focus on empowerment achieve. My research participants in this project are the service providers in one program that works with integrating immigrant women and will hereafter be referred to as *street-level bureaucrats*. I will discuss street-level bureaucracy further in the theory chapter but the reason for using this term about the service providers is to highlight their role as both policy implementors and policy shapers. The term is also used to examine the expectations of the service providers and the complexity of how they work as the link between the people and existing rules and policies.

The thesis aims to answer these questions using a case study of one Jobbsjansen project (The Job Opportunity Program), hereafter called Jobbsjansen. Even though studies like these often focus on the participants in such programs, this study has chosen to examine the service provider's point of view since the focus of similar studies is often on the participants' experiences. Still, since this Jobbsjansen project has had good results for many years it is interesting to see what the people working there think is most important when working with immigrant women. The aim is therefore to look at how street-level bureaucrats work with immigrants, what barriers they see as the greatest, and what they believe is most important in achieving results working with immigrants.

Research questions

The research questions of this thesis comprise of one main research question and two sub research questions, which are as follows:

RQ 1: In what ways does official policy guidelines affect street-level bureaucrats' work with immigrants?

RQ 2: What do street-level bureaucrats that work with immigrant women describe as the main barriers to integration?

RQ 3: How can increasing immigrant women's agency contribute to a secure attachment to work-life, according to street-level bureaucrats?

The main research questions examine how official policy guidelines affect street-level bureaucrats' work with immigrants. This thesis argues that policy guidelines play a big role in the quality of offers immigrants receive. It affects the time and resources street-level bureaucrats have available. Moreover, poor policy guidelines can affect service providers' attitudes towards immigrants, as well as how much effort they are willing to put into their work with them. *The second research question* looks at what some of the greatest barriers to integration are, according to the service providers interviewed in this thesis. The focus here is both on barriers related to the individual, and on their encounters with the system. *The last research question* explores street-level bureaucrats' use of empowerment in their work with immigrant women. The argument is that when service providers focus on empowering women, they are more likely to obtain a secure attachment to work-life and therefore become integrated, according to the street-level bureaucrats. The thesis tries to answer these questions using previous research on the theme and a case study of one qualification program for immigrant women called Jobbsjansen.

Why use Jobbsjansen as a case study?

As part of answering my research questions, I have looked at a project called Jobbsjansen which has been quite successful in helping immigrant women find work and become more integrated. The reason why I wanted to explore Jobbsjansen further was that they receive considerable funds from IMDi and were granted additional funds in 2021. Moreover, the project has achieved good results, above the minimum of 70%, for several years. Thus, this is an important project in the integration field right now. Furthermore, the employment rates of immigrants have for a long time been a highly prioritized political field and a part of the public debate. It is therefore of interest to look at programs that work with and address this. I am curious of the success factors of the program, and if there are any elements that can be used in expanding existing projects or creating new ones.

Why is it important to focus on employment for immigrant women? As previously stated, immigrants, in general, are more often outside work-life than the rest of the population. In addition, immigrant women often experience more obstacles than immigrant men. Immigrant women, therefore, have a larger need for customized programs and aid than immigrant men. Furthermore, as mentioned earlier, high employment rates benefit both society as a whole and

the individual. Not having a job can lead to outsidership, social differences, and child poverty to name some related consequences, while employment can lead to being a part of a community, more freedom, and independence, and will in turn affect children living in poor households positively (KD, 2018, p. 33). The barriers women experience are much the same as immigrants in general but women often experience more barriers as well as more complex ones (Rambøll & Halogen, 2021). Immigrant women face more challenges compared to immigrant men and non-immigrant women when it comes to getting an attachment to the labor market (Rambøll & Halogen, 2021). In addition to the barriers also experienced by men such as language, culture, and missing or no qualifications, women can also experience barriers related to gender. In many cultures, women are expected to stay at home and take care of the house and family while the man is out working. So, while the man often worked in their home country and early on gets a job in the new country, the woman often becomes a stay-at-home mom also in the new country. However, immigrant women have different backgrounds and face different barriers, so it's important to remember that they also have different needs when facing the labor market. Furthermore, it is useful to keep the framework of intersectionality in mind and how multiple social identities at the micro-level can affect systems of privilege and oppression at a macro level (Harris & Leonardo, 2018, p. 2). Immigrant women can therefore experience inequalities related to both their gender and their ethnicity at the same time. It is therefore important to map the background and needs of each woman to make sure they receive help that is relevant for them. As I will go more into later, close follow-up of participants is an important tool in programs that aim to increase the qualification of immigrant women and assist them in finding a job. Unfortunately, entities such as NAV and Voksenopplæringen (adult education) are organized and run in such a way that they generally don't have resources enough to follow up with participants as closely as needed (Rambøll & Halogen, 2021, p. 82). Caseworkers often have too many participants and too little time and capacity to give the participants the follow-up they need.

The significance of the study

Through looking at the barriers immigrant women experience in the face of work life, Rambøll & Halogen (2021, p. 83) argue that there is a lack of customized offers for immigrant women. The consequences of this are that many women receive offers they can't make use of, they don't experience progression and mastering, and it doesn't help them get

any closer to participating in work-life. One of the recommendations Rambøll & Halogen (2021) make for further investigation and process is to document experiences with what works in targeted programs such as Jobbsjansen and other methods and processes. Furthermore, as we have seen the quality and results of the Introduction Program vary between different programs. Entities such as NAV and Voksenopplæringen often don't have the resources required to follow up with participants. This is the reason why targeted programs such as Jobbsjansen are interesting to look more closely at. They provide help to immigrant women who are far from the job market and use both close follow-up and individually adapted strategies to make sure their participants get a permanent connection to the labor market or enter studies that can help them acquire a job.

As IMDi (2021a, p.2, my own translation) states, «how we are doing with integration is crucial for how Norway is doing». Moreover, that one important criterion of succeeding with integration is that decision-makers, professionals, and the general public have access to a wide and up-to-date foundation of knowledge on the theme. That is why my research about integration as viewed from the service providers' point of view, with a focus on official guidelines, barriers, and empowerment, is an important contribution to further expanding this knowledge foundation. The objective of this thesis is therefore to contribute to further reflection and knowledge of different integration strategies, focusing on the use of empowerment, individually adapted programs, and close follow-up.

Delimitations of the study

Since the thesis has only collected data from the service providers' point of view, I have broadened the view in the thesis by including immigrant women both through background context in chapter two and through thorough use of mapping of barriers experienced by immigrant women in previous research.

Before going further in the thesis, I want to elaborate on some of the central terms used. First, the people who receive help from entities such as NAV are referred to as service users, migrant users or participants. The employees on the other hand, are referred to as service providers, case workers, contacts, or street-level bureaucrats. Second, I discuss policy guidelines throughout the thesis and whether it is good or poor/unsatisfying. What I mean by

this is aspects of the official framework governing the employees' work, such as having enough time and resources at their disposal, having freedom to make decisions, and having a satisfying work structure and environment. Third, the research participants often mention ownership of process (Norsk: eierskap til/over prosessen) which is about the participants feeling like they are the one who controls the process, makes decisions and chooses the direction.

The paper will be structured as follows:

PART 1

Chapter 1 Introduction – Introduction of the thesis, main themes and relevance.

Chapter 2 Background and context – This chapter will elaborate on the context of the paper and some relevant background info. It starts with defining integration and immigration before providing some information on integration and immigration in Norway and relevant programs and actors.

Chapter 3 Methodology – Here I will present and discuss my choice of methodology. I will discuss ethical considerations and decisions regarding the choice of method along with the process of establishing data.

Chapter 4 Theoretical framework and previous research – This chapter will look at the theoretical framework used in this thesis which is Street-level bureaucracy, theories on equity/equality, and empowerment. It will also provide some perspectives on postcolonialism. Then, I will provide an overview of relevant previous research for the thesis.

PART 2 analysis and discussion

Chapter 5 Individual adaption and work methodology – The first analysis chapter presents and discuss findings related to how Jobbsjansen actively work with individual adaption of programs and holistic follow-up of the participants. Then, it looks at policy guidelines and work methodology in relation to exercising discretion.

Chapter 6 Ownership of process – The second analysis chapter looks at the employees work with empowering the participants and the process around it.

Chapter 7 Barriers – The last analysis chapter discuss some of the barriers immigrant women experience in the face of work life. The focus here is both on individual barriers and structural barriers.

Chapter 8 Concluding discussion and the way forward – In the final chapter of the thesis I will summarize my findings and have a final discussion about my research questions. Then I will provide some thoughts on the way forward and future research.

2. Background

Before looking at previous research, theory, and my findings it is important to look at the definitions and history of integration and immigration in Norway to understand the context behind how the welfare system and service providers/street-level bureaucrats' work.

Understanding and defining integration

Before going into the background and context relating to this theme, I would like to look at the terms integration and immigrant and discuss the different understandings and definitions of integration. *Integration* can be difficult to define since it is understood in different ways in different contexts. The verb *integrare* which is Latin means to make full, or to complete (Østerberg, 2012, p. 28). As Barstad & Molstad (2020, p. 9) discuss, the word integration is primarily used to describe how immigrants, and other groups that are considered outside the community, can become part of society. Even though there is no universal definition, the term is often understood as a process that can be both quick or slow, good or bad (IMDi, 2021a, p. 5). However, one understanding of *successful integration* is if “unreasonable and not self-selected differences between minority and majority decrease, over time and between generations” (Østby, 2016, my own translation). *Immigrant* (Norks: innvandrere) on the other hand is clearly defined by Statistics Norway (SSB) as people born outside of Norway with two foreign-born parents and four foreign-born grandparents (Kirkeberg et al., 2019, p. 10), this definition can therefore include both immigrants and migrants. This thesis, however, will use the term immigrant as a translation to the Norwegian word *innvandrere*, and will only focus on first-generation immigrants, not children of immigrants.

The integration term has been criticized for only being a one-way process where the individual must adapt and become part of the majority, among other things (Barstad & Molstad, 2020, p. 10). The concept of integration has also had a negative connotation concerning the marginalization of individuals or potentially disintegrated societies (Kavli, 2020, p. 22). It has also been a controversial term in migration literature, because of disagreements on what immigrants are supposed to be integrated into and how much space there is and should be for differences (Kavli, 2020, p. 22). Even though my thesis will not go too much into this, these aspects are important to keep in mind when discussing integration. Furthermore, even though this thesis focuses on integration through employment and

education, integration is a normative term that can be understood and come about in many ways. However, this paper will not go further into the different meanings and definitions behind the integration term but rather focus on understanding integration as a process toward equity. This entails that we get to a place where immigrant groups don't experience any disadvantages by the virtue of the fact that they are migrants. Rather, they have equity of opportunities and attainment. SSB provides five dimensions of integration (Barstad & Molstad, 2020, p. 35). These are *structural integration*, *social integration*, *psychological-cultural dimensions*, *political dimensions*, and limits and resources for integration. The first dimension includes perspectives on achieving the same socioeconomic goods as other members of society, including employment, housing, and income. The second dimension is about social participation and attachment. The third includes the experience of national belonging and having the same values as the majority, and the last dimension includes indicators of Norwegian language skills, health, and discrimination (Barstad & Molstad, 2020, p. 5). These dimensions are often associated and linked and being integrated into one dimension might affect integration in another. This paper will focus on integration through work and education which is mainly under the structural dimension, but employment can in turn lead to better language skills, a social network, feeling like a part of the community, and participating more in the society in general. The advantages of participation in work in relation to inclusion and integration are that it “contributes to independence, self-realization and to build a network. It provides increased belonging to society, counteracts poverty, and levels differences” (IMDi, 2021, p. 30, my own translation).

Immigrants in Norway

In the last two decades, Norway has experienced a tripling of the immigrant population (IMDi, 2021a). While differences between immigrants and the general public have decreased or remained stable in some areas such as participation in higher education, income, and election participation (IMDi, 2021a), there are still big differences in other areas. For instance, children with immigrant backgrounds are over-represented when it comes to children living in households with persistent low income. In 2019, 6 out of 10 children living in households with persistent low-income had immigrant backgrounds (IMDi, 2021a, p. 38). Furthermore, according to IMDi (2021a, p. 4), the proportion of immigrants in work is lower than for the rest of the population, and women have an even weaker connection to work than men.

Another important aspect regarding the differences between immigrants and the rest of the population is that people with immigrant backgrounds more often have part-time or temporary positions. IMDi (2021a) points to education as having a larger effect on employment than immigrant background and states that immigrants in general have a lower education level than the rest of the population. Becoming integrated often takes time and the longer immigrants live in Norway, the better the integration results seem to be in most areas of society (IMDi, 2021a, p.5), but more so for men than women. The article also mentions the term “everyday integration” as an important aspect where integration happens through relationships between people in everyday life (IMDi, 2021a, p. 5). Integration is a complex matter, and it’s important to remember that many factors can influence how much and how fast a person gets integrated, such as negative social control, country of origin, the reason they migrated, and more. Gender also plays a role when it comes to integration. As Smukkestad (2009, p. 157) explains, gender is about what norms and expectations are attached to the behaviors of men and women in different societies. The focus here is on gender as a cultural and social term constructed through processes of socialization. This can affect integration concerning for instance work and education since there can be different expectations for women than for men, especially women who come from male-dominated societies or cultures, and who are expected to have a more traditional gender role.

There have been several major changes in Norwegian society in the last 50 years, including an education revolution that has led to a strong presence of women in the work-life. At the same time, our society has become more multicultural with an increasing population of immigrants. Because of low employment among some immigrant groups and increased concern about the sustainability of the welfare state, the focus on immigrants’ economic integration has increased (Kavli, 2020, p. 10). Kavli (2020) argues that the particular attention on immigrant women’s employment is mostly because it relates both to the question of the Nordic model's economic sustainability and to values related to gender equality. In Norway, the norm is for both men and women, even mothers, to work full-time, and for families to have two incomes. This is not the case in all cultures, especially male-dominated ones. Furthermore, since the mid-1970s and until today, Norwegian integration policy has been through an extensive change from the focus on everybody’s right to be different to the obligation to contribute (Djuve & Kavli, 2007, p. 204 as cited in Kavli, 2020). The Norwegian integration policy has

shifted in the last decades. There has been a shift from the notion that the society to the smallest extent possible should impose on immigrants the values and ways of living of the majority. The previous policy emphasized how immigrants should be able to decide for themselves what kind of adjustments they wanted to make to the Norwegian society. Now the integration policies more concerned with rights and obligations. This was partly a result of a growing agreement that Norwegian integration policies had failed and that new reforms were needed which led to the enactment of the Introduction Act in 2003 (Kavli, 2020, p. 18).

The Introduction Act

The Introduction Act (Norsk: Introduksjonsloven) includes both the *Introduction Program* which was created in 2004 and education in Norwegian and social studies for adult immigrants which was included in 2005 (Djuve et al., 2017, p. 23). The goal of the introduction program is that 70% of the participants are in work or education the year after finishing the program. The law aimed to strengthen new immigrants' chances of finding their place in Norwegian work and society and becoming economically independent and was created as a result of a 'failing' integration policy (Djuve et al., 2017, p. 23). Today there is a mutual requirement for both providers and users. This means that municipalities are required to offer individually adapted training while newly arrived immigrants are required to take part in this. Unfortunately, as previously stated, the results from the Introduction Program have varied between different municipalities and programs. Not all municipalities have been able to offer full-time or year-round programs, and there has also been a great variety in what and how good offers the programs have been able to offer (Djuve et al., 2017, p.24). All in all, it seems like participants who are in work or education one year after finishing the program, is fairly even around 60% with men doing better than women and young people better than old. Among the participants finishing the program in 2015 only 49 percent of the women were in work or education the year after, while for men, the results were 71 percent (KD, 2018, p. 25). Studies show that the different offers women receive are far less vocational than the offers men receive. However, there have been done extensive changes in the Introduction Program, which was implemented in January 2021. Thus, the results from the program may change in the coming years (IMDi, 2021a, p. 27).

The Norwegian integration strategy for 2019-2022 is divided into four areas. These are *education and qualification, work, everyday integration, and the right to live a free life* (KD, 2018, p. 9). The main goal, however, is higher participation in work and society. Boosting employment among immigrants can help with higher participation in society, increased livelihood, less child poverty, and less outsidership (KD, 2018, p. 10). One of the goals under *work* is to make sure more immigrants have a good and stable foothold in the work-life. One of the reasons why this is such a big problem is because there are big differences in the *Introduction Program* offered to immigrants, both in terms of content and results (KD, 2018, p. 25). In addition, men more often than women start work or education within a year after finishing the program. The differences between municipalities when it comes to the scope and results of both Norwegian training and the Introduction program are many (KD, 2018, p. 26). The government, therefore, wants to standardize some elements of the Introduction Program to better the offer and increase quality and facilitate the use of individual adaptation.

Since the Introduction Program is not able to meet everyone's needs and help more people become a part of work and society there is a need for other programs that can offer training and education to immigrants after they have completed the Introduction Program.

Furthermore, it is also important to note that not all immigrants have rights and responsibilities and are captured by different programs for newly arrived, such as the introduction program. They might therefore have a harder time getting in touch with the service apparatus in Norway because they don't know who to contact themselves and because they become "hidden" from the public help apparatus (Rambøll & Halogen, 2021).

IMDi and Jobbsjansen

IMDi (Integrerings- og Mangfoldsdirektoratet) is the Directorate for Integration and Diversity in Norway and work with implementing the government's integration policies. In IMDi's letter of allocation for 2021, the second main goal is about getting more immigrants to participate in the work-life. The background for this is the employment gap between immigrants and the general population (Kunnskapsdepartementet [KD], 2021, p. 8). One of the sub-goals here is *styringsparameter 2.4* which is about getting more immigrants to participate in qualification (KD, 2021, p. 14). This sub-goal is about other arrangements and

methods that are not a part of the Introduction act or Integration act, which aims to strengthen qualification and participation in the work-life. One of these arrangements is *Jobbsjansen*.

Jobbsjansen was first established in 2005 and the purpose was to test methods and principles that were used in the Introduction Programme on immigrants who had been living in Norway for some time (Lerfaldet et al., 2019, p. 17). Funding for the programs comes from IMDi and both counties and municipalities can apply for funds. The target groups and design of the program have varied a lot over the years, but immigrant women with a weak connection to the work-life have been a priority from the start. The program was for some years divided into three schemes where part A focused on immigrant women, part B on primary education for immigrant youth, and part C on extended qualification programs for former introduction program participants (Lerfaldet et al, 2019). Today Jobbsjansen only focuses on part A – qualification projects for immigrant women who are far from the work-life.

Jobbsjansen is one of IMDi's focus areas and received a total grant framework of 135,3 million NOK for 2021 after the government decided to strengthen the work with Jobbsjansen with additional funds (IMDi, 2021b). Jobbsjansen aims to increase the number of immigrant women that are in work or education. The participants of Jobbsjansen are minority women from 18-55 years, and the target group is women who are supported economically by their husbands, or single providers (Cogorno, 2021). These women are either far from the work-life or have trouble with acquiring permanent employment or even getting job interviews.

All municipalities in Norway can apply for grants from IMDi for projects that are meant to qualify immigrant women for work or education. IMDi has some demands for the projects in general and for reporting on the projects yearly (IMDi, 2022). The performance requirement for this arrangement is that at least 70 percent of the participants in Jobbsjansen will be in work or education at the high school level or higher after completing the program (Lerfaldet et al., 2019, p. 148). Other than that, the different Jobbsjansen projects are more or less free to structure the program as they want.

The district in Oslo that I have looked at has received considerable funds for its work with Jobbsjansen in 2020 (IMDi, 2021b) and is one of the districts with the highest number of

immigrants from the Global South. Furthermore, this district had a very high success rate in 2020. The employees create individual plans for each participant and the aim is to access each participant's resources. They also work very closely and holistically with each participant. In this way, they can better help the women get a job or an education by assisting them with everything from language courses, job applications, family life, and much more. They also follow up on each participant one year after they complete the program to make sure they are doing well in their new situation and have maintained a stable and strong foothold in work-life.

Oslo

A round 30,4 percent of the immigrants in Norway live in the most central municipalities compared to 19,1 percent in the rest of the population (IMDi, 2021a, p. 10). Oslo had on January 1st, 2021, 697 010 inhabitants (Oslo Kommune, 2021), and is also one of the cities with the highest number of immigrants in Norway. The distribution of immigrants in the different districts in Oslo is very uneven. The districts Stovner, Grorud, Søndre Nordstrand, and Alna have the highest percentage of immigrants and Norwegian-born people with immigrant parents from the Global South, with 48,3%, 39,2%, 42,4%, and 40,9% (SSB, 2021, appendix 1). Numbers from IMDi (2021c) show that in Oslo 60% of immigrants were a part of the labor force in 2020 versus 71,9% of the general population.

As discussed earlier, there are many ways of understanding and defining 'successful' integration. However, this thesis will look at integration through employment or education since both of these can lead to being more integrated into Norwegian society. Through for instance improving language skills, creating a larger network, learning more about Norwegian society, and improving one's confidence and self-efficacy. It is also important to note that immigrant men also face many obstacles and difficulties with integration and with discrimination in the job market. However, both because of limitations in time and resources, and because women often have more, and other, obstacles, this thesis will only focus on female immigrants in Norway.

Unlike many other qualification programs where the goal is just to get participants quickly into the work-life, Jobbsjansen has a more holistic approach where the goal is not only to get

a job but to secure a lasting connection to the work-life. What this means is that they work with their participants to find work that is not part-time or temporary unless this is what the participant wants. They also have a one-year follow-up for the participants after they have started a job or education to help them with problems that might appear in the beginning. Jobbsjansen also teaches the participants how the Norwegian society and work-life functions and make sure they have knowledge of how to write a CV or job application, how to apply for jobs, and much more. They do this so that if they lose their job in the future or simply want to change jobs, they know what to do and how to handle it. Therefore, they maintain that empowering women and increasing their agency is important. They are not only helping them find jobs, but they are also teaching them how to be independent and confident.

