



**A Refugee Integration Program and Policy Comparative Analysis of Two Locations:  
Houston, Texas (U.S.) and Oslo Norway, and Literature Review With a Focus on User-  
Involvement.**

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**A Refugee Integration Program and Policy Comparative Analysis of Two Locations: Houston, Texas (U.S.) and Oslo Norway, and Literature Review With a Focus on User-Involvement.**

**1. Introduction**

The CHAPAR project, case study 4, focuses on young immigrants and refugees enrolled in the introduction program at NAV. The introduction program specifically aims to integrate the immigrant and refugee young adults into the labor-market. The jobs endeavors were created for social integration opportunities. Therefore, an important goal for the program is to have user-involvement and to structure the program with and for the users. While these refugees are not yet Norwegian citizens, their ultimate goal is to become one. Sherry Arnstein, author of 'Ladder of Citizen Participation', believes that citizen participation redistributes the power to the usually excluded have-nots. Having the refugees participate in developing their individual programs within the introduction program could make the program a better experience. Arnstein has also identified and described levels of participation. Of the three main levels she described, I believe the introduction program is still at the nonparticipation and tokenism level and has not yet reached the top citizen power level (Arnstein, S.R., 1969). The mandatory nature of the program along with Norwegian being a second language for the user, are barriers to users influencing the program. Currently, there has not been, nor are there any other studies focused on the user's positive and negative experiences or any studies focused on this vulnerable age group (Guilherme-Fernandes & Kjørstad, 2019). The CHAPAR case study 4 is attached at the end for further review.

Facilitated through OsloMet, Monica Kjørstad and Ariana Guilherme-Fernandes, are the lead researchers for this project. They have agreed to supervise my project because of their knowledge and our similar interests. I am interested in refugee integration

policy differences between countries. The Scandinavian countries (Denmark, Sweden and Norway) take a collectively different approach than European countries and the U.S.. I am specifically interested in the policy differences between Norway and the U.S. and will take an even more indepth view by comparing Oslo, Norway and Houston, Texas (U.S.). I will compare the two countries at the federal (and state in Texas' case) level and then do a comparison at the municipal level. More specifically, my research question is: What are the differences within refugee integration policy and programs between Oslo, Norway and Houston, Texas (U.S.) including: Integration strength and weaknesses and degree of user-involvement in programs? How are they similar? The vastly different cultural realities of the two locations allow for a maximum difference design. I can then bring the two locations together to compare and contrast refugee integration policy. This can highlight the ways a location's culture, history, demographics and geographics can impact policy making and find relationships despite the wide variations in locations and policy. Refugee policy is usually made and implemented by individual countries but it is an international crisis. Voters and policy makers must learn about other countries' policies to create better policy for their respective countries. Reading policy anlysis and literature reviews can help fill the gap in knowledge for these people.

Through writing my thesis I am going to do a comparative policy and program analysis between two countries I perceive to be very different in terms of refugee integration policy and programs. I also plan to compare the aims and goals of the policies and programs and even more specifically whether they differ in integration outcomes. The goal of this analysis and review is to learn the most about refugee integration policy using a wide variation and to have a structured policy and program guide to create conversation about refugee integration policy and programs. Perhaps even purpose even better refugee policies

and programs. Through a literature review I will be able to reinforce the importance of user-involvement in general and especially in refugee integration policy and programs.

I have chosen these countries and cities because they will most likely have the most policy, population, and differences in comparison. I will provide some contextual background information for Houston, Texas (U.S.) and Oslo, Norway in this paragraph and will continue in their individual chapters. Oslo is the most populous city in Norway and the state of Texas is the recent top relocater of refugees in the U.S.. Like Oslo, Houston is the most populated city and the leader in resettlement of refugees in Texas. "Between 2010 and 2014, the U.S. resettled 71 percent of all refugees." This translates to 700 out of every 1000 and of those 700, 75 end up in Texas ( Kragie, 2015). I assume both countries will be very different in policy, but another important difference includes the difference in diversity between the two cities and countries. In Houston, data collected between 2013 and 2017 concluded that 48.1% of the population spoke another language other than English at home while in the state of Texas 35.3% did. Another 2017 statistic to be considered is the poverty rate. Texas has 14.7% living in poverty while Houston has approximately 21.2% (U.S. Census, n.d.). Norway seems to have less difficulty with poverty with statistics from 2015 citing the rate at 6.3% using the OECD's standard for poverty and 12% using the EU's standard for poverty (Mortensen, G.-A., & Simonsen, 2017). The EU has a higher standard for poverty which accounts for the higher percentage. Norway seems to be more homogenous by ethnicity as well with 83.2% Norwegians including Sami, 8.3% other Europeans and 8.5% other. From this I can infer that Norway is 91.5% white while Texas is 70.2% non-Hispanic white (Norway Population, n.d.). Norway appears to be less diverse in language, income and race. Language, poverty and race issues are also directly relevant to the refugee populations which I will be focusing on.