The objective of the program according to IMDi is that “Jobbsjansen should through individually adapted programs give strengthened qualifications for lasting attachment to work-life and economic self-reliance. The program should have a specific focus on the early placement of participants in the ordinary workplace. For those who need it, the program should adapt for increased basic and formal competence if it is necessary to get the participant over in job or ordinary education” (IMDi, 2022). What we see here is that the program is focused on finding a lasting connection to work-life and that this help should be through individually adapted programs. However, the guidelines do not mention anything about empowering the women or making sure that they get ownership of their process.

I will now move on to the methodology chapter and provide a detailed overview of how I have collected my data.

3. Method and Design

Research perspectives and methodology

Methodology is the different tools researchers can use to collect, generate, construct and produce their data (Brinkmann & Tanggaard, 2019). For the purpose of this study, a qualitative approach was the most appropriate research method. Flick (2018, p. 604) defines qualitative research as “research interested in analyzing the subjective meaning or the social production of issues, events, or practices by collecting non-standardized data and analyzing texts and images rather than numbers and statistics”. Qualitative research is more concerned with how something is done, said, or experienced while quantitative research focuses on quantities and how much there is of something (Tanggaard & Brinkmann, 2019).

In qualitative research, you seek to understand people, processes, or events and go deeper into human thought, feelings or actions. Conducting qualitative research entails understanding the participants’ perspectives (Postholm, 2010). I wanted to study the breaking point between official policy guidelines and the street-level bureaucrats' daily work with integration and their background in their work. I therefore sought an in-depth perspective that captured each employee’s experiences, which is something that might have been overlooked if I had used a quantitative approach. I wanted to create new knowledge and not base it on preconceived assumption about work and integration. I wanted to look at the individual perspective rather than a general one. Moreover, qualitative research often seeks to understand and look at processes from within life itself rather than from the outside which was what I wanted to do with my fieldwork – to look at integration strategies in real life from the point of view of those who work with this. For the purpose of this thesis, a qualitative approach will provide me with the tools to observe, map, and thoroughly study ways of working with immigrants combined with the thoughts and feelings of the employees which are relevant for answering the research questions of the thesis. Having an ethnomethodological approach means being more concerned with what people do than how they view the world (Fangen 2010, p. 24). It also studies how knowledge in everyday life is created. I was interested in looking at how the people in Jobbsjansen work and their reasons behind this, how they work to integrate immigrant women into the society, and whether there were some aspects of the practices and knowledge that they took for granted. To get to know Jobbsjansen better and see how they work, it was valuable to observe them in their everyday work life. In this way, I was able to

see how they cooperated with their participants and how they cooperated internally and with other institutions. Furthermore, how they related to and perceived the policy guidelines that govern their work. Whether they find it helpful and relevant or if it at times works as an obstacle against doing what they believe is the best way to help the participants and get to their wanted outcomes.

The methodology I'm using for my research is an ethnographic approach with participant observation and interviews. The term ethnography has changed in recent times from defining more long-term studies where the researcher is a part of a local community, to now also including short-term studies in one's own culture (Fangen, 2010). With this approach I was able to do a combination of observing people in the 'field', talking with them through both informal conversations and more formal interviews, and collecting documents and other literary sources (Flick, 2018). Through participant observation, I could also join activities and take notes on what I observed (Flick, 2018, p. 59).

Case study

A case study is typically a study that gathers information about one or a few units (Fangen, 2010, p.187). Case studies can be used in many different contexts, for instance when the focus of the study is on the interaction between people, or when you want to see the perspective of an actor (Fangen, 2010). Postholm (2010, p. 50) defines a case study as exploring a system that is bound by both time and space. A case study gives a detailed description of what is studied in its context. This context can be the physical setting or the social, historical, and/or economic setting for what is being researched (Postholm, 2010, p. 50). In this case, the context, which we have already looked at, is Norwegian integration and immigration. Case studies can use several different methods for collecting data. The important thing, however, is to plan the case study carefully and both define and narrow down the case beforehand. The case definition problem in this study is looking at one Jobbsjansen project and how they work with the integration of immigrant women. As Postholm (2010, p. 52) maintains, certain settings can be subject to research based on their unique character. In this case, Jobbsjansen was chosen as a case study based on its good results and for being in a district with a high number of participants from the Global South.

Bent Flyvbjerg (2006) writes about common misunderstandings about case studies. He mentions, among others, how there are misunderstandings regarding that general, theoretical knowledge is more valuable than concrete, practical knowledge, and how “one cannot generalize on the basis of an individual case; therefore, the case study cannot contribute to scientific development” (Flyvbjerg, 2006, p. 221). Flyvbjerg (2006, p. 224) argues that these misconceptions are wrong and that regards to the misconception about practical knowledge “predictive theories and universals cannot be found in the study of human affairs. Concrete, context-dependent knowledge is, therefore, more valuable than the vain search for predictive theories and universals”. Moreover, as a response to the misunderstanding about not being able to generalize based on an individual case, Flyvbjerg (2006) mentions several cases as “black swans”, showing how a single case can have great value. The value of a case study can be described like this: “sometimes we simply have to keep our eyes open and look carefully at individual cases – not in the hope of proving anything, but rather in the hope of learning something” (Eysenck, 1976, p. 9 as cited in Flyvbjerg, 2006, p. 224). This is exactly what I hope to gain with the knowledge from my case study about Jobbsjansen – to learn something about one way of working with immigrant women.

Sampling

Flick (2018, p. 331) states that sampling in participant observation is most often focused on situations and not individuals as in interviews. This is the case in my sample group, where I started by finding an organization I was interested in and wanted to know more about. I thought Jobbsjansen, with its high goal attainment, seemed like an interesting project which I wanted to learn more from. I chose one of the projects because a great proportion of its participants came from the Global South. I then contacted them and asked if I could use them as a case study for my master thesis by observing and interviewing them. The people I observed were, therefore, ‘chosen’ because they worked in this place or were in contact with the people who work there. The interview sample was based on the same criteria and consisted of the employees I had observed and consisted of seven people in total.

After I had agreed with Jobbsjansen to observe and interview them, I quickly decided that I would only be focusing on the employees in the project and not the participants, for two reasons. The first reason, which was an ethical one, was based on the people who are

participants in Jobbsjansen. The participants are only women, with varying levels of fluency in the Norwegian language, who could be considered a vulnerable group because of the reason(s) why they are in the project. They could also feel pressured to participate in my research to please their contact in Jobbsjansen, or there could be misunderstandings or miscommunication without the use of an interpreter. Therefore, including them in the research in this way meant facing a lot of ethical issues and I did not believe I could include them in a good way. The second, and main reason, was both a strategic and a practical one. I wanted to focus on the process and not the results, and the employees were therefore the most important and suitable participants. Previous qualitative research in this field has mostly focused on the users in such programs, and where the employees have been in focus, the research is mostly quantitative and focused on results. I wanted to look at the employees' strategies for working with immigrant women and what they believed were the greatest obstacles both for the women and for working with them. In this way, my research could both contribute to the existing literature on the field and create more insight into integration from the service providers' point of view. In addition, since my time and options in this research were limited, my findings would also be better supported by focusing more on one group instead of trying to say something about two groups based on a few people from each. Although I only wanted to observe and interview the employees of the program, I also listed the participants as a sample when applying to NSD just to be sure, since I did not know what the situation would be when I was there regarding for instance third party information and how much I would interact with the participants. I later notified NSD that the participants would not be a sample group.

My goal from the beginning with the participant observation was that I wanted everyone to feel comfortable with my presence there and know that the information I obtained through observation and interviews would be handled according to both common research ethics and general privacy policies. I wanted to make sure everyone knew that I was not there to cause any harm to either individuals or the organization (Flick, 2018). I explained how I believe these kinds of projects are important in the integration field and how I wanted to learn more about the way they work.

Ethical considerations

All research demands ethical considerations, which need to be assessed throughout the entire research process (Haugen & Skilbrei, 2021). Ethical principles should not be seen as rules to be followed, but rather as a support for different choices the researcher must make in the research process (Postholm, 2010, p. 154). Making good research-ethical assessments is important for several reasons; to make sure the research is ethically sound, to increase the quality of the research, and to avoid illegal research practices (Haugen & Skilbrei, 2021). Research ethics is both about protecting the participants in a study and about increasing the trust others have in the research results (Haugen & Skilbrei, 2021). I will now go through some of the ethical considerations I have made in this research relating to informed consent and anonymization and confidentiality.

Informed consent

The concept of informed consent is about informing participants of a study about what the purpose of the project is and making sure they know and consent to what they are a part of (Fangen, 2010). In studies based on participant observation where you don't necessarily know every detail about the study beforehand it may not be possible to give a complete description of the study, but the most important thing is to be as open as possible (Fangen, 2010). Furthermore, all social science studies that involve the collection or use of personal data must notify and apply for permission from NSD (Norwegian Centre for Research Data) before starting the research (Fangen, 2010, p. 191). So, before I started my research, I applied to NSD to get an approval for using personal data since I would be observing and doing interviews where I recorded the informants. In my application I stated that I had one sampling group, which was the employees of Jobbsjansen, but since I at that time were not 100% clear on exactly what I wanted to research NSD recommended that I should add the participants of the program as another sampling group, and I followed their advice. What's important when collecting informed consent from participants in a research project is that they understand what the research is about and how the data will be handled, that participation is voluntary (which also means that they will not get any negative consequences if they choose not to participate) and that they can withdraw their consent at any time without having to offer any explanation (Flick, 2018).

Before I started my observations, I sent out an information letter with a declaration of consent based on a template from NSD to the employees. This document contained among other things information about my project, that participation was voluntary, and consent could be withdrawn at any time, and information about the institution and people responsible for the research project. I then asked the team leader about comments on making a similar document for the participants in the program, to which she commented that I should simplify the document and make it easier to understand for those who are not as fluent in Norwegian. I then created a revised version which the team leader approved as being understandable enough for the participants, and which I felt was good enough according to ethical guidelines. This letter contained information about the project, that everything would be anonymous, that consent was voluntary and could be withdrawn at any time, and my contact info. Making sure I had informed consent from the employees of Jobbsjansen was unproblematic since they were all adults capable of understanding and consenting to being a part of my research.

The participants of the program, however, was a bit more problematic. Since their fluency in Norwegian was of varying degrees, I had to be more careful and make sure that they truly understood who I was, what I was doing and what their role in this was (Fangen, 2010). So, to make sure that I had their explicit consent I made an arrangement with the employees that they would ask them in advance if it was okay that I observed them (in whatever activity they were doing) and after they agreed to this, I would meet them and tell them a bit about myself and my research and that I was writing a paper where I was interested in looking at Jobbsjansen, in addition to handing them the information letter. To the ones I only observed at follow up conversations or casual meetings I would hand out an information writing about my research project and my contact info, but in the few instances that I was a part of mapping conversations (Norsk: kartleggingssamtaler) I asked them to sign a declaration of consent and gave them a copy of the document they signed which also contained my contact info in case they had any questions or wanted to withdraw their consent. The reason I asked for written consent in these situations and not in others was that even though I never recorded the participants, interviewed them, or wrote down any identifying information about them in any of the situations, I felt that the mapping conversations were more vulnerable situations for the participants and wanted to be sure that they were comfortable with me being there. In general, I wanted the participants of the program to feel like I respected their integrity and I wanted

them to feel comfortable around me. That was the main reason why I made sure to get their informed consent, either oral or written, no matter the situation (Haugen & Skilbrei, 2021, p.58). Although, in all the situations I participated in, none of the participants seemed hesitant or bothered by my presence and they all accepted me observing them with a smile. Their Norwegian was also good enough to explain my presence to them and get an oral consent. If I would have used them as informants, however, I would have considered translating the informed consent into some of the most common languages of the participants or using a translator. I only observed the relational between them and their Jobbsjansen contact and took field notes of statements they made that were general but interesting. To reassure them that I was not collecting personal information about them I would always make sure that I focused on them and put down my pen when they said something personal or not relevant for the project, so that they had control of what and when I was writing. Although I tried to observe without participating or interrupting too much in the conversations between the employee and the participant, I felt like they trusted me more and was more comfortable with my presence if I engaged in small ways like laughing when they laughed, and by nodding and smiling when they looked at me. In this way we were more like equals than researcher/informant.

To sum up, my data collection went pretty much after plan. I wanted to observe and interview the employees in the project and even though there was some back and forth on making the participants in the projects another sampling group I ended up not using them as informants. Nevertheless, since I participated in situations where they were present, I asked for their informed consent just to be sure that they felt safe with my presence.

Confidentiality and anonymization

Confidentiality is about ensuring the privacy of the people involved in the study and making sure they can't be exposed based on characteristics or information in the study (Fangen, 2010, p. 196). My research project went through an unexpected turn after I finished collecting my data. My plan was to anonymize which Jobbsjansen district I had done my research on. I had informed my participants on this from the beginning and as previously explained given an information letter with a declaration of consent to each research participant. After my data collection was finished, I talked with one of the research participants to ask whether there were any characteristics of their Jobbsjansen project that I should be aware not to write about

to make sure I maintained confidentiality and anonymization. At this point the research participant said that they wanted the district of the project to be known. The reason for this was that they believed it would be good for them in helping create awareness and focus on the project, which could lead to more possible participants and partners. The research participant said they had discussed it together as a group with their leader and had come to a joint decision wanting the place of the project to be known. There were a lot of ethical considerations to consider before deciding what to do here. First, I had to consider the possible negative consequences this could have both for the research and for the participants. I had to think about whether disclosing which project I was researching would prevent me from discussing possible critique or problems I might have found during my observations or interviews. After some thought I concluded that I had not found anything I wanted to criticize which was directly related to the employees or the way they work, and so therefore it would not affect my findings or prevent me from expressing my thoughts or feelings. In hindsight I have also thought about whether the employees would have acted differently or talked about other things if they were expecting the research to be completely anonymous. Even though there is no way for me to know for sure, I don't believe this is the case as I felt like the employees were completely honest and transparent with me. Moreover, since I planned and conducted the project as if it would be completely confidential, I know that I would not have done anything different. Since the letter of information with the declaration of consent I previously sent out did not contain any information about anonymizing the place of the project, only how I would ensure the confidentiality of the research participants, this change did not conflict with the current consent. Each participant's privacy is still maintained, and I gave the participants random numbers in the thesis so that they would not know who had what number based on the order of the interviews. Since this was discussed and decided after the data collection was finished, I was also confident that they made the decision knowing what I had observed and talked with them about in the interviews.

The second aspect I had to think about was whether there could be any negative consequences for the participants of my project if the place of the program was known. I had to go through my findings and evaluate whether they had said or done anything which could put them in a bad light or could cause them unreasonable inconvenience from for instance IMDi or other affiliates. However, considering the open framework they work under and what they've told

me about how they work and their results, I did not see any possible conflicts here either. I also trust that when they wanted their project to be known they were also aware of the implications and what this would say for their project. However, to make sure my informants' identity is private I have not used any names in the thesis and changed information which could help identify individuals. When it came to the participants in the Jobbsjansen project, I made sure to not write down names, country of origin, or any other personal or identifying info.

Establishing data

I consider the data I have established to be of good quality since they are a product of several different methods. The established data consist of a total of 11 pages of field notes, 22 hours of participant observation and 91 pages of transcribed interviews. As I will explain further, I also believe my data was made better by the fact that I got to know the people I was observing before I conducted the interviews. The observations and interviews were conducted at Jobbsjansen Søndre Nordstrand over a three-month period. Søndre Nordstrand is as previously explained, one of the districts in Oslo with the highest number of immigrants and Norwegian born people with immigrant parents from the Global South with a total of 42,4%.

Before I started my observations, I wrote down some assumptions I had about the project and the people working there. I expected everyone to be very friendly and open because of the nature of their job, and this was further confirmed through my first encounter with the Jobbsjansen employees. The employees welcomed me in a very genuine and kind matter, and I immediately got a positive impression of them and felt very welcome. This might have colored the rest of my stay and view of the employees and the fact that I liked them so much might have affected my research to some degree. Although I don't experience my reflection or findings as biased, I believe it is worth mentioning. In the coming sections I will elaborate more on the methods *participant observation* and *interviews*.

Participant observation

One of my main methods of collecting data was through participant observation. As Fangen (2010, p. 12) states, participant observation is often used as a synonym for fieldwork. Participant observation is about being able to describe what people say and do in situations

not structured by the researcher (Fangen, 2010, p. 12). The reason why I wanted to do participant observation was based on having a “special interest in human meaning and interaction as viewed from the perspective of people who are insiders or members of particular situations and settings” (Flick, 2018, p. 329). Using participant observation gave me more knowledge of how the employees work with the immigrant women than if I would have just asked them about what they do. I was not interested in just looking at what they said they do, but how they actually do it, including the things they do that they are not necessarily aware of. Also, in the process of observation, a qualitative researcher should always try to be inductive and therefore open for new themes and aspects (Postholm, 2010, p.57). The researcher will always have some presumptions however, so the observation process will usually be an interaction between deduction and induction. The total amount of my fieldwork and observations have been based on what I have been invited to take part in and has been somewhat limited due to restrictions in society caused by Covid-19. However, I have participated in team meetings with the employees, observed meetings between the employees and participants, and been shown how they work in the office. My observations and the interviews are just as important and have contributed to the same degree to my research. The observations have been limited but important in both generating knowledge I would not have found if I would just have done interviews, and in helping me find out what was important to research further and to ask about in the interviews. The interviews on the other hand have given me answers to areas of interest and helped support my theories.

I always had a notebook with me during observations so I could write down everything I observed. I didn't know exactly what I was looking for, so I wrote down everything that seemed important, whether it was things that were said or actions of the JS employees. After each observation I would go home, read through the fieldnotes and write down questions or remarks I had afterwards (Postholm, 2010, p. 63).

Flick (2018, p.325) maintains that observational methods can be classified along five dimensions. My observation of the employees and participants in Jobbsjansen was *overt* and agreed upon from before I started. I made an agreement with one of the employees that I could come and observe what they were doing and how they were working over a period of three months. I conducted a *partially participant observation* which means that I sometimes

joined in and asked questions or made comments during my observations (like for instance in team meetings) and in other situations I sat back and observed more quietly. I found it difficult in some situations to know how much 'space' I could take and if I should be a part of the conversation or just quietly observe. However, I found that in situations like these it was best to be quiet and polite but comment or respond if I felt it was appropriate. I wanted the situations and interactions to be as normal and natural as possible without my interference. Furthermore, my observations were *unsystematic*. I knew that I wanted to observe behavior and relations among other things, but I had no system or plan on what exactly I was looking for, whether it was words, actions, or other non-verbal actions. Therefore, I tried to observe with an open mind and take notes of everything that seemed important or interesting. The observations were done in a *natural situation*, namely in the office or similar places. And lastly, my focus of observation was mainly on others, and (perhaps too little) on myself, although I was very aware of my role and place in every situation.

Flick (2018, p. 330) describes three phases of participant observation, namely descriptive observation, focused observation and selective observation. As mentioned earlier, I started my observation with a relatively open mind. I had decided beforehand that I wanted to observe the people working there, and how they worked with each other, the participants, and the framework and policy guidelines around them. My main aim in the beginning was to look at what worked well and what worked not so well. However, I knew that I wanted to keep an open mind and be susceptible to other interesting areas. It turned out to be the right thing to do since some of the themes I had imagined would play a greater role, such as their cooperation with IMDi, turned out to not being a big part of my thesis. After I had been there for some time my aim shifted a bit to also looking at the less quantifiable aspects, like the wording they used when talking with the participants, the ways they behaved, how they talked amongst themselves, and their ways of doing their job and adapting their strategies to each participant. Eventually I knew exactly what I wanted to observe and directed my focus and field notes on this. To make sure the participants in my research was informed, I explained to them what I thought I wanted to observe and write about in my thesis (but also that it was quite open) when I first started my observations. After some time, I explained to them how my focus had shifted slightly. At the end, after doing the interviews I also made sure to inform each

informant of what the research would mainly be about and which themes I wanted to pursue, just to make sure that they were up to date and comfortable about what they were a part of.

Advantages and limitations of participant observation

The advantages of doing participant observation in a project like this are several. First, I was interested in the knowledge and ways of doing things special to this place that may not be conscious actions or that may be so natural to the employees that they are not aware of it. Second, I found it interesting to learn more about not only their subjective experiences with events and routines (Fangen, 2010, p. 15), but also the more objective versions of it. Although, I didn't necessarily have an objective view on everything either. However, I am both interested in their subjective experiences and thoughts (through interviews) and the more hidden or 'unknown' knowledge and ways of doing things (through observation). As Fangen (2010, p. 15) maintains, participant observation lets you get closer to people's reality which in turn can better your understanding of the field.

By doing participant observation, I had the possibility to observe actions and interactions for a period and then interview people afterwards based on what I had seen and how I had experienced things (Fangen, 2010, p. 15). As I will elaborate more on later in this chapter, it turned out to be of great importance to my research that I observed the employees for a while before I conducted the interviews instead of doing them right away. I believed I would get a more nuanced description and understanding of Jobbsjansen by both interviewing and observing them. As Fangen (2010, p. 15 my own translation) writes; "Observation therefore makes it possible to a certain degree to move beyond the primary participants selective perspective". Observation also adds to a better understanding of what is being studied instead of just relying on the participants' reports about what is being studied (Flick, 2018, p.3 29). Therefore, I accessed information and knowledge that I might have missed if I only did interviews. It also helps in getting to know the participants better and to see them in their 'natural habitat'.

The limitations of using participant observation as a method, however, can also be several. The greatest limitation is that the act of observation always influences the observed in some way (Flick, 2018, p. 329). When I observe people in an overt manner, they might act

differently or modify their behavior because they are aware they are being observed, either consciously or unconsciously. They could feel disturbed by my presence and not be able to be themselves or act how they usually would. They could also try to act in a certain way to make a better or different impression of how they act and work. However, I got the impression that my presence did not affect situations in any major ways, and that the informants were mostly happy to have me there and show me how they work. Another problem that might occur when using participation as method is about what role to take and how involved the researcher should be (Flick, 2018, p. 329). It is important to be aware of how one's own behavior and involvement might influence the people being observed and reflect in advance how involved one should be and how to potentially handle difficult situations. Structural differences can also play a role when doing participant observation (Fangen, 2010, p.146). In my case, I believe the fact that I am a woman probably made things easier for both me and the employees since all the participants in Jobbsjansen are women. Furthermore, since I am 30 years old and not in my early 20s I might have some more credibility with both the employees and the participants. The fact that I am ethnic Norwegian might have also played a role. Maybe the interactions with the employees or participants would have been different if I was an immigrant or child of an immigrant. Since I did not have that much interaction with the participants and did not meet them in any vulnerable situations, I did not feel like there were any structural differences that affected the situations, like the role between researcher/informant or ethnic white woman/immigrant woman since they seemed to be comfortable with me observing them.

There was one episode which made me reflect over my role as observant and how clear this was to the participants. I was asked to observe a digital job interview where the participant was asked to answer a case after the interview was over which she could answer by mail or phone. After the interview was finished, I received these answers to my phone and I replied that I was not the interviewer, just the observer and that she was sending these answers to the wrong person. I then received another case answer and once again replied that I was the wrong person and that she should send it to the interviewer. She then apologized and thanked me for letting her know. This made me reflect over whether my role as observer was unclear, or if the participant had simply mixed up our names and sent the message to the wrong person by accident. Everything was cleared up and since her contact in Jobbsjansen had asked her

beforehand if I could join and I introduced myself once again when the meeting started, I choose to believe that it was just an honest mistake.

Interviews

Doing interviews after participant observation can be useful to validate observation material (Fangen 2010). In this way the interview can be about situations that have been observed earlier and assess what is said against what was observed. For my research I decided that using a semi-standardized interview technique would be best suitable, to be able to ask different forms of questions and ask follow-up questions when clarification was needed (Flick, 2018, p. 232). I wanted to interview the informants one on one with a combination of questions based on my observations, their own experiences, and more general questions relating to the theory I was using. In the following sections I will first go through the process of making the interview guide before I elaborate more on the interview process.

Interview guide

Before I started my fieldwork, I made an interview guide to send to NSD in order to get my project approved. The first interview guide I made consisted of general questions about Jobbsjansen, questions about how they work to find participants and which problems they anticipated before starting the project, and lastly questions about their cooperation with IMDi. My plan was always to do the interviews at the end of my 'fieldwork', but I did not realize just how important this decision was in finding the information I wanted before I had been there for a while. After a few months of participant observation, I realized that I would have to change almost all the questions in my interview guide before conducting the interviews. The original interview guide consisted of more descriptive questions, while the final interview guide was more exploratory and to a larger extent designed to capture the informants' subjective meanings and experiences. The original interview guide included questions which I needed in order to form a basic knowledge base about Jobbsjansen but I acquired this insight through observations, conversations with the employees and by reviewing documents. Because I had an exploratory approach to my research and went into the project with an open mind, I found that some of the questions were not relevant anymore when the research started to take shape. The final interview guide builds on the insight I had acquired so far in the project and served the purpose of going one step further and dig deeper into relevant themes

and expand my understanding of the employees work with integration. As mentioned earlier, one of the aims of the paper is to look at the non-quantifiable and human mechanisms which lay behind the positive results of the districts work with Jobbsjansen. I wanted to capture not only what the employees formally say they do but also the background, like discretionary assessments, experiences, thoughts and visions. To get beyond the practical and obvious I used semi-structured interview.

The interview guide contained a total of 15 questions, and I estimated on beforehand that it would take approximately 45 minutes to answer. However, the time each person spent varied from 30 to around 70 minutes depending on how much they elaborated their answers. None of the informants seemed to have a problem with using more time though, and they were all happy to help and elaborate. Since I spent less time creating the second interview guide than the first because of the time limitation, some questions could probably have benefited from being better formulated. The interview guide contained a combination of open questions and when I wanted information on a specific topic, I used more leading and closed questions. For instance, I had one question (number nine) where I initiated the question by stating that I get why it's important that the participants have ownership of the process in the program, but where I then asked if they could elaborate on why this is important and what they do to facilitate ownership. Another question (number 13) was about what the advantages was by using individual adaptation versus offering the same package to everyone. Both of these questions are quite leading in what is obviously the best way to work with the participants, but since I had observed them and their ways of working in addition to reading about the subject, it was obvious that these were in fact the ways that gave the best results. I also felt like it would have sounded out of context to ask *if* it's important that the participants have ownership of the process, and what works best between individual adaption and offering the same package to everybody, since I was familiar with them and their ways of working. Formulating the questions in this way was a result of having observed them and having knowledge of how they work. Nevertheless, even though I had to change most of the question from the first interview guide, it still helped me find out some interesting themes, narrowing in my focus and in general starting the research process. In the first interview guide the questions were more open since I did not know exactly what I was looking for, but in the second interview guide the questions were more focused since I knew better what I wanted to investigate.

The interviews

The original plan was to conduct the interviews at the workplace of the employees. I had sent out an email beforehand where I mentioned some of the main themes of the interview, approximately how long it would take, and where I offered to meet them either in the office or come by their homes since they had some home office days due to Covid-19. However, due to further restrictions because of Covid-19, everybody was advised to make use of home office whenever it was not crucial that they were at the office physically. Therefore, I had to conduct all the interviews online, which the participants were all positive to. I then researched what was the recommended method for online interviews according to OsloMet's guidelines, notified NSD of the change, and ended up doing the interviews through my OsloMet Zoom account while recording the interviews on my phone through the Nettskjema Diktafon app. In this way I could make sure that I was using a safe account, and I recorded the sound the way NSD had approved earlier. In addition, I did not experience online interviews as a weakness or obstacle since I had already established a relationship with the informants. Therefore, I was not dependent on physical contact to get to know or become comfortable in each other's presence.

When it came to conducting the interviews, everything went better than expected. I was afraid that there would either be a problem with the technology (slow internet connection, problems downloading Zoom for the participants etc.) or that doing the interview online would have a negative impact on the conversation. Doing the interview online and not physically could create a barrier between us, it could make it harder to explain or express oneself, or it could ruin the natural flow in the conversation. Of course, I can't say if the interview would have gone any different if we were face to face, but I did not experience any major issues even though it was online. The sound was good, and the participants could easily talk for a long time or comment when I said something. The non-verbal communications were also still easy enough to pick up, like for instance the participants facial expression or gestures. It was also easier to reschedule and make time for the interviews when they were online, because then I did not have to travel for some time for each interview and it could be done more spontaneously. The only problems I did experience was firstly that one interview object talked quietly, so the recording was a bit difficult to understand at times. The second problem was

with the Nettskjema Diktafon app which would only record for 45 minutes at a time, and which would stop recording if someone called me. I would then have to send in the recording before I could start it again, and I found it more difficult to interrupt the participants to let them know about this when the interview was digital than I imagine I would have if we were in the same room. Therefore, I would usually try not to interrupt the participant when this happened and just start the recording again, but this often led to missing some time of the interview. However, after transcribing the interviews I concluded that I don't think I missed any important information.

I tried to keep the mood light throughout the interview because I felt like that would make it easier for the informants to say whatever they wanted to and to make them more comfortable. I also found it helpful when we could use humor in the conversations, because when the employee said something and laughed it closed the gap between us more and made the conversation easier when I could also laugh instead of keeping a serious 'researcher' role. However, in trying to make everything light and comfortable for the informant there is a risk that I sometimes 'helped' them find the answer or agreed with them instead of asking questions. I also believe that the interviews went as well as they did because I conducted them at the end of my stay. In this way the informants knew me and, as they expressed, wanted to help me as best they could. If I would have done the interviews at the beginning, I might have experienced the interviews as more awkward and maybe the employees would not have been as willing to elaborate their answers and use as much time as they did.

Analyzing Data

There are two basic approaches to analyzing qualitative data, namely, coding and categorizing, or investigating data in context (Flick, 2018, p. 62) and I chose to use coding and categorizing of the material. Under this approach we find what Flick (2018, p. 474) calls a thematic analysis, which is a method for identifying, analyzing, and reporting themes within data. When I first started the process of analyzing my data, I started with familiarizing myself with the transcripts by reading everything a couple of times to see what themes stood out or repeated themselves. I already had some themes in mind which I knew I wanted to analyze based on my observations and interviews, but I also found some new themes. I created eight categories which were structural challenges, ownership of process, individual adaption, work

methodology, cooperation with participants, results, personality, and barriers. I then started highlighting the material into these color-coordinated categories. Then I went through everything and extracted the quotes and put them into an excel sheet, refining the categories as I went and adding sub-themes to each category. In this way I got to read through everything several times and make sure I captured all the important themes that emerged. After all of the material was put into the excel sheet, I started going through everything and picking out which of the quotes I wanted to use and what material I would discuss in the three analysis chapters I had created based on theme. The entire process of reading, categorizing and analyzing the data was way more time consuming than I had anticipated in the beginning. However, I ended up having a lot of useful data. After writing down all the quotes I wanted to use I realized I had way too many quotes and had to go through an extensive process of deciding which quotes were most relevant and which I could sum up or delete.

I transcribed all the seven interviews myself and ended up with 91 pages of transcribed interviews. I wrote down everything word by word, but since I was not doing a language or discourse analysis, I chose to exclude some of the agreeing and acknowledging sounds like “mhm” and “mm” that were not important for understanding the meaning. In addition, since the interviews were done in Norwegian and the thesis is in English, I have translated all the quotes I have used. When I went through the transcribed material for my analysis and extracted quotes, I adjusted the language some places to make it easier to understand since oral Norwegian does not always translate well into written English. However, I have made sure to always keep the meaning and essence of the quotes and statements, and only changed the quotes when it was necessary for understanding.

Assuring the quality of the material

Qualitative research produces different data than quantitative research and is therefore assessed on different terms. Fangen (2010, p. 236) describe how different researchers have suggested exchanging the quantitative assessment terms validity, reliability and generalization with terms that can apply better to qualitative research such as trustworthiness, credibility and transferability. In terms of validity, or trustworthiness, participant observation is argued to be a method that secures a high degree of trustworthiness when it is understood as whether the research actually measures what it's supposed to measure (Fangen, 2010). As stated earlier, I

wanted to use triangulation through interviews and participant observation to help assess the truthfulness of statements through being able to observe actions and communication between people in addition to strengthening the trustworthiness of the findings. Establishing personal relations with the informants creates more natural settings during the observations and helps create a positive and transparent environment during observations and interviews. Participants observation was beneficial for this research because using triangulation as a method increases the expressiveness of the research and increases the validity of the project. Triangulation is “the combination of different methods, theories, data and/or researchers in the study of one issue” (Flick, 2018, p. 606), and is often used to extend the collection of data and further grounding the knowledge obtained (Flick, 2018, p. 192). I believed that my research would have an advantage by using observation as well as interviews since previous reports and studies on Jobbsjansen was mostly done using ‘only’ a combination of qualitative and quantitative interviews.

Since reality is complex and this is a qualitative study, it would probably be difficult to replicate this study and get the exact same results (Fangen, 2010, p. 250). It is not only the world that’s complex and changes but the people within it and their interactions as well. External conditions which may have power to influence results may change over time and contribute to different results of the same qualitative study. The political debate on integration is one example of this, in relation to how much is invested in the field and how much prestige it has. The pandemic is another one. Perhaps the results of my study would have been different before the pandemic, and maybe impacts of the pandemic will change future research. My personal relationship with the employees might also have affected the trustworthiness of the project. The fact that we got to know and trust each other (to a certain extent) can have contributed to them wanting to be more open and transparent with me.

In relation to transferability, I believe aspects of this research could be transferred to other similar contexts. Looking at other projects that work with immigrant women (or immigrant men) through close follow-up and individually adapted programs, would probably create some of the same knowledge. However, as stated earlier, reality is complex and since people, environments and organizations change, it is rarely possible to produce the same results with qualitative research (Fangen, 2010). I have tried to capture the essence of the employees’

personal experiences which, naturally, have been shaped by each person's experiences, personality, motivation and more. Work environment and work culture, group dynamics and policy guidelines can also affect the results. What could possibly produce different perspectives, however, is if this study was conducted with a more critical approach. As previously discussed, my perception of Jobbsjansen and the people working there was very positive right from the start. Although I don't believe this has affected my research, it is possible that someone with a more critical view would focus more on other events or statements.

4. Previous research and theoretical framework

Previous research on this theme is a combination of research on street-level bureaucracy, immigration, integration, employment programs for immigrants, and empowerment programs for immigrant women. Making sure I have covered all research done in these fields would be close to impossible since there are a great number of research articles especially on empowerment programs of different kinds around the world and articles on street-level bureaucracy. I found that using “integration” as a search word gave a lot of results from other disciplines, especially within the health sector, even when coupled with terms such as women, strategy or immigrant. However, since I am looking at integration of immigrant women in the Norwegian context, I found that not all research was relevant since Norway has a pretty extensive welfare system and a great focus on integration. Therefore, I tried going through the research of Fafo since they are a highly recognized independent social science research foundation. One of their research areas are on migration and integration with focus on inclusion, exclusion and competence in the Norwegian labor market, and here I found several relevant research articles. Furthermore, research from people affiliated to Fafo is known for having high quality and being reliable.

Furthermore, research on employment or empowerment programs for immigrants most often focus on the participants’ perspectives in such programs. The view of the participant is crucial for understanding what works well and what needs improving, but the point of view of the people working with this also has great value in creating a more nuanced view. It’s important to include the employees’ own experiences with what works. This is often overlooked, or, when employees are included in similar studies, the research is often more quantitative or focused on results and statistics. However, it is still important for this thesis to first look at some of the previous research on the area which focuses on the participants, and previous research of street-level bureaucracy.

Previous research

Barriers immigrant women experience in the face of work-life

The first paper I want to look at is by Rambøll & Halogen (2021), who have mapped barriers immigrant women experience when trying to get into the work-life in Norway. The mapping is based on immigrant women and the barriers are therefore connected to them, but as I see it many of the barriers are not gender-specific and can be experienced by immigrant men as well. In their mapping, Rambøll & Halogen (2021, p. 7) write about how immigrant women, especially those with little or no schooling and/or little or no work experience, have a harder time learning Norwegian and acquiring the formal competencies needed for the work-life than other subgroups helped by NAV and Voksenopplæringen. The women, therefore, end up being in training or under follow-up by the public for many years without any improvement in their situation. The paper investigates these barriers more closely and from a user perspective. Since my research looks at this from a provider's perspective it is of great interest to look at the barriers presented here, as some of them are highly relevant for this thesis, seen from another perspective. Moreover, Jobbsjansen employees seemingly have more time and resources than many other programs in NAV and are therefore able to accommodate many of the barriers. The mapping also uses experiences from the service apparatus to gain more insight and make suggestions for further development of the services. The target group in this mapping includes immigrant women with low education, little or no work experience, women who have been registered, received follow up and/or training with NAV or Voksenopplæringen for a longer period (more than five years), and who have low Norwegian language abilities (A2 level or lower) (Halogen & Rambøll, 2021, p. 8). The purpose of the mapping is to get a better understanding of the needs of the women, their challenges, and encounters with different services.

Rambøll & Halogen (2021) present four main groups of what they call “user journeys” (Norsk: brukerreiser) which are four typical journeys experienced by immigrant women in Norway. These were made by collecting the most common barriers experienced by their informants. Their research is mainly focused on hearing the voices of the users but insight from the service perspective is also included. These four groups are *stuck in primary education; stuck in qualification despite great progression and initiative; hindered by health;*

and can't get a job and don't know why (Rambøll & Halogen, 2021, p. 14, my translation). Under each group, there are listed several experienced barriers to education, language, and more but I will here focus mostly on the barriers they experience in the face of the Norwegian service apparatus.

In the *first group*, they mention that the users often participate in offers (Norsk: tilbud) that are too difficult for them or not well enough adapted to their needs. Some reasons for this can be a lack of knowledge about the users' needs, too little individual adaption in the offers they receive, and a lack of offers adapted to the target group. The *second group* is comprised of women who have come further than the first group in the qualification but still experience being stuck and not progressing further despite showing considerable effort, own initiative, and ambitions. The main barrier here is that the women don't feel understood by the system and experience not receiving the offers that they perceive as relevant to them (Rambøll & Halogen, 2021). They feel like they are not being heard and given a suitable offer and that this limits their possibility of moving on with the qualification. The *third group* is hindered by their own health or because of the care responsibility of a family member. Most of these women have some schooling from before and want to get back to qualification and work-life but they don't know how and need more initiative and help from NAV. A common barrier here is that their contact in NAV doesn't know them well enough and hence is not able to adapt to their needs. Furthermore, they might need help reflecting on what their options are and how to get there (Rambøll & Halogen, 2021). In other words, they need close follow-up and individually adapted programs.

A possible aspect here that is not mentioned in the mapping is how mental health and past traumas can influence learning and motivation. Neuroscience has researched the brain and what affects for instance learning. It shows that stress and trauma activate so-called survival structures in the brain which create responses such as fight, flight, freeze, or fawn (Frothingham, 2021). Research shows that in this condition the thinking part of the brain shuts off and learning becomes more difficult. Many immigrants, especially refugees have gone through great mental strain which affects the brain to be in this condition often. This can make learning Norwegian, for instance, more difficult. It is therefore important to have caseworkers who can see and deal with this. The fourth and *last group* is not as well documented as they

fall outside of the target group since they have higher education and better language skills than the rest. However, this group can't get a job, despite having higher education and good language skills, and don't know why. Many of them are followed up by a contact in NAV and have had several job internships without any of them leading them to a job. They need to be seen and heard while applying for jobs from home and need good counseling to figure out what to do to get a job.

Rambøll & Halogen (2021) look at the barriers that appear across the different groups and divide them *into follow-up, learning, working, and handling other events in life*. For this thesis, I will focus on barriers related to follow-up. One of the barriers is that the users' qualification process is affected negatively by the lack of coordination between public services. The users experience that they must relate to many different services and coordinate things between them and that no one takes a holistic responsibility in following them up. The women who are followed up by for instance both NAV and Voksenopplæringen (adult education) experience that their teachers and supervisors don't communicate and that they get called in for a follow-up with their supervisor at the same time as they have Norwegian classes or other activities and hence they must prioritize between them. A more holistic follow-up by NAV or better communication between the service providers would benefit the participants here. Rambøll & Halogen (2021) also note how both their informants from Voksenopplæringen and NAV express frustration over each other and how uncoordinated timetables and appointments prevent them from following up with their participants in a good way. There are also too many systems and not enough possibilities to transfer relevant information between different public service providers. One concrete example is how information from career guidance done through Voksenopplæringen is not available to the employees in NAV. NAV has to do their own mapping of this which is both time-consuming for NAV and can be frustrating for the participant who must answer the same questions several times (Rambøll & Halogen, 2021). Furthermore, both informants from NAV and Voksenopplæringen experience practical barriers to cooperation, for instance, that they both have little capacity and time and therefore often must down-prioritize collaborative meetings.

Rambøll & Halogen (2021) also examine another relevant barrier, which is about how the users need close follow-up and good availability. The point here is that the users need a

contact person they can call or ask when they have problems and who knows them and understands them well. In this way, small problems can be fixed quickly and can also create a safe framework for the qualification process. One challenge that is mentioned often by the service apparatus is how NAV employees have too large portfolios and therefore have too little capacity to follow up with the user as often and holistically as needed (Rambøll & Halogen, 2021). When it comes to barriers related to work, one of the challenges mentioned is relevant work training. Many of the users believe that training is a useful tool to learn about work-life, improve Norwegian skills and expand their network, but feel like they are not getting enough out of it because they are not being followed up well enough. Many also express frustrations over being in training for a long time or many different pieces of training without any of them leading to steady employment (Rambøll & Halogen, 2021). In the second part of the mapping, Rambøll & Halogen (2021) looks at possible solutions to the different barriers based on a workshop and discussion around them, but I will not go into this here.

Street-level bureaucracy and user-involvement

Another relevant research paper is a Ph.D. about family practice and women's occupation participation among immigrants in Norway by Hanne C. Kavli (2020). The Ph.D. is based on a survey among 1821 people with different immigrant backgrounds, qualitative interviews and focus groups with both bureaucrats and users in the introduction program, and registry data about women in paid work. The Ph.D. looks at "how the welfare state and working life shape institutional spaces of opportunity and constraint, and thereby influence immigrants' attitudes and practices in relation to family life and mothers' employment" (Kavli, 2020, p. 8). What is most interesting in this dissertation is the topic of the third article, which I will go more into later. In this article Kavli looks at "how the structures of the welfare state and working life can influence integration processes, but the emphasis here is on the interaction between immigrants and street-level bureaucrats in the welfare state's front line" (Kavli, 2020, p. 9). The focus here is on situations when participants in activation programs either aren't expressing what they want or when they have different preferences than the program's guidelines, and how different types of street-level bureaucrats can have different kinds of practices when meeting different types of users (Kavli, 2020, p. 9). Kavli maintains that the analysis support Lipsky's point that street-level bureaucrats are not only policy implementers but that they also contribute to shaping policy content. Kavli (2020) discusses how involving

the participants in creating an individual educational plan in the introduction program and thereby making them complicit in the process opens for better cooperation and acknowledgment of the participant's attitudes and values. However, in law and regulations, there is still a stronger emphasis on economic integration than on participants' complicity (Kavli et al., 2007 in Kavli, 2020, p. 47) and the law can therefore be interpreted as an expression of a general tendency in the direction of assimilation in European integration policy. Kavli (2020, p. 47) points out that assimilation should in this context not be understood as making immigrants adapt to every side of the host country's culture but rather that there has been a shift from multiculturalism's focus on cultural acknowledgment and toward economic integration accompanied by a larger concern for the consequences of a value fragmentation of the society.

Kavli (2020) looks at street-level bureaucrats and how they must often interpret given rules and regulations in deciding how much they should adjust and adapt to the participants' wishes. Kavli argues how street-level bureaucrats in the introduction program have different strategies and beliefs in how they work with the participants. Some will initiate a work-focused program either in cooperation or in conflict with the participant, others will fail to implement adopted policies because they for instance believe the offers aren't good enough or because they feel their participant doesn't have the capacity to follow a strict program because of their situation. Others again may believe that giving the participant great influence will give the best result even though it might conflict with the guidelines of the law. It's therefore an interaction between the participants' prerequisites and what kind of offer they receive. The relational aspect of policies is therefore just as important as the formal institutional structures (Kavli, 2020). Kavli (2020) ends by discussing how immigrants can't be studied as one group since there are differences between countries, generations, time of arrival, and several other factors. Furthermore, the society that meets the immigrants in Norway has also changed a great deal over the years and the system is now better equipped to adjust to working in addition to having care work, combined with an integration policy that is more targeted towards women.