## **2. Houston, Texas (U.S.)**

### **2.1 Introduction of Houston, Texas (U.S.)**

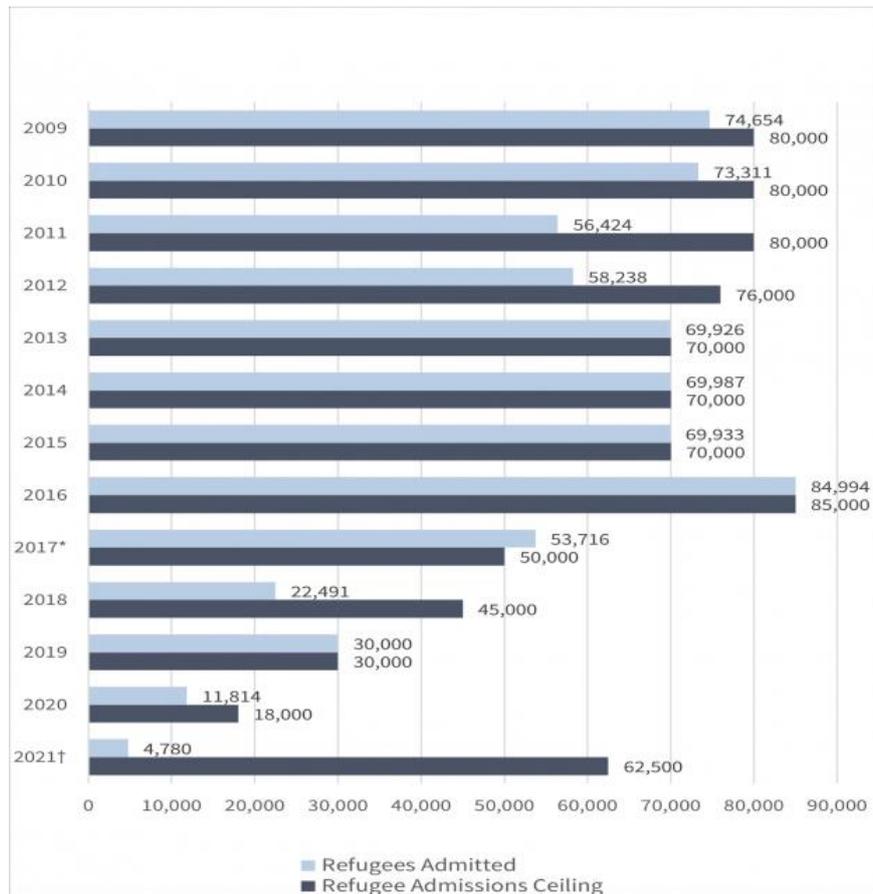
Some of the differences in the current policies adopted by both cities can be explained by historical, cultural, political, religious and even geographical differences. To describe such differences in Houston, it is important to distinguish the differences between the presidential administrations. In particular, there is the Obama (Democrat party) period between January 2009 – January 2017, the Trump (Republican party) period from January 2017 – January 2021 and the Biden (Democrat party) period from January 2021- present. Any earlier periods were eliminated since I don't feel it is necessary to differentiate since I am most interested in the more current refugee history and policies. It is also important to appropriately use how each country defines the words 'asylum seeker' and 'refugee'. According to Homeland Security, a refugee is 'a person outside his or her country of nationality who is unable or unwilling to return to his or her country of nationality because of persecution or a well founded fear of persecution on account of race, religion, nationality, membership in a particular social group, or political opinion. An asylee is a person who meets the definition of refugee and is already present in the United States or is seeking admission at a port of entry' (Refugees and Asylees, 2019). The important distinction here seems to be the location of the person upon application.

Refugees in part are responsible for Houston's population and economic growth as well as diversity. This may be a surprise to many but, according to the 2010 census, Houston is the most diverse of the top ten U.S. cities. The Houston metropolitan area is a large area, bigger than the state of New Jersey in size. Houston also has a strong economy even with a high poverty rate.

Houston has many nonprofits able to collaborate with the government to assist refugees and this may be in part why Houston has more refugees than any other city. The five major nonprofit agencies that work together to rehome refugees include: Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of Houston-Galveston, Interfaith Ministries for Greater Houston, Refugee Services of Texas, YMCA International Services, and Alliance for Multicultural Community Services. The focus for refugee integration is employment and Houston has the jobs available. Refugees are also more likely to become citizens than other immigrant categories. In 2014, refugees were more likely to be from Cuba, Iraq, Afghanistan, Burma and a smaller percentage from other countries. (Kragie, 2015).