The third article in Kavli's (2020) Ph.D. address *Facilitating User Involvement in Activation Programmes: When Carers and Clerks Meet Pawns and Queens* by Djuve & Kavli (2015).

This paper examines the consequences different types of street-level bureaucrats' approaches may have on the development of user involvement (Djuve & Kavli, 2015). As Djuve & Kavli (2015, p. 236) points out "user influence has been argued to be a key element in distinguishing empowering programs that develop social citizenship from intrusive programs that diminish social citizenship". The focus of the paper is both on service providers and on service users' individual characteristics and Djuve & Kavli identify two ideal types of service users (pawns and queens) and two types of service providers (carers and clerks). *Pawns* express little or no agency and *Queens* express agency that is conflicting with the overall goals of the program. *Carers* tend to be reluctant to overrule choices made by service users even when they disagree while *Clerks* tend to overrule *Queens* or make decisions on behalf of the *Pawns*. Furthermore, they argue that an important part of empowerment and democracy is citizen participation in decision-making. The goal is therefore rather to be empowered and queen-like and not passive and pawn-like (Djuve & Kavli, 2015). When it comes to service providers, Djuve & Kavli (2015, p. 240-241) argue that they can be either rule-oriented with loyalty to 'the system', or care-oriented with loyalty primarily to the service user. Therefore, they will either focus more on goal achievement as specified by policy documents or on adapting the services to each individual participant. However, both types of street-level bureaucrats may have morally good intentions and be more or less reflexive in how they relate to the framework and users (Djuve & Kavli, 2015). The two types of caseworkers are not constant and service providers can be a mix of the two or change over time according to the situation.

The findings from the article show that both carers and clerks believe user involvement can be challenging, especially when the users are passive or Pawn-like, and that they respond to these challenges differently. As discussed earlier, clerks will most likely make decisions on behalf of passive users and overrule users with incompatible preferences. Moreover, the clerks will be on friendly terms with the user but will make sure to maintain a professional distance when it comes to topics or tasks relating to the private sphere. The carers, on the other hand, will often be more reluctant to overrule choices made by the user. Carers sees "the process of involvement as empowering, educational and necessary in order to reach long-term goals of economic and social inclusion in society" (Djuve & Kavli, 2015, p. 250).

As I understand the article, there is a correlation between the two types of service users and dimensions of class. The queens seem like typical middle- or upper-class while the pawns are more working-class. The queens expect the system to work for them and do what they want while the pawns are not used to making decisions for themselves and don't know what to expect or demand from the system or service providers. We can therefore argue that what kind of service user you are, depend mainly on class and background. What conditions do you come from in your country of origin with connections to what kind of education you have and your reading and writing skills. Furthermore, women who come from societies with traditional gender roles might not have the same prerequisites for being queens as those from societies with more equal gender roles.

In the end, Djuve & Kavli point out how user influence can be achieved by turning pawns into queens, but how there's little knowledge about the consequences of different approaches to this process by service providers. This will be discussed more in the next chapter in terms of how the employees of Jobbsjansen work to empower their participants by helping them be accessory in decision-making.

Street-level bureaucracy and welfare workers' attitudes towards migrant users

In *Attitudes matter – welfare work and migration in Sweden* Carolin Schütze (2019) writes about Swedish welfare workers' attitudes towards migrants, what factors that influence this, and how their attitudes are associated with the workers' encounters with migrant users. The data for this study was made from answers to a questionnaire sent out to Swedish welfare workers with 1,319 respondents. Schütze (2019, p. 424) argues that “preconceived notions about migrants can affect the welfare services that they receive”. Schütze uses the street-level bureaucracy theory to investigate the welfare workers, and her findings suggest that their attitudes play a significant role in how they perceive the encounters. Those with more favorable attitudes were less likely to perceive the encounters as difficult. Schütze also points out that since welfare workers hold powerful positions it is important to raise questions about their attitudes and how these might affect welfare encounters since “their attitudes can contribute to and reinforce existing social hierarchies despite regulations and procedures designed to ensure fair and equal treatment” (Schütze, 2019, p. 426). Sweden, like Norway, has a relatively large and growing migrant population and a rather similar welfare system that

provides benefits and welfare services of different kinds to the entire population. Schütze (2019) identifies two different models of belonging – the civic and the ethnic model and argues that those who relate more to ethnic belonging are more likely to have less favorable attitudes towards migrants than those in the civic model. Civic belonging stands for a politically defined community, while ethnic belonging “stands for an imagined community held together through a common affiliation expressed through common origin, language, and culture (Schütze, 2019, p. 430). She points out how the beliefs and values of welfare workers are unique because they work together in groups with other staff members who have similar belief systems because they have experienced similar encounters and situations at work (Schütze, 2019). Street-level bureaucracy theory is therefore important because it emphasizes the role of welfare workers and how their work is carried out. As Schütze (2019, p. 431) points out welfare workers, on the one hand, act based on their personal values and beliefs, but on the other hand, they might be influenced by the organization through an organizational socialization process.

The findings of the study indicate that more frequent personal contact with migrants tended to create more favorable views towards them and that those who had more contact with migrants in their free time had a lower probability of experiencing encounters as difficult. When these experiences are tied into street-level bureaucracy, Schütze (2019, p. 443) argues that the workplace plays a role in the differentiation in experienced encounters with migrant users and that the nature of the job and what kind of resources are being allocated can influence these experiences according to street-level bureaucracy theory. However, organizational aspects are not the only aspect that matters when it comes to welfare practices. The analysis showed a strong association between how positive attitudes among welfare workers and their values and beliefs also play a big role in how they view their encounters with migrant users. Negative stereotypes can therefore negatively influence welfare practice. To summarize, the article's findings suggest that welfare workers' attitudes affect how they experience encounters with migrant users to a large extent and that aspects of national belonging have the strongest association with their attitudes towards the users in combination with personal contact with migrants. Moreover, the findings also suggest a connection between organizational settings and how welfare workers experience encounters. The general attitudes in the organization one

works in might therefore contribute to whether welfare workers experience encounters as more- or less favorable (Schütze, 2019). Schütze (2019, p. 445) also points out how:

migrants might receive less advantageous services than their native counterparts within the employment and insurance agency, which eventually could affect their integration into the labour market but also their overall socio-economic integration and might lead to further exclusion in other systems.

Welfare systems might therefore contribute to exclusionary processes. And the organizational culture and relation between welfare workers and migrant users are therefore important aspects of integration.

Schütze (2019, p. 429) also makes use of what Gordon Allport called the *contact hypothesis* (referred to as contact theory in the article). Allport proposes that “contact between groups will, under the right conditions, reduce prejudice and promote better intergroup relations (Tredoux & Finchilescu, 2007, p. 667) Allport argued that positive effects of intergroup contact could only occur in situations marked by four key conditions: Equal group status within the situation; having common goals; intergroup cooperation; and under the support of authorities, law, or custom (Pettigrew, 1998, p. 66). Pettigrew & Tropp (2005, p. 951) maintain that there has been done a lot of research to confirm that intergroup contact can reduce intergroup prejudice, especially in situations that are structured to improve positive intergroup outcomes. Furthermore, “the intergroup attitudes of minority group members are often based in the anticipation of prejudice from the majority group, whereas the intergroup attitudes of majority group members tend to be based in their own systems of beliefs and values” (Pettigrew & Tropp, 2005, p. 952). Schütze (2019, p. 429) explains how superficial cross-group interaction (such as encounters on the street) can lead to negative attitudes, less empathy, and greater anxiety since these are not considered meaningful communications. On the other hand, meaningful contact such as friendships can promote positive attitudes, more empathy, and reduced anxiety. The nature of the relationship, therefore, plays a big role. However, as mentioned concerning ethnic and civic belonging, Schütze (2019) points out how systematic racism and notions of national identity may be less likely to be affected by increased meaningful contact.

Empowerment programs for immigrant women

In their article *To stand tall, to look people in the eye: empowerment of Ethiopian women immigrants via an employment programme*, Sharaby & Lipkin (2018) examines a government empowerment program established in Israel for immigrant women from Ethiopia, with a special focus on empowerment of the individuals. The research was conducted over two years and included qualitative interviews of 20 women who participated in the program. The article examines the effect empowerment has on the individual woman and their confidence in themselves, which later benefits the community and state. I will not go into their definition and discussions around empowerment here as I discuss it in the theory chapter. Sharaby & Lipkin (2018, p. 448) argue that women immigrants “face unique adjustment difficulties that stem from their being bound to a patriarchal family structure, stereotypical perceptions as to their gender role and structural obstacles that block their advancement in the labor market”. These obstacles can include financial difficulties, a low professional status, and problems related to the family and childcare.

The article looks at intervention programs for immigrants that contribute to strengthening personal and social resources and argues that these kinds of programs “strengthened the sense of personal wellbeing among immigrants, which is a subjective expression that indicates the degree of the person’s satisfaction from his life” (Sharaby & Lipkin, 2018, p. 450). Sharaby & Lipkin points out how there is little research literature on intervention programs for immigrant women in employment channels but how it has been written many studies on empowerment programs for women migrant workers. They argue that one of the major contributing factors to encouraging women to become financially and emotionally independent in their new country is through a more liberal worldview and a service system that encourages and supports them financially. According to their research, the employment centers in Israel gave the women a sense of meaning in life, improved their health status, and it increased their personal and financial self-efficacy, and gave them more ethnic pride (Sharaby & Lipkin, 2018, p. 452). The program focuses on women in different situations but who all have in common that they are far away from the work-life. Both first- and second-generation women immigrants are in the program. What’s special about this program is that it focuses on inclusion in work through a long-term process in several stages, close follow-up, cultural

sensitivity, and a holistic view of the participants (Sharaby & Lipkin, 2018). The activities combine both group and individual work.

The findings of the study show that the program provides a supportive framework for the women's inclusion in work-life. The program also improved their language, made them less dependent on the welfare system, and increased their motivation. Sharaby & Lipkin (2018) argue that the program works with immigrant women in a unique way by aiming at advancing and empowering them through the employment channel. Moreover, the program works with and perceives the women in a holistic way, seeing them as part of a family, community, and social system. The findings suggest that the women experienced an empowerment process comprised of three major stages. First, is the transition from the 'domestic sphere' to the 'public sphere'. This is about exposing the women to the possibilities that exist outside (Sharaby & Lipkin, 2018, p. 463), and is a process that they argue is the most difficult stage in the process. However, through meeting similar women and becoming a part of a group they slowly started the process. Second, they were exposed to a great amount of information on different issues and therefore started the process of learning. Third, they went through the stage of change. This internal change gradually influenced their conduct in the public sphere, in the program, and outside (Sharaby & Lipkin, 2018). Another change that happened was that the women became more involved in their communities as a result of the program and discovered "that they have the ability to fight for their rights and developed political aspirations and abilities" (Sharaby & Lipkin, 2018, p. 468). Another important aspect of the empowerment process was that some of the women returned to their ethnic traditions and decided to preserve parts of it when they experienced more safety and empowerment. So, by empowering the women they could combine being more integrated into the society together with preserving their ethnic and cultural background. This is an interesting point since, as mentioned earlier, the use of the term integration in this thesis is more focused on having the same possibilities as the majority but not necessarily having to assimilate into the new society or culture.

Theory

In this chapter I will go through the theoretical framework I will use to analyze the findings from the collected data. The chapter will first look at the equity/equality theory which connects to the argument that it is crucial for programs that work with people in this way to create plans and programs that are individually adapted to each participant's background and needs. Second, the chapter will examine Michael Lipsky's theory of street-level bureaucracy which will later be used to look at the employees' use of discretion in their work with the participants and the decisions they must make in order to follow existing policy guidelines and to accommodate the wishes of the participants. Lastly, I will discuss the importance of using empowerment in work with immigrant women and different ways of understanding the term empowerment. I will also include some perspectives on postcolonialism which can be useful to consider when dealing with issues on immigration and integration.

Equality/equity

Göran Therborn (2013) discusses the differences between difference and inequality and argues that differences are given or chosen, and can coexist with both equality and inequality, while inequalities are socially constructed (Therborn, 2013, p. 38). Therborn wants to move further than the current debate on inequality which he argues is too focused on inequalities of income and wealth (Therborn, 2013). He argues that Amartya Sen and Martha Nussbaum's 'capability approach' is the best theoretical basis for analyses of inequalities and struggles against them and maintains that Sen's definition of equality has great value. Sen defines equality as the "capability to function fully as a human being. Such a capability clearly entails survival, health (and aid for disability), freedom and knowledge (education) to choose one's life-path, and resources to pursue it" (Nussbaum, 2011 as cited in Therborn, 2013, p. 41). Inequalities are here seen as multidimensional barriers to equal human capabilities of functioning in the world (Therborn, 2013, p. 41).

In relation to the basic dimensions of human life, Therborn argues that human beings are organisms, persons, and actors. Therborn then argues that we can derive three kinds of inequality from this: *Vital inequality*, *Existential inequality*, and *Resource inequality*. *Vital inequality* refers to socially constructed unequal life-chances of humans (Therborn, 2013, p. 49), and can be indicated by for instance life expectancy and mortality rates. This inequality

can relate to the opportunities you are given at birth depending on the family or place you are born into. Many factors can play a part in this, from even before birth depending on what your mother consumes during pregnancy, to being born into a poor family with little access to food and medicines. The second kind of inequality, *existential inequality*, has to do with the unequal allocation of personhood (Therborn, 2013, p. 49) and can be looked at through for instance autonomy, dignity, and degrees of freedom. An example of this can be how women historically have had fewer legal rights than men, or how blacks have had fewer rights than whites in many societies. The last kind of inequality is *resource inequality*. This is about providing human actors with unequal resources to act (Therborn, 2013, p. 49). This can be about resources such as connections, education, or simply income. Where you come from and what kind of resources your parents have been able to provide you with is an important aspect here, as your parents are often your first resource in life (Therborn, 2013). Therborn also argues that social relations can be an important resource both economically, politically, psychologically and for your somatic health (Therborn, 2013, p.51). Social relations can also be included when looking at vital inequality. Power is an important resource for human action, and Therborn maintains that inequality of power has been studied too little. Therborn points out that it's important to remember that the three dimensions interact and intertwine but are also irreducible to each other.

There have been many debates among scholars about 'equity' and 'equality', what they really mean and what the goals and results should be (Espinoza, 2007). Furthermore, as Espinoza (2007, p. 343) maintains, "it is debatable whether we can have 'equity' and 'equality' in a society that prioritizes efficiency in resource management over social justice". When talking about equity and equality it is often in relation to the educational system and the importance of dealing with students on an individual level. One important aspect of equity is that it is not focused on equal results but more on fair competition. Equality on the other hand is more focused on equality of results (Espinoza, 2007, p. 346). Equity is more difficult to define since it can mean different things in different cases and achieving equity can sometimes require structured inequalities, at least for some time (Espinoza, 2007), like offering special encouragement and support for weak groups in schools or certain occupations. As I will go into more detail later, Jobbsjansen is one example of a program that works towards equity for immigrant women. The program provides special encouragement and support for immigrant

women since these are often further away from work-life than Norwegian women and immigrant men. Furthermore, the program consistently uses individual adapted programs for the women instead of offering the same package to everyone. As Espinoza (2007, p. 347) maintains, it is not enough with equality of access if it does not come together with equality of attainment, since equality of access will not automatically lead to equality of attainment. It is therefore crucial with some systematic provision of educational services that are tailored to each student's needs. Individual adaption is therefore key in trying to tackle inequalities and leveling the playing field.

Street-level bureaucracy

Bureaucracy was from the late 19th century seen as a “rational’ device to ensure the efficient and just delivery of public policy (Hupe et. al, 2015, p. 5). The term *street-level bureaucracy* was first introduced by Michael Lipsky in an article in 1971 and then elaborated further in the book he published in 1980. The book was then further updated in 2010 (Hupe et al., 2015). He first defines street-level bureaucracy as “the schools, police and welfare departments, lower courts, legal services offices, and other agencies whose workers interact with and have wide discretion over the dispensation of benefits or the allocation of public sanctions” (Lipsky, 2010, p. xi). Lipsky (2010, p. xi) argues that interactions with street-level bureaucracies “are places where citizens experience directly the government they have implicitly constructed”, and that these interactions are complex and can affect the benefits and sanctions they receive in a great way. However, in the version published in 2010, Lipsky discusses street-level bureaucracy narrower as “public service employment of a certain sort, performed under certain conditions” (Lipsky, 2010, p. xvii). He maintains that in this understanding of the phrase, street-level bureaucrats “interact with citizens in the course of the job and have discretion in exercising authority; in addition, they cannot do the job according to ideal conceptions of the practice because of the limitations of the work structure” (Lipsky, 2010, p. xxvii). Lipsky (2010, p. 3) define *street-level bureaucrats* as “public service workers who interact directly with citizens in the course of their jobs, and who have substantial discretion in the execution of their work”. *Street-level bureaucracies* are defined as “public service agencies that employ a significant number of street-level bureaucrats in proportion to their work force”. In short, Lipsky argues that street-level bureaucrats are not only implementors of policy but that they also help shape and make policy in their own way.

As Lipsky (2010, p. xii) says, “mass processing of clients is the norm, and has important implications for the quality of treatment and services”. Lipsky argues that there is a paradox of expectations to the street-level bureaucracies as it on one hand is expected that all citizens are treated the same and on the other hand is expected that they can be responsive to the individual case when appropriate. Street-level bureaucracy also hints at this paradox by combining the word “bureaucracy” which implies “a set of rules and structures of authority”, while street-level “implies a distance from the center where authority presumably resides” (Lipsky, 2010, p. xii). Usually in these kinds of occupations workers should treat every person they encounter as an individual and a unique case. However, in reality they more often have to treat all clients collectively because the work load is too great or resources too few or simply because work requirements prohibit individualized responses. As we will see later, this is not the case with Jobbsjansen. Moreover, frontline workers find ways of doing the jobs they have with the resources they have at their disposal. Experiences with the government happens through street-level bureaucrats and “their actions are the policies provided by government in important respects” (Lipsky, 2010, p. xix). Lipsky is basically saying that street-level bureaucrats are making the policies they otherwise would have to implement. As Lipsky says, these “low-level” employees carry out the services delivered by the government.

Lipsky argues that public policy is not only made in high-ranking decision-making arenas, but also in crowded offices by street-level workers. One of the main arguments of Lipsky is that some of the people in the jobs mentioned in his first definition of street-level bureaucracy experience stressful working conditions and that these are the ones who develop routines in response to their work requirements to cope with a difficult work environment. Furthermore, these coping behaviors may increase the gap between the performed policy and the written policy (Lipsky, 2010, p. xvii). Lipsky argues that no matter the government policy the “discretionary actions of public employees are the benefits and sanctions of government programs or determine access to government rights and benefits” (Lipsky, 2010, p. 3).

In his book, Lipsky (2010, p. 4) explains how street-level bureaucrats have considerable impact on peoples’ lives:

This impact may be of several kinds. They socialize citizens to expectations of government services and a place in the political community. They determine the eligibility of citizens for

government benefits and sanctions. They oversee the treatment (the service) citizens receive in those programs. Thus, in a sense street-level bureaucrats implicitly mediate aspects of the constitutional relationship of citizens to the state. In short, they hold the keys to a dimension of citizenship.

I will discuss this further in later chapters in relation to how street-level bureaucrats determine the eligibility of citizens for the programs, and about the service citizens receive in welfare programs. Lipsky also notes how street-level bureaucrats must deal with the personal reactions to their decisions and is therefore far from the bureaucratic ideal of impersonal detachment in decision making (Lipsky, 2010, p. 9). Getting close and personal with users, their personal problems, and their reactions to decisions might be a contributing factor for the street-level bureaucrats in their work with these people. In addition, because of street-level bureaucrats possible use of discretion, they might also be the recipients of citizen reaction because of the possibility that they will act in favor of the users.

Street-level bureaucrats are restrained by rules, regulations and directives from above, but still have considerable discretion “in determining the nature, amount, and quality of benefits and sanctions provided by their agencies” (Lipsky, 2010, p. 13). Other than this, Lipsky (2010, p. 28) also argues that they typically experience a lack of resources relative to tasks; ambiguous, vague, or conflicting goal expectations; and difficulties with measuring performance oriented toward goal achievement, among other things. Decision making usually takes place with limited time and information, and “decision makers typically are constrained by the costs of obtaining information relative to their resources, by their capacity to absorb information, and by the unavailability of information” (Lipsky, 2010, p. 29). This is often caused by the large caseloads or limited time street-level bureaucrats have. As I will go further into in the next chapter, we can see examples of this through how ‘good’ policy guidelines and enough time for each participant is crucial to obtaining enough information and follow up the participant in a holistic way, and by how difficulties of obtaining information from other departments or services creates complications and are time-consuming.

Street-level bureaucrats are those who meet the receivers of public services face to face. The use of discretion is influenced by organizational guidelines, what perceptions the street-level bureaucrats have about the policies they’re implementing and their perception about the users they are supposed to help and their needs (Kavli, 2020). As Djuve & Kavli (2015, p. 236) interprets street-level bureaucracy, it’s about public employees and how they “translates

public policy into individualized and discretionary decisions” and are therefore both administrators and professionals to some extent.

Empowerment

The theme of empowerment is also relevant in this paper. As we will see later, it is through empowering immigrant women that Jobbsjansen aims to motivate and integrate them. It was feminists in the 1980s and 1990s who first started using ‘gender equality’ and ‘women’s empowerment’ to get women’s rights into the international development agenda (Cornwall & Rivas, 2015, p. 396). The term has later been widely used and different understandings and definitions have emerged.

Sharaby & Lipkin (2018) argue that welfare states in the West started to see the importance of empowerment in strengthening the control people from weak groups had over their lives after the multicultural viewpoint became more prevalent in the last decades. This perception focused, among other things, on the importance of treating people from minority cultures with the same respect and care as people from majority cultures. Sharaby & Lipkin (2018, p. 449) defines empowerment as “a process whose essence is a transition from a state of helplessness to an active state, with personal acceptance, social-political understanding and personal decision-making ability and control over resources”. Sharaby & Lipkin (2018) maintain that the empowerment process is made from two complementary processes. The first is *personal empowerment*. This process is about personal change, where the goal is for the person to be more self-aware of his/hers decision-making abilities and take responsibility for their results. This can also lead to change in the perception of self-efficacy which is about the perception of one’s own ability to perform a required behavior to achieve a desired result (Sharaby & Lipkin, 2018, p. 449). The second process is *community empowerment*. Community empowerment is about “developing the ability of people with similar characteristics, such as ethnic origin and gender, to act within community organizations with the aim of influencing the people in making decisions regarding their future (Sharaby & Lipkin, 2018, p.449). Women from weak groups may benefit from being in women’s groups with the support of an instructor, and can accumulate power from participating in such groups. This thesis will refer mainly to empowerment on a personal level while acknowledging that this affects empowerment on the community level as well.

Ibrahim & Alkire (2007, p. 383) discuss how the concept of empowerment “is related to terms such as agency, autonomy, self-direction, self-determination, liberation, participation, mobilization and self-confidence”. The term has also been a point of discussion worldwide with a variety of definitions, and Ibrahim & Alkire (2007) have gathered some of the different understandings and definitions of empowerment in their article about agency and empowerment. Different versions of “the expansion of assets and capabilities of poor people to participate in, negotiate with, influence, control and hold accountable institutions that affect their lives” are often used (Narayan, 2005, p. 5; Malhotra *et al.*, 2002; Grootaert, 2003, all as cited in Ibrahim & Alkire, 2007, p. 381). This definition focus on peoples’ power dynamic with society and institutions and about helping them realize their rights and possibilities within the society they live in. Another definition by Oxaal & Baden (1997, p. 6) defines empowerment in this way: “Empowerment cannot be defined in terms of specific activities or end results because it involves a process whereby women can freely analyze, develop and voice their needs and interests, without them being pre-defined, or imposed from above, by planners or other social actors”. This definition includes an important aspect of empowerment, that it’s a process over time within the individual and that there is no clear end result and difficult to measure. It is more about a subjective feeling and about how the individual experience themselves. This leads us to the definition which is most relevant for this thesis, by Oakley (2001, p. 4):

While the empowerment approach acknowledges the importance for women of increasing their power, it seeks to identify power less in terms of domination over others and more in terms of the capacity of women to increase their self-reliance and internal strength. This is identified as the right to determine choices in life and to influence the direction of change, through ability to gain control over crucial material and non-material sources. It places less emphasis than the equity approach on increasing women’s status relative to men, but seeks to empower women through the redistribution of power within, as well as between, societies.

What this definition emphasizes is the importance of women increasing their power within societies, their internal strength, and their self-reliance. As will be discussed later in this thesis, this is part of the work that the Jobbsjansen employees do with their participants. They work together with the women to increase their internal strength and self-reliance by making them accessory in decision-making, letting them be in charge, and by finding the resources already within them. In this way they empower the women to take control and ownership of their own lives. So, what we see is that there are many ways of defining and understanding

empowerment, but they all have in common that it's a process towards strengthening individuals' capabilities and making them aware of their rights and opportunities.

Empowerment is related to agency which can be understood as “the ability to act on behalf of what you value and have reason to value” (Ibrahim & Alkire, 2007, p. 383). Furthermore, it is important to acknowledge the importance of institutional structures that might support empowerment and structures that may work as obstacles to it. Ibrahim & Alkire (2007, p. 386) also discuss an important point on how to measure empowerment and whether it should be measured by what an individual *values* or what powers one *have*, even if they do not value these, which leads back to the definition of agency above. This is an important aspect of empowerment; however, it will not be discussed further here as this thesis does not look at empowerment from a user perspective, but rather from a provider's perspective.

Postcolonialism

Vanessa Andreotti (2010, p. 243) explains how postcolonialism “emerges in the field of anti-colonial struggles and literatures”. Smukkestad (2009, p. 221) argues that the great inequalities between the West and the rest of the world is a consequence of colonialism and imperialism. Furthermore, he maintains how postcolonialism is an attempt at correcting for the Western way of seeing the world as its own reflection through using an alternative way of looking at the world where the focus is on the South. Julian Go (2017a, p. 130) discuss how “empire and related processes of colonialism and imperialism have been central to the making of modern societies”, and the legacies of the modern empires have remained even after their dismantlement.

Catarina Kinnvall discusses how eurocentrism has been and continues to be a precondition for our vision of the other and how we construct it, and how European integration therefore must be read within “the context of colonial and postcolonial globalization, migration and ethnicity” (Kinnvall, 2016, p. 155). A postcolonial perspective of Europe means understanding the Eurocentric view where non-western societies are evaluated based on western norms which are viewed as universal and where the west and east are each other's opposites (Kinnvall, 2016). A postcolonial view would force us “to discredit binary and categorical conceptions of inside-outside, of us and them” (Kinnvall, 2016, p. 160). Edward

Said (1978) also wrote about this through what he called the “law of division” which is about constructing an *us* and a *them*. We create opposites that are socially constituted in relation to each other such as East and West, metropole and periphery (Go, 2017a, p. 135).

Postcolonialism also critiques the fact that even though there was a political decolonization, it didn't come with equality between the metropole and former colonial countries. Moreover, it didn't come with a decolonization of consciousness or culture (Go, 2017a).

Chandra Mohanty (2003, p. 49) analyses what she calls the production of the ‘Third World Woman’ as a singular monolithic subject in some of the recent Western feminine texts. This average third-world women, Mohanty describes:

leads an essentially truncated life based on her feminine gender (read: sexually constrained) and being ‘third world’ (read: ignorant, poor, uneducated tradition-bound, religious, domesticated, family-oriented, victimized, etc.). This, I suggest, is in contrast to the (implicit) self-representation of western women as educated, modern, as having control over their own bodies and sexualities and the ‘freedom’ to make their own decisions (2003, p. 53).

In terms of having freedom to make their own decisions, Julian Go (2017b, p. 198) also argues how sociology often “thinks of agency as something that the Global North possesses alone”. The point is, as discussed above by many of the other authors, how the West typically construct themselves as a normative referent and create an ‘us’ and ‘them’ where the West is the universal standard. Mohanty (2003) argues how the objectification of women in the third world might be benevolently motivated but nevertheless needs to be named and challenged.

The theme of Postcolonialism will not be used as much and as consistently as the other theories in the analysis of this thesis but is mentioned here because it is worth keeping in mind when dealing with issues such as integration and immigration. In the following four chapters I will present and analyze my findings.

PART 2: Findings and analysis

In this part of the thesis, I will present and analyze my findings from the participant observation and the interviews. I have used quotes from the employees throughout the chapter to substantiate my findings in combination with observations, theory and previous research on the field. I will refer to the participants in the Jobbsjansen project as the *women* or *participants* as this is how the employees refer to them. My research participants on the other hand, which are the employees in Jobbsjansen, will be referred to as *Job Specialist (JS)* and their number (for instance, JS 1) to avoid confusion. The analysis will be divided into three chapters: individual adaption and work methodology, barriers, and ownership of process. However, many of the themes are interconnected and will be mentioned several places.

5. Individual adaption and work methodology

As previously mentioned, IMDi highlights how Jobbsjansen should work with their participants through individually adapted programs, and it is clear how this has a great focus in the program. In addition, the ways in which the employees work, and exercise discretion is also an important aspect. The first analysis chapter will therefore look at individual adaption of programs, work methodology and exercising discretion.

Holistic follow-up

Instead of offering a standard package to the participants, the Jobbsjansen employees create a unique program to each participant based on many aspects:

You need to take some time to map what each person needs, which can be very different. Because of their background, education, work experience, or no work experience, and the situation they're in; marriage, no marriage, where they live, how are they doing with themselves? Both outer and inner motivation. What triggers you? What makes you happy? (JS 2)

This shows how carefully they evaluate each person's needs and how to best help them and adapt the program individually. Instead of simply focusing on what kind of education and work experience they have, they go beyond that and see the whole person. This is also why holistic follow-up is important according to the employees, because it allows them to get to know the participants and follow them closely throughout the program and see what works and what doesn't work.

I think that's why it's so important to have this type of program, like we have. And that type of follow-up, or close follow-up, that's really what it's about, holistic follow-up. Because then you have so many more possibilities, even in a very so-called 'square' system. You do, you just have to find them and have the possibility and time for it. So yeah, I'm thinking YES this works! (JS 7)

Holistic follow-up is thus very important in this kind of program according to the employees. Lipsky (2010) stated that street-level bureaucrats find ways of doing their jobs with the resources available to them which we can see from the quote above. Even though the system can be perceived as so-called "square" and difficult there are a lot of possibilities if you just have time and resources to look for them. In addition, as discussed by Rambøll & Halogen (2021) in their mapping of barriers, the last group (which were immigrant women with higher education and better language than the other groups), commented that they needed close follow-up and good counselling to figure out how to get a job. And as JS 7 argue you have more possibilities and can more easily find them (in an otherwise difficult system) when you

have enough time and are working with close follow-up. Moreover, as we will go more into later, having time and resources to follow the participants up closely and looking for possibilities is an important aspect of this program. This also contributes to the employees' feeling of achievement and subjective perceptions of how well the program works. JS 7 also express a wish to "learn more about mental health among immigrants, maybe take some courses. More about that and more motivation simply" when asked about what they could need to do a better job. JS 7 explains how they can see that many of these women are struggling with problems related to their mental health and how this can often become a great barrier to learning because the participants are not in a state of mind to learn or focus on anything else. Considering the theory presented about *fight, flight, freeze or fawn* by Frothingham (2021) there can in some instances be of great value having different tools to be able to detect these problems and show understanding around participants' situations. The JS therefore want to learn more about mental health to better be able to help the participants with whatever they are struggling with. This shows the complexity that can occur when helping the participants and the different aspects of life the JS engage in. We can see more examples of this by examining whether the employees help the participants with problems that are not directly related to work or education:

We are supposed to be working towards the goal, which is work and education, but to get there we must go through so much else. We need to fix some kind of 'chaos', whether it's health or economy or family-life (JS 7)

Many of the informants mentioned the same thing. How they must clear the way for other problems so that the participant can focus on finding a job or starting an education. Once again, we see the importance of being able to understand and accommodate to problems that may prevent the brain from learning or focusing on other things. When I asked whether they had ever helped with problems that wasn't related to work or education all the JS answered yes, to varying degrees. One JS explained how it rarely happens but that when it does it's about getting the participants to a place where they have room in their head to think about work. Two of the JS also pointed out how it's important that they refer them to other departments when possible, so they don't take on too much. Following is one answer to this question and why they believe it's important:

YES! Haha, all the time! Yes, we do that all the time. Otherwise, it wouldn't work. You're supposed to clear the way for work and in doing that there's a lot of things which are outside of that (JS 2)

And as one JS point out, sometimes it's just about being a (Norwegian) person who knows how the system works:

Yes, I help with these things, I do. Like, with economy, I need to help with that. I'm a Norwegian person, and there are sometimes when they don't have anyone in their network that are Norwegian, so just to talk to someone who's Norwegian and just to talk to someone who knows NAV and can help them, because NAV is totally 'Greek' for them (JS 5)

Network is important when figuring out a new society and welfare system. Those who come to Norway without knowing anyone may have a harder time understanding the system than those who for instance already have family here.

When I asked about the benefits of individual adaption and why this was the best way to do things all the JS answered pretty much the same:

That's an easy answer really, because everybody needs different things, and all the people we follow up are different. They are in different situations, they have different challenges, they have different wishes (JS 7)

This represents the basis of equity theory very well. Everyone has different preconditions and backgrounds and levelling the playing field between people and accommodating to their differences and inequalities is dependent on individual adaption. Furthermore, as JS 3 points out "the main goal has to be... I feel like it's time-controlled, because it goes faster for them to get further when they have a uniquely adapted individual follow-up", so the process actually goes faster when they get individually adapted programs. Another statement which sums up their work methodology and ideals in a good way is by JS 4:

We have plenty of time for each person and they feel seen and heard and taken seriously. That's a huge advantage with the individual. You work uniquely with each person. A lot of it is the same but you adjust it to each person. Their personality, background, wishes and goals, and such. (JS 4)

This shows the benefits of having enough time to use individual adaption and close follow-up. This quote also substantiates the general attitudes of the employees in this project.

Furthermore, as we saw in the mapping of barriers by Rambøll & Halogen (2021), the second group they discussed reported on exactly this problem. The second group consisted of women who had come further in the qualification than the first group, but still experienced being stuck and didn't understand why. Some of the barriers mentioned by the women in this group were how they didn't feel heard and understood. The possibility of moving on with qualification was limited as a result of this. The same also goes for the two other groups though, and both the first and the third group mention how they are not getting offers or help

that is adapted to their needs. When I tried to turn the question around and ask whether it would be fairer if everyone got the same package, I got different version of what JS 5 says:

It's not fair because no one is the same and everyone has an individual situation, background, personality, and yeah, giving the same package-deal to everyone is simply unfair (JS 5)

Another JS (JS 1) answered the question like this; “No, justice isn’t one thing for everyone. Justice is not, there is not one justice. People are different and you can’t treat them the same”. JS 5 answered this question similarly by saying that “as I see it, there are no advantages with giving the same package to everyone”. The focus on equity is therefore pertinent among all of the JS. One could argue that this also has something to do with what kind of service provider they are, according to Djuve & Kavli’s (2015) article. A typical clerk would probably treat everyone the same because he would be rule-oriented and make decisions he believed is the best. A typical carer on the other hand will probably judge each case more individually and adapt to each person’s needs. Nonetheless, one important reason why they are able to work in the way they do, with close follow-up and individual adaption, is the low number of participants they have. Each JS have around 20 participants each, and almost all of the JS mention the number of participants as an important factor for success:

Yes, and that is the close follow-up that we do, which the ‘Qualification Program (KVP)’ also does. It’s that kind of close follow-up, that makes it possible to have that overview. While those who have 200 people on their list is just trying to help people in those five minutes that they have for exactly that person... There’s greater room for making mistakes then (JS 1)

Having too large portfolios to be able to follow up the participants in a holistic way was also mentioned often by the NAV informants in Rambøll & Halogen’s mapping. This is an obvious point, but still important to remember. The typical way to work in NAV is through large portfolios to be able to help everyone that comes to NAV. Still, it is important to look further into since this may create more problems than fairness.

Policy guidelines and close follow-up

When I stated that many participants in similar programs in NAV complain that there is too little communication between different departments and agencies, and how few caseworkers have a good overview over the participant’s schedule and activities, many of the JS responded with little surprise to why this is often the case. Simply put, as JS 1 mentioned, the number of participants is an important reason why they have time to follow up the participants as extensively and why they have such a good overview over everything their participants do.

Furthermore, they all point out how close follow-up or holistic follow-up, as some call it, is important:

I think it's great to be able to work individually but of course I understand that it's demanding. You see that in schools for instance. You'll have 25 kids in one class, and they get the same teaching but it's different what and how much they are able to understand. So, it's more demanding to have individual follow-up of everyone, but that's what works! (JS 5)

Several of the JS mentioned that close follow-up and looking at the individual is crucial when working with people. This is also expressed by JS 2 “Yes exactly, because we have time for it, because it should be holistic follow-up, and that’s what works”. Another JS expressed how NAV should be more focused on looking at the individual. The JS goes on to say:

Like I said you have those that come from rich families in the cities and have had the opportunity to get an education, and then you have those that come from poor backgrounds in a village and that have not had the opportunity to even learn to read and write. And then it won't be fair to give them the same offer. (JS 6)

This represents the point made earlier in relation to Djuve & Kavli’s (2015) article on how there are different ideal types of service users and my understanding of how this can have a class dimension. Those who come from larger cities and have had the opportunity to get an education and learn to read and write have better prerequisites for acting like queens and demanding help from the ‘system’ than poor people from small villages. Moreover, perspectives from previous research by Kavli (2020) also point to the importance of not treating immigrants as a homogenous group since many other factors come into play here, like we see here between people from big cities versus those from small villages. This is explained by the JS when pointing out how different the participants can be and how important it is that they get individual adaption and not a standard package. Another benefit of the close follow-up which is mentioned by JS 2 on how there can be problems at the beginning of a new job or work training is how important it is to be available and follow-up closely in the start to avoid small issues getting bigger. One example of this was a participant that had not understood the ‘rules’ around lunch, among other things, and was dissatisfied her first week in the new job. Since her contact in Jobbsjansen was there to explain to her more about work culture they were able to fix the problem easily. This is exactly what the user informants of Rambøll & Halogen (2021) commented that they needed. Close follow-up and good availability and someone they can contact when they have problems. This can prevent small issues from getting bigger and create a safe framework in the qualification process. Like JS 2 explains,

other issues can also be dealt with easily if you are just a bit 'on the ball', especially in the beginning:

But to be there, be with them on their first day, whether they're going to a course or training. To follow-up the night before, inform them that if you feel a bit nauseous tomorrow morning, if you haven't slept then it's just because you're scared and nervous and it happens to everybody, everyone can recognize that... It may not take that much, but if you're a bit 'on the ball' then you can prevent that they lose their job, and also be a reference person for them when they're applying for a new job (JS 2)

As we will get more into later in the section about ownership of process many of the women may not be used to deciding for themselves or are simply unsure about what they want to do. With close follow-up however, the employees get to know the participants well and find out what their wishes and goals are and as JS 2 explains, "They often think like 'what do you think? What's your opinion?' But it's that close follow-up with meeting often and talking on the phone and that close, close follow-up (that helps)». Several of the JS also mention how helping these women will affect more than just the women's situation. It also affects their children in both being a good example and by having more resources to help them with school and other problems, and it helps the husband who sometimes work two jobs to make ends meet. As one JS said, when they apply for the job in Jobbsjansen they get told that you're not only helping the women, but you're also helping the entire family. This can also be illustrated by the quote below:

We often see that social status is inherited, it's very clear, and it's sad. But when you grow up in a family where your parents receive social security then the chances of you needing it yourself are big, and early on. It's not like you will work until you're 50 and then need it, but from the beginning. You can see it very clearly and it's so sad, so very sad, because that means that children are growing up and actually have very small chances of doing well. And that's also something I think is very good about working with these women, and that is that their children will benefit (JS 5)

This represents what Therborn (2013) refers to as vital inequality which is an inequality relating to opportunities given at birth depending on the family or place you are born into. So, children of immigrants might experience more inequalities in opportunities and attainment than the general population if their parents have poor Norwegian skills, are unemployed and/or dependent on the welfare system. Therefore, like JS 5 express, helping immigrant women become integrated will in turn also help their children and eliminate some forms of inequality. Another JS put the benefits of working closely with the participants and helping them get closer to work-life like this; "I mean it's a win-win situation either way you know, both for the women and for society in general, and for the children, for the municipality they

live in or the district” (JS 7). This is also one aspect of what Djuve & Kavli (2015) discuss around getting pawns to a queen-like state where they are more active actors in society. We can also connect this to the second kind of inequality Therborn (2013) mentions, which is existential inequality. This is about the unequal allocation of personhood and can be looked at through for instance autonomy, dignity and degrees of freedom. Since women historically have had fewer rights than men and since immigrant women often are further away from the work-life than immigrant men, it is essential to put extra effort in raising their autonomy and degrees of freedom. And as JS 7 says, this will in turn affect many more than only the women. Lastly, Therborn’s (2013) third kind of inequality also plays a big role here. Resource inequality can be about having different resources relating to for instance connections, education or income, and an important aspect here is what kind of resources you parents have been able to provide you with. First, this can be connected to the immigrant women and what resources they have from their home country. Like discussed about the difference between those who come from larger cities with an education and those who come from poor villages without any education and whether they came from poor or wealthy conditions in their home country. It can also be about what kind of resources they have in Norway, whether they have family here who can help them with the system and with jobs, and what help they actually get from the system. Second, this connects to the children of immigrants who (as per statistics discussed in the background chapter) more often live in households with persistent low-income because their parents don’t have enough resources, and who can experience resource inequality through getting less help with homework, economy or connections. Empowering these women through programs that supports them both emotionally and financially will therefore go a long way in preventing resource inequality both for them and their children.

About work methodology and working in Jobbsjansen

When I asked what personal characteristics the employees believed was important to have to be a ‘good’ job specialist I got many different answers. One mentioned determination as an important characteristic since you encounter many challenges. Several mentioned being open and good at communicating with different people, and many talked about the importance of caring for and liking other people. As JS 3 said "I think being patient is very important, and to listen is perhaps the most important thing, at the same time you need to be solution oriented

because that's what it's about all the time, to try to find solutions". Two people also mentioned being empathic as an important quality.

When I asked about the team and whether they worked well together and were good at supporting and helping each other, everyone was very positive and pointed out their different backgrounds as a strength:

Yes absolutely, I think we have a huge advantage by being such a big team... I think our boss, as you know, has done a good evaluation when hiring us, because we have different qualities and different education and we come from different industries, and I believe that's REALLY important... all 'rules' say that there should only be sociologists in NAV (JS 7)

Absolutely, it's a very good team. As you may have seen there's a lot of humor, people don't take themselves very seriously. I think that's important to get a good work environment, and important for the internal sharing of knowledge, and as you mentioned earlier, we all have different backgrounds (JS 6)

When I asked what they needed in order to do a good job many answered that having a good leader and good co-workers, and having space to make your own decisions is very important:

I need a good leader that gives me a lot of room and flexibility...It is very important to get room to do what you want to do (JS 3)

I noticed that several of the JS had to think about this question for some time, and without knowing for sure, it seemed like most of them were satisfied with what they had today. However, they pointed out again how good co-workers, a good leader, and freedom to make their own decisions were important for them. Two of them also pointed out how new Jobbsjansen projects also often had a positive influence on them because the new projects often take initiative to do things in a new way, for instance. So, it benefits the other projects as well when new projects start up. Therefore, granting more money for more projects affect the other projects positively:

Yes, we have our own Jobbsjansen network for Jobbsjansen in Oslo, and now there is, because IMDi got even more funds from the government last year, it was some extra millions, so now there is a lot of new projects and that's noticeable for us who have worked for some time (JS 2)

One of the questions I asked the JS was whether they felt like the policy guidelines for the project were good enough for them to help the participants with everything they need and want, and as a response to this question everyone answered yes. I was expecting more people to say no, not because I had the impression that they couldn't help with everything the participants needed or anything else, but more because in this kind of work it's more common to be pushed to streamline things and not have enough resources. However, they all seemed

mostly happy with the guidelines and resources available which some of the answers below demonstrate:

We are good at our office, with the boss and good at writing good applications, and taking initiative to new things and argue well for why we should have more people and stuff like that. And we are the biggest team in Norway, we are the ones that have the most people and get the most funding. And that is because we get good results, so I feel like we have the resources we need to follow up the participants as we should (JS 4)

Yes, I do feel that. There can probably be some that think we have too many participants, but I actually feel like I have enough time for everybody and that we have the resources we need or we can find the resources we need to be able to follow up everyone in a good way (JS 7)

One informant expressed how having enough resources and good policy guidelines makes it possible to actually make a change in the participants' lives:

I think what is most rewarding about this job is that we are able to reach those who need it the most, and we have time to give them that knowledge, that safety and that confidence that they need to get further... That's maybe what I like most about this job, that you can actually do things that you see can help people and change their lives, and that's important (JS 7)

To exercise discretion

As previously discussed, the employees in Jobbsjansen (and the welfare system in general) can be defined as street-level bureaucrats according to Lipsky's (2010) definition. They interact with citizens in their jobs and have discretion in exercising authority. The first way they exercise discretion is when deciding who is eligible for becoming a participant in the project. Based on my observations in team meetings this is something they decide as a group, at least when they are unsure. During several of the team meetings I participated in someone would talk about a possible participant they had done the initial mapping conversation with, and they would discuss with the others what the best option would be here. One requirement they have for joining the program is that the participant has some Norwegian skills, so if the participant for instance only spoke English, they would often discuss making an agreement with them that they could come back and join the program as soon as they had learned some more Norwegian. Another use discretionary assessment they make is what their individually adapted program should contain. This is up to each employee to decide based on their participants background, needs and wishes. The employees also need to exercise discretion relating to problems in the participants private sphere both when it comes to how involved they should be and how they should handle it. However, what do the JS themselves say about

whether they felt they had space to exercise discretion in their jobs? First, all of them said this was an important part when working with people like this.

So, we use discretion, lots of discretion, and we cooperate well within the team with checking with the team-leader or others that knows the laws and rules well, in relation to whether something is okay or not (JS 4)

We have to think a bit smart sometimes on what's most important. But then I also think that we do follow the rules one hundred percent, we do, but we do have a lot of freedom within that, I believe. Because there is always a lot of possibilities, it's just that we don't know about it... So, what I mean is that you can still follow the systems laws and rules, but you can still find things that helps you get more advantages of it, for the participant (JS 7)

These quotes exemplify what Kavli (2020) refers to when she says that street-level bureaucrats often need to interpret what politicians have decided when they're trying to decide how much they should adapt and adjust to the participants' wishes. Yet, exercising discretion as a street-level bureaucrat isn't necessarily about breaking rules or refusing to implement existing guidelines, but as JS 7 express, about being smart and looking for possibilities for the participant. Because you don't need to break any rules to exercise discretion. You do, however, need to have the time and resources to meet each participant individually and look for the best solutions for each participant. Sometimes things may go better if you take another route than the usual one and I believe that is what discretion is all about. To take time to follow-up the participants so closely that you know them well enough to adapt the program and activities to what will suit them best. Discretion is about making a judgement based on the person you're helping, and not all programs have time or resources enough to even get to the point where exercising discretion is an option. Exercising discretion has its pros and cons for the employee, but it will (hopefully) give the participant a better chance of succeeding. Moreover, as JS 7 explains it:

Yes and the point of discretion is, I actually believe that it should be done even more in NAV, I realize it's difficult but still what's important right, it's important, because it's from case to case, and again of course you have to have rules and you should relate to them but there are exceptions the whole way where you have to use discretion (JS 7)

As JS 7 explains how important it is to use discretion in this kind of work, JS 6 points out how the only reason they are able to do it is because they have enough time and resources:

Yes, we have the opportunity to do that, but we have that solely because we have so few people in our portfolio, and we know and get to know the candidates well (JS 6)

6. Barriers

In this section I will go deeper into different barriers. Both the greatest barriers immigrant women face, according to the employees, and the structural barriers experienced by both the employees and participants.

Barriers the immigrant women experience

When asked about what they think are some of the greatest barriers immigrant women experience in the work-life six out of seven JS employees mention language as a big challenge to many.

Definitely prejudice and language... But also, this with competence. Many lack basic education from their home country. So, I would say language and competency and prejudice among Norwegians (JS 3)

One (main barrier) is language, and that many of those we have contact with don't have the abilities or haven't had the opportunities to learn the language like they would like, or as we would like (JS 5)

Other than language they mention work experience, education, culture differences, and a lack of both network and knowledge on how the Norwegian (work) society works. One JS also mentions how important independence is in the Norwegian work-life:

Also, many of them have little experience, they lack confidence, they have little knowledge of how the Norwegian work-life is. They're not so independent because they haven't had to make their own decisions, that kind of independent. And Norwegian work-life demands that (independence) a lot, and that without it ever being said (JS 2)

This is one way Jobbsjansen is contributing to equity for immigrant women. As JS 2 states Norwegian work-life demands independence and that without even saying so, and there are many unspoken norms which can be difficult to detect for 'outsiders'. It is just expected that when you have free time at work you are supposed to find other tasks to do and sort of 'find' work yourself. As Espinoza (2007) maintains, one important aspect of equity is that it is more focused on fair competition than equal rights. This means that by Jobbsjansen helping immigrant women with the unspoken rules in the Norwegian society and work-life, they are providing them with resources most Norwegians already have. In that way they are levelling the playing field by teaching immigrants the knowledge most Norwegians get taught early on by their parents or surroundings. Another problem one JS mentioned was about jobs for unskilled workers in Norway:

In addition, there's the fact that in Norway we have very few jobs for unskilled (Norsk: ufaglærte). And that's part of the case here that they are often unskilled because they have been at home, they lack the language needed for further education and they will probably be unskilled the rest of their life. And then jobs for unskilled just gets fewer and fewer, like being a cleaning lady... I get the thinking behind, the ideology in that you should preferably educate yourself and we should wish that everyone gets 'up and further', but that doesn't work for everyone and then I think it's a shame that they get left behind and standing on the outside. So, I believe there's a job to be done there in relation to inclusion. Inclusion as I see it today is mostly on paper, it is not real... So, it's something that's supposed to be a positive thing, to get a trade certificate, but it just turns into a hindrance instead (JS 5)

So, there is also a problem with not having enough suitable jobs for those who won't be able to get an education either because of language, age, or other reasons, and JS 5 notes how a society where everyone needs to be educated might not be a very inclusive society.

Furthermore, when I asked why we need a program like this just for women they answer that:

And I also think that one of the greatest obstacles is this, I mean it doesn't have anything to do with motivation, I think that almost everybody wants to work, but the group we work with is so-called 'invisible', you have to find them, they don't always know exactly how to do it, and I understand that very well! (JS 7)

JS 7 explains how these women are the most 'invisible' in our country, and many other countries, and that this has something to do with what is expected from women and what roles they have. Another JS also points out how many of the women in their target group come from male-dominated cultures where the man is supposed to work:

We see that when we meet them, that many of them are supported by their husband. And in most of the cultures we deal with they come from a male dominated culture where it is common that the man supports the family. So, it has not been natural for them to work... and even though many of the men have not necessarily gotten an education, they have still worked from day one in some occupation (JS 4)

This connects to the gender norms and how women often have more complex barriers than men since many of them are expected to maintain a traditional gender role. One JS also mentions how one can see that even though there are still more challenges for women, there is a change when you go down in generations, where it becomes less. Moreover, several of the JS commented that there should be a similar program for youth or men because they could also need an offer like this:

There should be a program for the men as well. But of course, the women need help, they have stayed at home with children for many years and they often come without any work experience at all so they have a more fragile starting point, but like I said there are also many men out there that could use help (JS 5)

Holistic follow-up

As briefly discussed earlier, one JS talked about how being able to deal with the participants mental health would be beneficial in order to follow them up more holistically. JS 7 therefore wanted more training relating to mental health and explains how:

But it's clear that, in some cases it's a bit difficult if there is a lot of traumas for example, and again back to what I wished there was more of. Because I would like a foundation, I am not going to go into it and be a psychologist or that bit at all, but at least being able to give some form of understanding. And learn something about different tools and how one can work a bit around it at least... It's like you say and that's the thing with traumas right, in relation to learning Norwegian, it won't be possible before you find out of things. I believe there is always a reason to why motivation is not there, so yeah, you just need to try to figure it out as well as possible (JS 7)

JS 7 goes on to discuss how mental health might often be overlooked when immigrants come to Norway:

We have a tendency to think that as long as they can come here and live here, get a roof over their head and money, and everything, the elementary things, then you should be very grateful for that and then it stops there, and you don't see the things that lay behind... This engages me a lot I have to say, that part there. Because we shouldn't think that now everything is okay, 'my God, you live in Norway now'... (JS 7)

What we see above probably goes for a lot of immigrants, both men, women and children. Maybe a focus on mental health should be a greater part in the integration strategy and a part of programs like this. As JS 7 points out, it's not that caseworkers should act as psychologists, but that they could get some more training in the field and know where to refer those who need more help. This relates, again, to the theory by Frothingham (2021) of fight, flight, freeze and fawn, and how when people are traumatized or stressed their brain can't focus or retain new knowledge, and how important it is for caseworkers to see and understand this so that in stead of being annoyed with participants who learn slowly, they can have compassion for them and reassure them instead of pressuring them. However, this takes more time and resources than a typical NAV employee has, and many participants probably falls behind because of too little knowledge and resources for this.

Structural barriers - NAV

When asked about their cooperation with other services and agencies many of the JS mentioned how cooperation was sometimes difficult because there are many different systems

which does not communicate with each other. Therefore, it might be difficult at times to get the information needed. Several of the JS also mentioned how NAV is a so-called 'square' system and how things can move slowly at times. However, they also point out how you can speed things up if you spend some time and make sure to stay on top of things. Moreover, several of the informants maintain that private actors and course providers are easier to cooperate with.

It's really about whether NAV could have done a better job. But it's about the fact that we are divided in two and that there's different systems, so there's a lot of problems structurally. It's not about the people; it's about politicians and those who grant money and developers... So, there's often the technical that makes the biggest obstacles, and sometimes other agencies (JS 1)

Here we see again how good policy guidelines plays a big role in being able to provide a good service to participants, because as JS 1 points out there are a lot of problems structurally, but the employees are not to blame. This was also one of the barriers mentioned by Rambøll & Halogen (2021) related to follow-up. They discuss how the users' qualification process is affected negatively by the lack of cooperation between public services. The users feel like they must relate to many different services and that no one takes a holistic responsibility in following them up. In sum, they need caseworkers with time and ability to follow them up in this, at times, cumbersome system. To help mitigate this Rambøll & Halogen (2021) suggests a more holistic follow-up by NAV or better communication between service providers, and one important precondition in being able to follow up the users in a holistic way is by having enough time and resources, which many of the different JS express. So, even though Jobbsjansen has a good overview over everything and can provide this holistic follow-up it is mostly because of their official guidelines which provide them with enough time and resources for each participant. However, several of the JS maintain that creating a better system between different departments and agencies could make things more effective:

We talk about what causes frustrations which is data. Which is really about information, that's on another server and could potentially talk with data on NAV's servers, but there has not been created a system where they are allowed to talk together. Maybe it's the legislation that hinders it, but it could be way more effective (JS 1)

This is the same frustration that Rambøll & Halogen (2021) discussed that their informants from both Voksenopplæringen and NAV expressed. JS 5 mentioned another structural barrier which is that after finishing the introduction program there is a two year 'quarantine' before participants can start Jobbsjansen. JS 5 then adds how "I find it hard to understand the point of why they should just go and be passive for two years and wait".

Another question I asked the JS was about what they needed to do a good job and most of them answered good co-workers and leaders and to be able to make their own decisions.

Other programs (in NAV) are very tied up to method, they must report a lot, fill in forms or get measured on how many visits and stuff like that. And we don't have to do that and that's very nice, and that is a precondition for me to be able to do a good job (JS 4)

What JS 4 is talking about here is about not having strict requirements to reporting and such. However, JS 4 as many others, mention how it could be more effective if all the different Jobbsjansen programs had standardized forms for things they have to report on anyways. The fact that Jobbsjansen has few guidelines on how to structure the program on practical things connected to administrative tasks have been mentioned by many, both as a pro and as a con:

What is interesting and that I have been frustrated over is that every project does things in different ways, it is not streamlined. Some think that's good, I think that some things could be the same... I think we would be more efficient if we had been a bit more streamlined (JS 4)

Yes, and that is perhaps why IMDi many times gives vague guidelines... some may think that it should be like this or that and that all of the Jobbsjansen projects should be run in the same way, but it doesn't work like that because we are organized differently (JS 2)

When it comes to tools we could absolutely do more, because all of Jobbsjansen is very free and that's a positive thing when you have more freedom and can be in charge over your workweek, and you need creativity and determination. But the tools could be a bit more prepared and standard... We have created some tools that work for us, but why don't we have one common that works for all of the projects in Jobbsjansen? (JS 5)

As I understood the JS, being more streamlined is not in relation to working with the participants and the methods used here, but rather the more practical and administrative stuff like templates for payments and statistics. Another area where there are both positives and negatives are about the uncertainty of working in a project-based employment like this. This kind of job both brings a lot of freedom to do things their own way and exercise discretion, but on the other hand it can lead to uncertainty and problems with acquiring and maintaining good employees.

Yes, I think so. But it's clear that this is result driven, so we do have pressure on us, we have to deliver results. So, there's a kind of uncertainty that's always there. That, when you're not permanently employed, but a project employee, then the worst-case scenario is that the government or parliament doesn't support the project anymore, if they don't think it's going well. But luckily it's going well, so we feel safe and we get a lot of funds (JS 4)

(The employees) they have liked it so much here that even though they don't have that safety they've stayed. But I have heard about other projects where people would rather apply for a permanent position. So that the knowledge we accumulate disappears, and it takes some time to become good at this job (JS 2)

There are both pros and cons to working this way. On one hand it can make the program better since each program has more freedom to design and structure the program as they want. On the other hand, it can make it harder to attract good and dedicated employees since they have a greater risk of losing their job when they're not permanently employed. Moreover, it can be difficult to plan far ahead regarding the participants when they don't know how many years they will get.

Having enough time for each participant

As discussed earlier, many mention how when you are in the NAV system there is generally not enough time for close follow-up and individual adaption because of the high number of participants. Therefore, many end up being sent to different activities without understanding why or having use of it.

All of NAV agrees that there are too few people, we are too few hired in relation to the workload. It's not for nothing that the sick leave is as high as it is in NAV. It's because people are being worn out, and the caseworkers have a lot of people they are in charge of, 2-300 people maybe, and it's just wild (JS 4)

This exemplifies what Espinoza (2007) expressed about whether it's possible to have equity and equality in a society where efficiency in resource management is prioritized over social justice. Furthermore, this was also expressed by many of the service providers informants from Rambøll & Halogen on how they have too little time and resources to follow up as holistic as needed. As we see from the quote above, a typical NAV caseworker has too many participants to be able to follow up as close as needed and then be able to create individually adapted programs that fits the participant's wishes and needs. Another JS explains the importance of having enough time for each participant:

So, it's very important to map all of this. Because I have seen that in the NAV system in general, to criticize it a bit, not the people working here, but because the system is so big, you can be put into something just to be in an activity and it might not be right. You have many candidates and users in NAV that have an activity list 'as a long and hard year' but are still as far away from work as the first day they came here. Because you didn't get good enough mapping, or because you don't have time or capacity, simply. Not because you don't have the will or have neglected them in any way, just because the time aspect of how things are done. They have just been put in an activity just to be in an activity (JS 6)

Lipsky (2010) wrote about how mass processing clients is the norm and how this could affect the quality of the services they are providing, which we can see here. Lipsky also argues how street-level bureaucrats typically have a lack of resources relative to tasks. However, as we have seen examples of earlier, all the JS employees are concerned about stating how it is the

system, and not the people, who are at fault when things are not going as well as it should (or could) be. This is probably because they have insight into how employees in other departments work and are aware of the workload they are under. Furthermore, as in many other occupations, the street-level bureaucrats are typically the ones who gets blamed when the system is failing, because they are the face outwards, as discussed in the theory chapter. Nonetheless, having enough time for holistic follow-up and being able to see the whole picture was mentioned by many:

To just send someone to a course without knowing if it's something they want, and I've heard negative stories of when people have been put in activities and it doesn't work because they have to drop of the kids in school every morning because the husband works so it doesn't fit with the course schedule. So, we need to know the whole story to know what works with exactly this woman (JS 5)

One JS also mentioned how important it is to let the participant decide what they want to do:

...One that had just been sent to different courses, and been told 'you have to work there' even though you won't get a job but you have to be there. That is so basically wrong, and is really not what we are supposed to do. Because they are the ones who should decide (JS 7)

JS 7 goes on to explain how this kind of 'strategy' had only made the participant more unmotivated and how when she was referred to Jobbsjansen her previous department had argued that she would probably be difficult to work with:

(and with this participant) we had even been told from another department that it seemed like a hopeless case, and that they could not follow up on her (laughs exasperated). So, I didn't understand anything there. To just talk with her and think oh my god what a resource you are! (JS 7)

And I think we have had several people like that, who have been really upset and frustrated and have just been told by NAV what they should do. And that's a bit how it feels all the way for these: a bit harsh language in the letters, and messages and such. Like, do this if not you will lose your day money, do this if not then... (JS 7)

What we see here can connect to the article from Schütze (2019) and how caseworkers' attitudes and organizational structures can affect how they view encounters with immigrants. Since JS 7 had such a different perception and opinion about the participant this can be argued to substantiate Schütze's hypothesis. Maybe the other caseworker worked in a department with too few resources and too little time, and where strong-minded participants were seen as a 'difficult' participant. One could then argue that working under bad policy guidelines with little time and resources creates less favorable attitudes towards the users. The Jobbsjansen district I have observed has, as we will come back to later in this chapter, good policy guidelines, according to the employees. Moreover, they all seem to have favorable attitudes towards their participants, and as we see in the quote above, JS 7 did not see this participant

as anything else than as a woman with great resources. This can also represent what Lipsky discuss around the use of discretion and how it can be influenced by organizational structure, co-workers and how the street-level bureaucrats view both the policies they're implementing and the users they are supposed to help. What Lipsky's original theory and all the other contributions mentioned earlier argue when it comes to street-level bureaucracy is that street-level bureaucrats have some form of power in providing benefits and sanctions to the service users. This is further substantiated by JS 1 who talks about NAV, having power and treating everyone as equals:

And it can probably be perceived like NAV has power, we have power, but you can't sit and be that power. I don't see, there's perhaps something about the flat structure, but people are people no matter what, and there maybe takes a certain kind of people to take that insight too, but I view everyone as my equal.

This point is a very significant aspect of the beliefs of the JS employees. Furthermore, it connects to the theory of equity and treating everyone the same. If this was the case in all departments in the welfare system, it would go a long way in eradicating negative stereotypes, both of caseworkers and of service users.

Policy guidelines

When talking about where the system fails the people who need it and are in it, several of the JS point out again how the number of participants an employee has is of great importance to the quality of their help. One JS point out how other caseworkers in NAV can have up to ten times as many participants to follow-up as they do and how this of course affects how much you can follow up and cooperate with the participants. Moreover, caseworkers with a high number of participants which have more expectations or demands of mass proceeding all of them, might experience more of what Lipsky (2010) termed the paradox of expectations. This is about how they are on the one hand expected to treat all of their participants the same while on the other hand being expected to be able to be responsive to the individual case when needed. The employees in Jobbsjansen probably don't experience the same paradox since the foundation for their work is that it's supposed to be individually adapted. Nonetheless, one aspect of working face to face with service users that is probably felt more by those who work as close as Jobbsjansen employees is having to be up close and handle the reactions the participants have to decisions they make. Maybe since Jobbsjansen works so closely with the participants they are more inclined to give them the best help, because they are closer to their

lives and their reactions to what they decide. Seeing the participants so often and having to relate to their reactions may make them work harder to find solutions that the participants will be happy with and that it's 'easier' to implement unfavorable measures when you don't have to deal with the reactions up close.

Another JS describes more closely their work with follow-up of the participants:

Yes, we follow up from start to finish, and we are much closer to the participants so it's easier for us to catch problems when they appear, like double bookings and such. Because I can understand that if you are on AAP and you have 150 people to follow up then things can easily get lost. While we have almost daily contact with our women and they text us on our work phones, so we have a completely different communication with them (JS 6)

Yes, and that's because we don't have that many to work with. And it's not like that when you have 150 people and you're stuck to your computer and there's many of the systems in NAV that don't communicate. I don't have numbers on how many systems we have. So, you feel like you're banging your head against the wall when you're trying to get in and coordinate and call classes and call employers, but you sort of have to collect everything together (JS 2)

What JS 6 mentions here about having almost daily contact with the participants can connect to what Schütze (2019) discuss about how service providers who have more regular contact with the migrant users tend to have more favorable views towards them and less likely to view encounters as difficult. Many of the JS employees maintain how the number of participants one has plays a big role in how much you are able to follow them up in a good and sufficient way. As JS 5 says, "But of course we do have time (to get to know the whole story), those who follow up 100 or 150 people don't have that time". When we talked about the possibility of new demands for Jobbsjansen with more participants per employee, JS 6 said the following:

And if we were to do that, get more people in the program, then I hope they will evaluate afterwards what kind of results we have with 50 people and how the results were when we had 20. When did we get the most people into work? (JS 6)

I believe this is important to remember when talking about expanding programs. Because there is often talk about expanding programs that work to make them more efficient and get more participants involved. However, it is important to look at the cost/benefit of such programs and how it might be better to make sure 20 people get a permanent foothold to work-life than making sure 50 people get (any) job and not worrying about the consequences. Regarding the same possibility of having to become more "efficient" JS 1 talked about looking at the long run of these things and how important it is to look at more than just numbers:

I don't know how political we should turn this but there's this economy steering that economist have gotten more and more in control of. It's their numbers that control and their numbers control the advantages you have, and they often have plans for this year and can't see the long run. That's a curse when it comes to soft tasks such as this. You can't just look at the numbers, you need to look at the numbers over time, and you also need to look at the numbers that are not about money as well (JS 1)

7. Ownership of process

In this chapter I will go through empowerment in the form of helping the participant get ownership of their own process. Djuve & Kavli (2015) argue that citizen participation in decision making is an important part in empowerment and democracy. As we will see, Jobbsjansen uses participant decision-making and ownership of process to empower the participants. The chapter will first look at ownership of process, before moving on to how the employees use words and actions to empower the women. Lastly, the chapter will examine how the process of empowering the participants can sometimes be difficult and time-consuming.

Ownership of the process

One thing I noticed about Jobbsjansen is how even though it is not mentioned in the demands or guidelines from IMDi, they have a very high focus on empowering the women by motivating them and making them responsible for their own choices and helping them get ownership of the process. Even though only two JS used the word empowerment (or the Norwegian word 'myndiggjøre') during the interviews when we talked about this theme, I interpret my data as relating to empowerment. As discussed in the theory chapter there are many different ways of understanding and defining empowerment, but the essence of it is about making the women stronger within themselves with a higher sense of self-worth and confidence and knowing what rights and possibilities one has in society. It is however important to remember that empowerment is difficult to measure as it is both a process and a subjective feeling. It is therefore also difficult to measure how a program, like Jobbsjansen, manages to achieve empowerment of the participants. In addition, I can't say anything about how the participants experience this and whether they feel empowered after finishing the project. The findings here are based on the employees' point of view of what works and how it empowers the participants. Right from the beginning the employees work with boosting the participants confidence and motivation:

But it's also in our project that they get to know themselves better as well. Strong and weak sides, what they're good at, what they're not so good at, what they need to work on (JS 2)

Considering Sharaby & Lipkin's (2018) research we can say that this is about increasing what they call personal empowerment. The focus here is on personal change, becoming more self-aware of decision-making abilities and taking responsibility of the results. The JS try to

increase the participants confidence and helping them realize what resources and strength they have from before. Another aspect of empowerment as mentioned in the definition used by many was with the focus on knowing one's rights and being able to hold accountable institutions that affect their lives. An example of why this is important was mentioned by one JS about a participant who some years after finishing the program had been told by her boss that she should quit her job because they did not have enough work for her. So, not knowing her rights regarding dismissal and compensations she did as she was told and quit her job voluntarily. Fortunately, she still had contact with her Jobbsjansen contact and got advice and help even though this was several years after she had finished the program. One JS also explains how cooperation with the participant and creating a safe space is important from the beginning:

The most important thing for me is to establish a good communication with the candidate and create a trust-based relationship between both parts so that they feel like they can trust me and the work I do (JS 6)

Many of the JS mentioned how it can sometimes be difficult to find the right balance between how much you should do *for* them and how much they should fix *themselves*. However, they all discussed how letting them master things themselves is important both for their confidence and for getting a permanent connection to work-life:

Also, it's a kind of balance, how much should you be 'on top' of these women and how much should they do their own thing to be able to feel that independence feeling as well. You can't be on them all the time (JS 6)

One can be quite quick to think that I can fix this for you, I'll just write this, and I'll just call. And of course, we do that as well, but I need to stop myself sometimes and think that I have to let her do it, let her try that part. And that's because we can start something and make a good start and people need to find jobs or education, but they have to be able to be in it themselves. And we all know that during a work-life there's a lot of ups and downs, and most, almost most people, go through NAV at one point in their life and then you have to be able to have the possibility of making it on your own (JS 7)

What we see here is the work they do to make sure the participants have the tools they need to make it on their own after finishing the project. Like JS 2 expressed "That's exactly what we want - that they will get a lasting connection". The program's goal isn't just to get the participants into work as soon as possible, they are making sure they will get a lasting connection to work-life and being empowered to survive the ups and downs in the work-life later. This can be compared to Djuve & Kavli's (2015) description of a typical carer who "sees the process of involvement as empowering, educational and necessary in order to reach long-term goals of economic and social inclusion in society" (2015, p. 250). All the

employees maintained that empowering the women by helping them get ownership of the process will increase their chances of making it on their own and being integrated. This was also suggested by Sharaby & Lipkin's (2018) findings, as previously stated, they found that a similar program in Israel provided a supportive framework for the women's inclusion in work-life. Moreover, it had positive effects on language and motivation and decreased their independence on the welfare system. On the other hand, letting the participant have ownership of the process and being active in decision-making might take more time and resources since they might not always know what they want or the best way to get there right away. As Kavli (2020) argues, a typical carer will let the participant spend some time to figure out what they want to do without making the decisions on behalf of them. Moreover, a typical NAV employee might not have the time to work in this way and when they don't it can work as an obstacle to empowerment by not letting the women have decision-making power and by making them feel 'helpless' in the process, as will be discussed later in this chapter. There were some different approaches regarding to which degree you should be 'on' the participants at all times and follow them up. Some of the JS were clear on how the best way to work was by not being on top of them at all times but letting them figure out things on their own. Still, they all expressed how it's important to not do everything for the participants but help them get ownership of their own process and learn how to do things themselves. JS 7 goes on to say:

I don't think you will get that basic feeling of confidence and security before you master it yourself. So, it's about self-mastering... So yeah, back to making them responsible right, of their own process and that bit. You see how important it is, because only being told what to do and being placed somewhere, that doesn't work (JS 7)

This compares to Kavli's (2020) findings on how street-level bureaucrats in the introduction program have different strategies and beliefs in how they work with their participants. Even though the employees in this Jobbsjansen district works in a rather similar way there are still some small variations in their strategies. However, on a general basis most of the JS maintained that it is important for the participants to do as much as possible themselves because it's important both for motivation and for confidence

It's about that we have had good conversations on what her tasks should be. It's her that need to drive the process forward, that's the best thing, at least how I work. I mean you need to give her lots of independence and empowerment to take the initiative herself... That's a much stronger feeling, than if I push her around and test this and try that. Because that is what NAV is known for, that myth about NAV that we just push people around. Unmotivated people at

the wrong place, in work practice, that just gets thrown around for years. And this unfortunately happens because there are not enough people in NAV, we're understaffed (JS 4)

One JS (2) offers a possible explanation to why the women sometimes have a hard time deciding and want the employee to help them choose and that is that "They're maybe not so used to thinking in an individual way like we do, they think more in a family way".

Something else that Jobbsjansen does that, according to them, makes them different from the typical NAV is making sure the participant doesn't end up going months between each activity, which can be demotivating. Rather, they make sure they forge while the iron is hot and keep them in activities.

We are pretty good at activating (the participant) the entire way because we know how much that means. To not have to sit at home. And maybe even more so when you have just started and been a bit outside, gotten some routines and that bit, and then you have to stop and wait, that's not healthy for the one concerned (JS 7)

In other departments you get sent to CV course and then after three months it's done and then you just wait for six-seven months before you hear something from your contact. Here it's very *bam*, *bam*, *bam*, *bam*. You're finished with one thing, then we'll find something else for you, so you don't go around doing nothing. We try to have everyone in an activity all of the time (JS 6)

Several of the JS mentioned this, and how they believe keeping them in activities at all times increases their motivation. Furthermore, when it comes to motivation, making them responsible for their own process both motivates them and leads to less disagreement since they are not making any decisions on behalf of them as a typical clerk would. Subsequently, the participants are doing what they decided themselves and not being told to do something that they don't want to do.

For me personally it's generally about giving people what they want. Because it's mostly when you give people what they want that you mostly get the best results. It's also about when people also handle hardship the best also, because the goal is still there, and it becomes manageable because they will actually reach it. So, it's about their motivation. It's also about that they are maybe not so used to being accessory. There I have my prejudices. I haven't experienced it always and you have many strong Pakistani women who have been at home for 20 years and 'ruled' both the home and the husband, but there's more of a general tendency that they have not had the opportunity to decide that much over their own life as much as they would wish, or as much as we think they should in our culture. Yeah, so it's really about seeing one's own options (JS 1)

It's interesting to note here how JS 1 discuss how much autonomy the women have to decide over their own life as much as *they* would wish but adds that it could be about as much as *we* think they should in our culture. Like discussed earlier it's important to remember when talking about integration that there is not necessarily one common goal and to keep in mind

different cultural traditions. The goal should rather be to empower the women so that they know about their rights and possibilities and are capable of making informed decisions about their own life and what they want to do. Considering Therborn's (2013) paper, this is what the capability approach is about – freedom and knowledge to choose one's life-path, and resources to pursue it. In this way they can choose in what ways and how much they want to be integrated. In addition, relating to close follow up, the fact that they have enough time and are available to the participants also has an effect on the participant's motivation:

We also see that some of these women have been in the system for a while and feel like it's difficult not being able to get in touch (with their contact). But when they see that they can easily get in touch with us it helps raise their motivation too, that 'here things actually happens, and very quickly, so I want to make an extra effort here' (JS 6)

You're the boss!

When I asked the JS whether they occasionally have disagreements with the participants, all of them said no. Some expressed how they could disagree on some things, and they could try to guide them and make suggestions, but like JS 3 says, "but I always end with saying that in the end you're the boss and it's up to you". Others again explained how they don't have disagreements at all and like JS 1 says about whether disagreements happen; "no it doesn't, because I never make them do anything they don't want to do".

It's not about what I want to say, it's about what she wants to say. And I can try to confirm or deny and say that I won't send her to courses if it's not something useful, and if it doesn't work we'll just cancel it. She is the one who should have 'ownership', not me (JS 7)

This is an interesting theme seen in the light of Djuve & Kavli's (2015) article about different types of street-level bureaucrats and users. According to their article the JS employees would all classify as *carers* since they don't make decisions on behalf of the users. However, the way I interpret my data I don't believe the JS refrain from making choices for the participants because they are reluctant, rather because they have a strong belief that the participants' needs to make their own choices to get ownership and be more sure that they have made the right choice. In order to go deeper into how they work with the participants to make them feel seen and heard, and like they are in control, I will provide an example from a mapping conversation I observed in the following paragraph.

One event which exemplifies how important it can be for the participant to be seen and heard and to be included in decisions and thus having more ownership of their own process, is one

of the mapping conversations I observed. One potential participant came in to have a mapping conversation with one of the employees to see if she could join the program. When the woman came in, she was obviously frustrated, and it seemed like she was not expecting the meeting to lead to anything more than her previous experiences with the system. She had been in the system for some while, had countless of different caseworkers, and been sent to several different activities. She had also had various experiences where she had been told to stay in long work trainings that were obvious would not lead to a permanent job. She explained how she felt like she was always told what to do and never had any say in anything and how she was tired of trying and trying and not getting a job. She said several times how she just wanted a job and expressed how she did not want to sit at home and do nothing. She also said how she had noticed that in Norway having a network is important in order to get a job. She had a lot of work experience from her home country, and even though her pronunciation was not perfect her Norwegian was very good. When we sat down together the JS asked her several questions about her background and what she wanted to do if she could choose. The JS employee was also very concerned with communicating that the participant was the 'boss', and she should control what happens and what she does. The JS said the most important thing about the activities was that she liked them and wanted them, and most importantly that the activities actually led to steady employment. The JS employee provided a very safe and pleasant environment during the conversation and was very committed with letting the participant express herself and talk about her concerns, and then reassuring her by explaining how things are done in Jobbsjansen and that she would not have to do anything she did not want to do. The JS also reassured her a lot and expressed several times how she was sure everything would work out and that they would find her a job. As mentioned earlier the participant seemed frustrated and unmotivated when she came in, probably thinking that this would not lead to anything. However, at the end of the conversation she seemed much lighter, more motivated and a lot less frustrated. It seemed like she felt that at this project she would actually be heard, have a say in decisions and get help.

What was interesting to observe in this situation was how the JS employee was able to reassure the participant by being genuinely interested in her, her previous experiences and what she wanted to do. The JS had a mapping form that she used during the conversation, but I could see that she didn't follow it very strictly. She rather asked some questions from the

form but mostly let the participant steer the conversation. The JS understood what the participant needed and acted thereafter. When she suggested different activities the participant could do to improve her chances for work she would for instance formulate it like “pronunciation course is a possibility *if you want to*” and explain the benefit with the activities she suggested while at the same time leaving the decision up to the participant. As an outsider it was very interesting to see the change in the participant’s mood during the conversation. How she went from frustrated to positive and motivated. When I talked with the JS afterwards, she said she felt the same change in the participants mood. This mapping conversation was a good example of how Jobbsjansen works with their participants and how they both use individual adaption and tailor conversations and activity-suggestions to each person and their needs. Furthermore, it shows how important it is to give the participants ownership of their own process and feel like they have a say in what happens to them. As mentioned earlier, similar programs in NAV are often known for sending participants in activities they do not want to be in or don’t understand the meaning of, which can lead to frustration and a lack of motivation and progression.

In another mapping conversation I took part in I experienced the same. The JS told me in advance that they would not be following the mapping form too much since it was better to personalize it to each participant. Many of the women who come to Jobbsjansen have already been in the NAV system earlier and the JS stated that they are probably tired of answering the same questions from similar forms, and how “freestyling” the conversation made it better. Compared to the findings in Rambøll & Halogen (2021) this is probably correct as many of their user informants commented that the lack of communication between service providers and how they for instance had to go through mapping of career guidance both at Voksenopplæringen and NAV. In relation to theory, Lipsky also argues how street-level bureaucrats often have to make decisions with limited time and information, and how this can be because of difficult systems, large caseloads or limited time. During the conversation JS asked about previous work and education and what she wanted to do, and about her family situation to find out what activities could work with her schedule. The participant was frustrated over her own situation and the fact that her language level was not good enough, but JS reassured her that this is not uncommon and that these things take time, but she will get there. JS was also very good at keeping the mood light and pleasant and made some jokes

from time to time to lighten the mood. When JS suggested she could try a work practice the participant stated that she did not want to do any more of that. JS then said that they could talk more about this later and find a good solution, but that she would not be forced to do anything she did not want to do. Again, we see how JS adapt to each participant and how they try already from the first encounter to help the participants get ownership of their process by letting them decide both what they want to do and how they want to get there:

I mean, we do that during the mapping conversations, the first meeting, to hear a bit about what thoughts and ideas they have... and what we have learned is that when they have ownership of the process, they take more responsibility as well because then they have been a part of making the decisions. There hasn't been made any decisions on their behalf (JS 6)

The process of empowerment

The employees work actively with the participants so that they will feel in charge of decisions. JS 6 express "what we see then is a much more dynamic collaboration, a much better collaboration, the dynamics in the entire relationship gets much better". Compared to the findings from Kavli (2020) making the participant complicit in the process through involving them in creating individual education plans, opens for a better cooperation and acknowledgement of the participant's attitudes and values. All of the JS say how they encourage the participants to get ownership of the process already from the mapping conversation and how important it is for them to agree on the activities and understand why they are doing them. Without this, motivation will most likely fall. JS 2 says how "the motivation shows when you're in a course or practice that helps you in finding a job. And they work a bit harder because they understand where they're going or what they want". However, it's not always that easy to help them take ownership of the process. One JS goes on to explain one possible reason for this:

Many have not had any goal of higher education or dreams about anything really, so in that way they kind of come and don't have any prerequisites for (taking) ownership of their process. This probably mainly goes for the more traditional and the oldest though, there are some of the youngers who are also traditional, but I feel like many of the younger are a bit more concerned about 'this is what I want and this is what I think' (JS 5)

During the mapping conversation and when we go through the conversation and sign and everything, I say that here you're the boss, I am just a support person. I will help you, guide you, do as well as I can, but you're the boss and you need to decide what you want. But still some come time after time and say but I don't know, what do you want? You can decide, what can you find for me? (JS 5)

What we see above can be linked to what Sharaby & Lipkin (2018) talked about relating the stages of empowerment. They argue that the most difficult stage is the process of going from the private sphere to the public sphere. Many of the JS mention the same problem, that many of the women are unsure and indecisive and need a lot of help and being pushed in the beginning and the transition from the private sphere to the public sphere might be scary or new for many of them. Moreover, there can be several reasons for why they're not sure what they want to do or why they want the employee to choose for them, but as several JS mention, then you just need to work more with them and figure out how to proceed together:

It's rare, but we have some that, whether it's a lack of commitment or will, or if it's culturally conditioned, that are terribly modest. They are not used to showing initiative and taking control, but then you just need to work with it (JS 4)

I mean we can give suggestions, that we can do, because we have the competence and know what we can offer. And then it's up to them to make a choice based on the suggestions we make. And if they don't want any of those then they get homework to find out what they think they could do, and then we can see whether it's possible to do, whether it's feasible (JS 6)

As mentioned earlier the employees also often help the participants with problems that is outside of what Jobbsjansen is supposed to do, but as all the JS mentioned this is about clearing space for them to get to a point where they can focus on work and education. Many of the participants have other issues in their life and it's not possible to ignore these while trying to help them get a job or education. One JS described experiences students in a Norwegian class had with NAV while trying to learn Norwegian:

And unfortunately, there was a lot of negative experiences and that's a shame, but that's just how it is. Some of them had gone from activity to activity and had contacts they didn't even know who were, or what their name was... I was so frustrated sometimes on their behalf because they were having so many problems with the NAV system, and their economy and everything, and their concentration to learn Norwegian was non-existent on the worst days....and it's a shame because it becomes another obstacle for learning (JS 5)

So, in some ways, the system which is supposed to help immigrants can become another obstacle in their way.

One JS talked about how different the participants in the program can be and makes two examples from each end of the scale:

(Talking about some of the women who have a clear goal from the start) Smart, young, women, and it's just a dream to work with them, because they have created a course, they just need help finding help with where they can learn this and that and where they can find work training (JS 4)

(Talking about on the other hand where you have women who are even further from the work life and just stayed at home raising kids) And then suddenly it's their turn and kind of like 'shit, I haven't thought about this, I have no idea what I want to do' (JS 4)

What we see here can be linked to Djuve & Kavli's (2015) different types of service users where the example on young women would be Queens and the older women would be Pawns. However, as discussed earlier this has an obvious class dimension where it would be more difficult for the older women to express agency and more easy for the educated women to show agency and know what they want. This might also be linked to differences in generation as well. Age, or being from a younger generation seems to also be an important dimension in the women's expectations to themselves, career, self-fulfillment and to the system. As Kavli (2020) discuss, both the Norwegian society and the Norwegian integration strategy has been through major changes in the last 50 years. Many groups of immigrant women came to Norway longer ago than the some of the more recent immigrant groups. The role of women (in general) in work-life was also more different than today and the integration strategy was less focused and adapted on immigrant women's participation in work life. Some of the immigrant women have both come from, and to, a different society with different expectations and possibilities than other groups. This may also explain some of the differences between 'queens' and 'pawns'. It is therefore not just affected by the society and background one comes from but also the society and its following expectations one comes to.

In the next, and last, chapter, I will sum up my findings and analysis. Furthermore, I will discuss shortly the way forward and make some suggestions for further research.

8. Concluding discussions and the way forward

In this thesis I have tried to answer three research questions using qualitative method with participant observation and interviews of the employees in one Jobbsjansen project. This concluding chapter will first address the research questions through the findings in the analysis combined with some further discussion and reflections. In the second part I will provide some thoughts on the way forward and further research.

Concluding discussion

This thesis has examined one aspect of integration in Norway, namely integration of female immigrants through employment or education. The focus of the thesis, however, has been on the service providers', or *street-level bureaucrats*', point of view. I have used a case study of one Jobbsjansen project to help answer the questions together with the support of previous research and relevant theories. The thesis does not try to speak for the participants in this or any other program on how they experience barriers and use of empowerment. It tries however, to see the perspective of the service provider and include the immigrant women through previous research and theories. As stated initially, this thesis has three research questions:

- In what ways does official policy guidelines affect street-level bureaucrats' work with immigrants?
- What do street-level bureaucrats who work with immigrant women describe as the main barriers to integration?
- How can increasing immigrant women's agency contribute to a secure attachment to work-life, according to street-level bureaucrats?

If we look at the first research question, the aim is to find out whether the policy guidelines street-level bureaucrats operate within affects their work with immigrants. As I interpret my data, there are two main aspects to how this happens. *The first aspect* is how policy guidelines control the time and resources street-level bureaucrats have at their disposal. This affects the quality of the program and service they can provide. Throughout the analysis chapters we see several examples as to how several of the work methods of Jobbsjansen is possible due to their modest number of participants per employee. The mapping of Rambøll & Halogen (2021) provided a good overview of what participants in similar programs wanted and needed

more of. Their wants and needs often came down to having contacts in NAV who knew them well and had time and resources to follow them up closely. In the analysis there were several examples where Jobbsjansen does exactly this. First, they spend a lot of time mapping their participants creating individually adapted programs to make sure everyone gets the same possibilities even though they have different starting points. As mentioned by several of the Job specialists (JS), their participants range from older women who struggle with language and motivation and women who don't have any education or work experience, to younger women who are very motivated and women with plenty of work experience or former education. It therefore takes time and involvement from the JS mapping differences while at the same time exercising discretion doing it. Second, the employees in Jobbsjansen have a holistic approach to the participants, focusing on family-life and obstacles they experience elsewhere in their life that may be in the way of learning and focusing on work or education. One JS even expressed how it would be useful to get some training related to mental health to help deal with past trauma. The employees thus work very closely with the participants including frequent contact and overview over the different activities they attend. However, as the JS point out, this is not typical in many other departments in NAV. The reason for this is that they simply don't have the time or resources for such rigorous follow-up. As one JS maintained, the only reason they can work in this way is because they each have few participants to follow-up. Therefore, we can see that policy guidelines play a big role in the quality of the program offered to the participants. In addition, the policy guidelines Jobbsjansen operates within from IMDi are quite loosely defined, giving them a lot of freedom to design their project. Even though this is seen as a positive aspect by most JS, some express how they wished some elements of the logistical and administrative tasks could be more standardized.

The second aspect to how policy guidelines affect street-level bureaucrats' work with immigrants is through attitudes and consequently the services offered. As maintained through Schütze's (2019) article about Swedish welfare workers and through the contact hypothesis, service providers' (majority groups) attitudes to immigrants (minority groups) can be affected by the amount of contact they have with them. In addition, as Schütze argues, the service providers are street-level bureaucrats and therefore exercise discretion in their decisions. They also exercise power in terms of the quality of the services they offer the service users, and

their personal attitudes thus plays a big role. Schütze (2019) also claims that organizational structures and organizational culture can affect the attitude of the individual employee. As I interpret my findings (subsequently), I therefore argue that working under unsatisfying policy guidelines can affect employees' attitudes to the participants. As we could see between the different departments view of one participant discussed earlier, one employee can see a participant as a 'lost case' while another one can see the same person as a resource with lots of potential. My argument here is that working under policy guidelines where you don't have enough time or resources and perhaps know that you are not able to offer the services necessary, can in turn affect your attitudes towards the service users. On the other hand, it may be easier to have a positive attitude towards the service users (in general) when you know you have enough time and resources to help them and in addition know that you will spend lots of time with them. How much time and resources street-level bureaucrats have at their disposal may affect their motivation and general attitude to the work they're doing. Working in an organization with a good work structure and culture where the employees are generally positive in helping their participants will also influence your own attitude. I got the impression that Jobbsjansen Søndre Nordstrand had a very positive work environment where the employees each played their part, cooperated and supported each other. This will probably reinforce positive attitudes towards the participants. Moreover, as I discussed in the analysis, when you work closely with the participants and see how your actions influence their (entire) life, in addition to seeing their reactions to the decisions you make, you will most likely be motivated to work harder and find solutions and possibilities.

Another aspect of Schütze's argument of welfare workers' attitudes to immigrants can be linked to stereotypical perceptions of immigrants and in this case, of third world women. In the interviews the research participants can be said to reflect attitudes characterized by an 'othering' of the participants. This can be understood in light of postcolonial perspectives. Mohanty's (2003) discussion on the West's tendency to create an 'us' and a 'them', and the construction of the average third world woman could be applicable here. Some of the quotes about the women coming from male-dominated societies and not being used to decide as much for themselves could be seen as a form of this attitude. Nevertheless, the JS seemed reflected on the differences between the varying female participants. They also stressed the importance of individually adapted programs since all the participants had different

backgrounds, preconditions, goals and wishes, which substantiates that they view everyone as separate individuals. This was exemplified through statements about for instance Pakistani women who have 'ruled both their home and husband', and about young women with lots of motivation and determination. They also commented on the differences in cultures and how our society might expect different things from them than they do for themselves, without that being a negative thing. Hence, I would argue that they did not fall into the trap of judging the women based on a notion of an average third world woman.

For the second research question the aim is to look at what the main barriers to integration are, seen from a service providers point of view. This question also has two aspects: barriers experienced by the women in general such as language and low/lacking qualification, and structural barriers in the system. Since this paper has a focus on street-level bureaucrats and not the women themselves, the most important aspect here is the structural barriers. As seen through both the mapping done by Rambøll & Halogen (2021) and the quotes from the JS, immigrant women experience many barriers in their encounter with the welfare system. Again, many of these barriers are due to poor policy guidelines and lack of time and resources. Immigrant women experience being in a system where they don't know their contact or where they change contacts often. They experience not being able to reach their contact, not knowing who to contact, or even how to get in contact. They experience having contacts that don't know them, and not feeling seen or heard. They experience being placed in offers that are not relevant to them but not having a choice in which activities or courses they attend. In addition, they might have negative sentiments towards their contact or the system. To sum up, they experience having contacts who don't have the time or resources to create individually adapted programs for them and following them up in a close or holistic way. All of these barriers hinder the women from getting further in qualification and reaching their goal of work or education. Like previously stated, we see again how the negative experiences immigrant women have with the system often stems from the policy guidelines and how their contact in NAV has too many participants to take care of and simply does not have the time or resources to help them in the way they need. As several of the JS stated, it's not the people working in the system who's at fault, it's the system that needs to change.

My third research questions discuss whether increasing immigrant women's agency can contribute to a more secure attachment to work life, according to the street-level bureaucrats. The argument here is that focusing on empowering the immigrant women will provide them with more tools and confidence which will help them get a more secure attachment to work-life. This is because when the women have gained ownership of their process in the program, they will increase their practical sense of know-how as well as their overall feeling of agency. Subsequently, the participants have learned more about how the system works, how to write a CV and job application, and how to search for jobs and go on job interviews. They may also be more confident, know their rights in society, and have a stronger feeling of what they value and how to achieve it. Hence, if they get fired or want to change their job in the future, they are more likely to know how to deal with it and handle it on their own, as opposed to their contact in NAV just telling them what to do to and finding a job for them without involving them. The employees in Jobbsjansen do this actively. Right from the start they want the participant to know that they are the boss and the one who's supposed to make decisions and 'drive' the process forward. The employees continually express how important it is that the participant has ownership of the process and that they are not only told what to do. In addition, when the immigrant women increase their agency and become more safe and secure in work and society, it may be easier for them to choose to maintain aspects of their own culture. In this way, the women can feel safe and secure both in the 'new' and 'old' culture. Sharaby & Lipkin (2018) also discussed this in relation to immigrant women in Israel. How empowerment programs made the women more confident and at home in the new society while at the same time enabling them to maintain their own ethnic traditions or culture. In relation to integration the question is how much space is there, and should there be, for differences? This is about finding a balance between helping the immigrant women understand and being able to participate in the Norwegian society while at the same time allowing them to maintain their cultural differences – in order to create a truly multicultural society.

The JS also argue that they get better results when they succeed in making the participant an active agent in the process. An active and dedicated participant is more likely to be well motivated as they are no longer just placed in activities that they don't understand and can't make use of. Moreover, they have fewer disagreements with the participant since the

participants are the ones who decide. As we have seen, the strategies street-level bureaucrats choose when it comes to decision-making depends, according to Djuve & Kavli (2015), on what kind of service provider they are and what kind of service users they are dealing with. Djuve & Kavli argues that *carers* are less likely to make decisions on behalf of the service users, while *clerks* are more inclined to do so. One aspect they mention is when service users take too much time deciding what they want to do. I would argue however, that the relevance of this depends on policy guidelines and the amount of time and resources service providers have available. If you have limited time with each participant, it is more likely that you will make decisions on their behalf. The JS all stated that they never make decisions on behalf of their participants, but rather motivate them to figure things out if they can't decide on a path. In addition, one might also argue that individual personality traits with the employees have relevance. While one employee may be patient and meek, another employee can be more eager and impatient. As Djuve & Kavli (2015) point out, what type of service provider one is can be a combination of both and change over time. The work environment and structure one works in may therefore influence the kind of service provider you are according to how 'good' or 'bad' the policy guidelines governing the work is. A person who is a carer who works under a lot of pressure with limited time and resources might therefore turn into a clerk. Nevertheless, I believe it's important to point out that how I see it, being a clerk is not automatically a negative thing. Clerks may also provide good service to the participants but might be less inclined to use discretion in trying to find the best solutions when things are difficult. Clerks might also in fact be more just and fair in some sense, treating everyone equally according to current rules and law.

Inspired by postcolonial critique, I would also like to elaborate on some issues related to integration and empowerment of immigrant women. First, I want to state again how the employees don't really use the term empowerment. They talk more about increasing the participants' agency, helping them take ownership of the process, and being accomplice in decision making. They talk about finding the resources already inside of them and making them see that they have a say in defining reachable goals for themselves. Yet, it is worth considering if there in the Norwegian society are established discourses and tendencies to view immigrant women, like Mohanty (1988) argues, as 'third world women' who need help from the Western women reaching the Western 'standard' through 'empowerment'? Some of

the JS discussed how the immigrant women think more in terms of ‘we’ rather than ‘me’. Also, how they have not had the opportunity to decide as much for themselves as they would wish, or as we think they should in our society. This can be discussed from a postcolonial view as an expression of established discourses in the Norwegian society. How we in the West construct this so-called third world woman, and how they should change their ways and become like us to reach their full potential. On the other hand, it could be argued that this is a simple fact. Many immigrant women from the Global South come from male-dominated societies where they have not been able to decide much for themselves even though they may have wanted to. Either way it is important to constantly name and challenge these postcolonial perspectives so as to not create biased or condescending attitudes towards immigrant women while defining them into one group. What used to be a more conscious way of thinking of and treating people has now become more of an unconscious way of thinking about the ‘others’, even if it is benevolently motivated. On the other hand, the participants in this program are immigrant women who are separated from work-life and in need of qualification. This qualification needs to be adapted to the Norwegian work life which quite often requires independence and taking initiative. Thus, not teaching the participants how to be more ‘Norwegian’ could harm their possibilities of reaching the goal of a secure attachment to the work-life. Hence, in my view, the employees have a good approach to how they are working with the participants. Their aim is to help the participants find the resources already inside of them and increasing their agency. Nevertheless, it is still important for western societies to avoid being led by an image of an average third-world woman. This way of thinking might be so subconsciously rooted, even if it’s benevolently motivated, that it’s important to constantly think about it and challenge it. I’m sure even this thesis has made the mistake of referring to immigrant women in Norway in this way at some point.

Overall, I believe Jobbsjansen in general, and this exact project in particular, is working well. They have a great focus on the process as well as the end results. They work with the participants on several levels and follow them closely. They are more dedicated to helping them get a strong a secure attachment to work-life, rather than just focusing on getting them a job (any job). Hence, I would say that one of the main strengths of Jobbsjansen is that they look at the individual and treat people with respect and more like equals than many other

departments. This seems to be an attitude penetrating not only the project structure but also the employees as individuals.

The way forward

I would argue that Jobbsjansen is a socioeconomically important project. Even though it might be more costly in the short term, it pays off in the long run. How much does it cost ultimately to invest too little in the number of caseworkers, which often leads to them sending participants off to offers they can't make use of? How much of a waste is it to spend time, money and offers on participants that are in addition wrong for them and won't lead to anything? Isn't it better to grant more funds to projects like these that has time and resources to treat their participants as fellow human beings and just 'do it right' the first time? As some of the JS mentioned it is important to see the individual and cooperate with the participant to increase their agency, and that this should be done more in NAV. My hope is that the knowledge accumulated in this thesis can be used to enable new programs or expand existing programs (without changing the structure or design), both for this group and for other groups. I believe this way of working can apply to other groups in the society as well and is not necessarily gender specific. Even though Norway has a relatively well functioning welfare system, there are still many different groups (unemployed Norwegians, immigrant men, young people struggling to get a job, and more) who are not receiving the help they need and want from NAV. These groups could all benefit from programs that work holistically with the participants and use close follow-up and individually adapted programs. Even though it might be more expensive, it would be better to invest more right away and avoid people coming back time after time to enter new "programs". Not 'succeeding' within relatively short time in the system can also decrease sense of mastering, and motivation may go down as time goes by 'in the system'. The way forward therefore becomes a political issue. The only way to keep improving the way the Norwegian welfare system works with immigrants is for the government to grant more funds to support projects like this and to employ more people in other departments in NAV. Thus, the question remains; how important, or rather how prioritized, is it politically to help more immigrants get a secure attachment to work-life and become integrated. When we get knowledge of programs that work well it is important to learn from their experience and use this knowledge in future integration strategies and

budgeting. In the end it comes down to whether the average politician is able and willing to give priority to long-term success rather than short-term gains.

As previously discussed, immigration and integration in Norway has changed a lot over the years and in the future the integration strategies may have to change continuously – as a consequence of the society changing continuously. As several of the JS pointed out, they can see a change in the younger generations as many of the female immigrants in this group have different backgrounds and expectations, both when it comes to the number of children they want and in wanting their own career. The important thing to remember is the diversity of immigrants (both men and women), and that we have to think in new ways and not continue in postcolonial thought where there is an ‘us’ and ‘them’, and where we create an average third-world woman. Like all of the JS stated, it is important to meet them with equity of treatment, since they all have different backgrounds, wishes, preconditions and goals.

Further research

My research has focused on the viewpoint of the service providers, the street-level bureaucrats, and only included the view of immigrant women through previous research. It can therefore only deliver statements about the successfulness of this project based on the people who work with it and not what the participants in the project think of it and whether they actually feel ‘empowered’ or more integrated. The degree of successfulness, however, can be supported to some extent by their high goal achievement of the number of people who actually find work or start education. Nevertheless, it would be of value to do a similar research project including the participants point of view as well as the service providers to include both sides. Another research project that could be interesting to conduct would be to compare this project to a Jobbsjansen project that work with immigrant women from Europe to see whether there are great differences in the way they work, or to a project in a smaller city with fewer immigrants.

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Appendices

Appendix 1: Table of immigrants by region in different districts (SSB)

Appendix 2: Letter of consent research participants (employees)

Appendix 3: Information letter participants in the program

Appendix 4: Interview guide

Appendix 1:

05752: Innvandrere og norskfødte med innvandrerforeldre, etter region, statistikkvariabel, år og landbakgrunn

	Innvandrere og norskfødte med innvandrerforeldre (prosent)					
	2020	Norden	Vest-Europa ellers, unntatt Norden	Øst-Europa	Nord-Amerika, Oseania	Asia, Afrika, Sør- og Mellom-Amerika og Tyrkia
030101a	Gamle Oslo	3,3	2,9	7,1	0,6	25,4
030102a	Grünerløkka	3,5	3,4	8,6	0,7	18,6
030103a	Sagene	3,0	2,6	5,4	0,6	14,9
030104a	St. Hanshaugen	4,2	3,9	6,9	1,0	12,0
030105a	Frogner	4,6	5,1	6,4	1,2	11,3
030106a	Ullern	2,6	3,4	5,7	0,7	8,3
030107a	Vestre Aker	2,5	2,8	4,8	0,7	7,1
030108a	Nordre Aker	2,2	2,7	4,2	0,6	9,3
030109a	Bjerke	1,8	1,7	11,4	0,2	29,3
030110a	Gronud	1,4	1,6	9,3	0,2	39,2
030111a	Stovner	1,2	1,4	7,9	0,2	48,3
030112a	Alna	1,3	1,7	10,5	0,2	40,9
030113a	Østernsjø	1,7	1,5	7,3	0,2	15,5
030114a	Nordstrand	2,3	1,9	5,4	0,4	8,2
030115a	Søndre Nordstrand	1,7	2,3	9,9	0,4	42,4
030116a	Sentrum	8,4	5,4	11,8	1,4	23,6
030117a	Marka	3,2	2,2	4,8	0,5	1,3
030199a	Uoppgitt bydel Oslo	4,1	6,3	25,1	0,4	36,3

med to
utenlands
region:

--Se liste over endringer i de regionale inndelingene.-

Siste oppdatering:
Innvandrere og norskfødte med innvandrerforeldre (prosent):
2021.03.09 08:00

Kilde:
Statistisk sentralbyrå

Kontakt:
Innvandrere og norskfødte med innvandrerforeldre (prosent):
Alice Steinkellner, Statistisk sentralbyrå
+47 907 29 051
ali@ssb.no

Vil du delta i forskningsprosjektet ”Muligheter og utfordringer i tilskuddsordningen Jobbsjansen”?

Dette er et spørsmål til deg om å delta i et forskningsprosjekt hvor formålet er å utvikle kunnskap om ansatte og brukeres erfaringer med tilskuddsordningen Jobbsjansen. I dette skrevet får du informasjon om målene for prosjektet og hva deltakelse vil innebære for deg.

Formål

Formålet med prosjektet er å se på hvordan de ansatte i Jobbsjansen jobber med prosjektet og hvordan brukerne opplever tilskuddsordningen. Videre er formålet å se på hvilke muligheter og utfordringer både ansatte og brukere opplever gjennom Jobbsjansen. Forskningsprosjektet brukes til å skrive en masteroppgave i programmet International Education and Development.

Hvem er ansvarlig for forskningsprosjektet?

OsloMet er ansvarlig for prosjektet.

Hvorfor får du spørsmål om å delta?

Fordi du er ansatt hos Jobbsjansen, eller er en deltaker i prosjektet.

Hva innebærer det for deg å delta?

Hvis du velger å delta i prosjektet innebærer det at du gjør deg tilgjengelig for intervju og eventuelt observasjon av hvordan ansatte jobber med prosjektet ovenfor deltakerne, og hvordan deltakere jobber mot å nå målene sine.

Det er frivillig å delta

Det er frivillig å delta i prosjektet. Hvis du velger å delta, kan du når som helst trekke samtykket tilbake uten å oppgi noen grunn. Alle dine personopplysninger vil da bli slettet. Det vil ikke ha noen negative konsekvenser for deg hvis du ikke vil delta eller senere velger å trekke deg.

Ditt personvern – hvordan vi oppbevarer og bruker dine opplysninger

Jeg vil bare bruke opplysningene om deg til formålene jeg har fortalt om i dette skrivet. Jeg behandler opplysningene konfidensielt og i samsvar med personvernregelverket. Innhenting og behandling av opplysninger vil også skje i tråd med generelle forskningsetiske retningslinjer.

Hva skjer med opplysningene dine når vi avslutter forskningsprosjektet?

Opplysningene anonymiseres når prosjektet avsluttes/oppgaven er godkjent, noe som etter planen er juni 2022.

Dine rettigheter

Så lenge du kan identifiseres i datamaterialet, har du rett til:

- innsyn i hvilke personopplysninger som er registrert om deg, og å få utlevert en kopi av opplysningene,
- å få rettet personopplysninger om deg,
- å få slettet personopplysninger om deg, og
- å sende klage til Datatilsynet om behandlingen av dine personopplysninger.

Hva gir oss rett til å behandle personopplysninger om deg?

Vi behandler opplysninger om deg basert på ditt samtykke.

På oppdrag fra OslomMet har NSD – Norsk senter for forskningsdata AS vurdert at behandlingen av personopplysninger i dette prosjektet er i samsvar med personvernregelverket.

Hvor kan jeg finne ut mer?

Hvis du har spørsmål til studien, eller ønsker å benytte deg av dine rettigheter, ta kontakt med: Helle Emilie Hannevold u.t.

S180552@oslomet.no

+ 47 95 16 43 13

Vårt personvernombud:

Ingrid S. Jacobsen

personvernombud@oslomet.no

Hvis du har spørsmål knyttet til NSD sin vurdering av prosjektet, kan du ta kontakt med:

- NSD – Norsk senter for forskningsdata AS på epost (personverntjenester@nsd.no) eller på telefon: 55 58 21 17.

Med vennlig hilsen

Helle Emilie Hannevold

(Forsker/veileder)

Samtykkeerklæring

Jeg har mottatt og forstått informasjon om prosjektet *En evaluering av tilskuddsordningen Jobbsjansen*, og har fått anledning til å stille spørsmål. Jeg samtykker til:

- å delta i intervju
- å delta i observasjon

Jeg samtykker til at mine opplysninger behandles frem til prosjektet er avsluttet

(Signert av prosjektdeltaker, dato)

Informasjon om å delta i prosjektet «Muligheter og utfordringer i Jobbsjansen»

Jeg skriver en mastergradsoppgave ved OsloMet og vil i den anledningen se på Jobbsjansen og hvordan de jobber sammen med deltakerne for å bidra til integrering, og for å få flere minoritetspråklige kvinner ut i arbeid eller utdanning.

Ingen personlige opplysninger om deg vil bli registrert og du vil være helt anonym i oppgaven.

Deltakelse er frivillig, og du kan når som helst trekke deg ved å si ifra enten muntlig eller skriftlig.

Informasjonen er basert på observasjon og notater, og vil kun bli brukt til å besvare masteroppgaven.

Med vennlig hilsen

Helle Emilie Hannevold

Mobil nr: 951 64 313

Helleemilie@hotmail.com

Appendix 4

Intervju guide

PERSONLIG ERFARING

1. Hvilke personlige egenskaper mener du er viktig for å være en god jobbspesialist i Jobbsjansen?
2. Hvordan type opplæring eller andre forberedelser får man før oppstart her?
3. Folk er jo forskjellige og gjør jo jobben sin på forskjellige måter, men hva er det viktigste for deg for å kunne gjøre en god jobb?
4. Hva kunne du eventuelt trenge for å gjøre en enda bedre jobb? (Kursing/samarbeid/ for eksempel)

OM DELTAKERNE I JOBBSJANSEN

5. Hva mener du er de største barrierene innvandrerkvinner opplever i møte med arbeidslivet? (Kan du gi noen eksempler?)
6. Hvorfor er det nødvendig å ha et eget program kun for kvinner?

ARBEIDSMETODIKK

7. Er dere flinke til å spille hverandre gode og støtte hverandre innad i programmet?
8. Får dere til et godt samarbeid med andre instanser? Lykkes dere med å koordinere arbeidsoppgavene så dere ikke «går i veien for hverandre»? (ikke planlegger forskjellige aktiviteter på samme tid osv)
9. Jeg skjønner hvorfor det er viktig at deltakeren har eierskap til prosessen, men kan du utdype litt om det og hva dere gjør for å bidra til dette? Noen spesielle knep?
10. Hvordan håndterer du deltakere som er umotiverte eller tar lite initiativ? (**Passive i prosessen**)
11. Dere jobber jo på en måte som gjør at dere har veldig tett oppfølging av deltakerne. Føler du at rammebetingelsene i prosjektet er gode nok til at dere kan følge opp deltakerne så mye som det kreves, eller så mye som dere ønsker?
12. Hjelper du noen ganger deltakeren med problemer som ligger utenfor programmets rammeverk? (ting som ikke direkte har noe med jobb eller studier eller Jobbsjansen å gjøre)
13. Hva er fordelene med individuell tilpasning i motsetning til å tilby en lik pakke til alle deltakerne? Kan du si noe mer om det, hva som er **de konkrete fordelene**?

- a. Satt på spissen: Kan man ikke si det er mer rettferdig at alle får det samme tilbudet?
14. Oppstår det ofte uenighet mellom deg og deltakeren om opplegg eller aktiviteter?
- a. Hvordan løser du det? (vurderer selv hva som er best eller lar deltaker bestemme)
 - b. Hender det at dere ikke blir enige?
15. Hender det at du tolker regelverket rundt Jobbsjansen fleksibelt fordi du mener det er det beste for deltakeren? Er det tøyelig nok eller føler du det noen ganger står i veien for det akkurat denne deltakeren trenger? Lemper på rigide regler, er det lov å gjøre noen ganger? Bruke skjønn?