## **2.2 Statistics on Houston, Texas (U.S.)**

The U.S. is usually the leader in resettling the most refugees, however the Trump administration (2017-2021) drastically lowered the refugee ceiling. There are 37 current resettlement countries in the world. In the fiscal year (FY) 2020, the U.S. took the least amount of refugees than they ever have with the ceiling set at 18,000. This was the lowest ceiling since 1980. The ceiling was not met last year partly due to COVID-19, with 11,814 refugees being resettled in the U.S.. Of that 11,814 refugees; 35.2% were from Africa, 21.8% from Europe, 18% from East Asia, 16.9% from East/South Asia, and 8% from Latin America/Caribbean. The dip and subsequent increase in the chart below can be explained by presidential administrations setting the ceiling yearly. For instance in (FY) 2017, the Obama administration set the ceiling at 110,000 that was then reduced to 50,000 when Trump took power. The Trump administration kept lowering the ceiling until (FY) 2021 to 15,000. When the Biden administration took power this year, they raised the ceiling to 62,500 refugees. Although only 4,780 refugees have been allowed in as of June 30th.

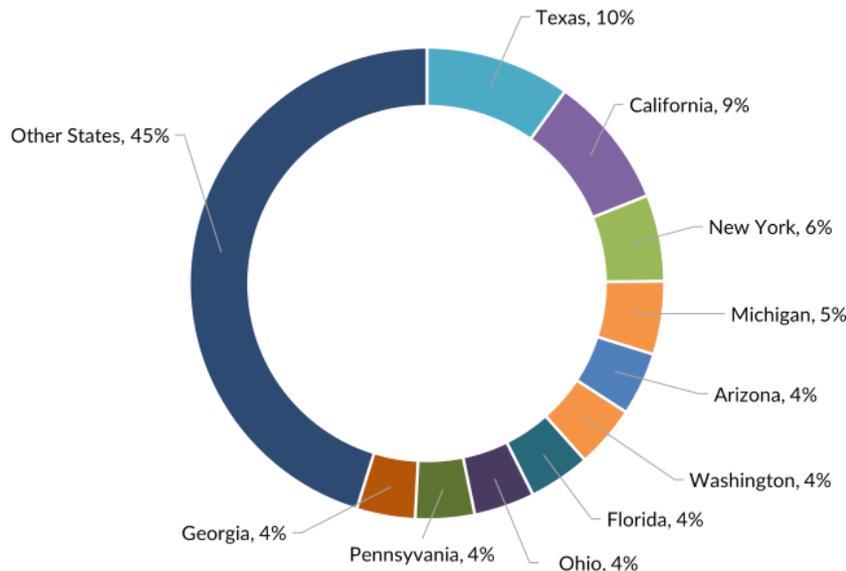


(American Immigration Council, 2021)

The Department of State said that in (FY) 2016 the refugee resettlement process takes an average of 18-24 months. The length took even longer when in (FY) 2017, under the Trump administration, security measures were increased. In January 2017, the Trump administration suspended the U.S. refugee admission program for 120 days and banned Syrian refugees entirely. Other countries were then also banned until the Supreme Court decided against the ban in 2018. Those countries included: Egypt, Iran, Iraq, Libya, Mali, North Korea, South Sudan, Sudan, and Yemen. These policies drastically change the number of refugees the U.S. relocates from year to year by the thousands (American Immigration Council, 2021). (Important to note that these years are fiscal years (FY), October 1st- September 30th).

From federal to state statistics, between (FY) 2010-2020, Texas, California, New York, Michigan and Arizona resettled one third of the 601,000 refugees admitted to the U.S.. Texas specifically resettled about 60,100 of them (Batalova et al, 2021).

### Refugee Arrivals by Initial U.S. State of Residence, Fiscal Years 2010-2020



(Batalova et al, 2021)

### 2.3 Refugee Policies in Houston, Texas (U.S.)

The Vietnam War incited change to the Immigration and Nationality Act of 1962 and the Migration and Refugee Assistance Act. There were 300,000 Vietnamese and Cambodian refugees that came into the U.S. from 1975-1979, allowed by Presidents Gerald Ford and Jimmy Carter's special permission. To provide more clear refugee policy, President Jimmy Carter signed the Refugee Act of 1980 on March 17th of that year. The yearly ceiling (limit) for refugees was raised from 17,400 to 50,000. However, yearly adjustment of the ceiling is made by congress and the President. There has been a lot of fluxuation in the ceiling in the past decade or so. The differentiation of immigrants and refugees didn't happen until after World War II. The Act responded by respecting and adopting the UN's definition of refugee as a person with a 'well-founded fear of persecution.' Also, new offices were

established under the act. The office of U.S. Coordinator for Refugee Affairs and the Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR) (National Archives Foundation, 2016).

The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) refers refugees to the U.S. and 36 other countries for resettlement. In the U.S. there is a couple other pathways for referral including through the U.S. Embassy or nongovernmental organizations. To put the issue in perspective, there were around 26 million refugees total as of (FY) 2020 and less than one percent have been resettled. Again, it takes an average of two years to screen and vet a refugee. This includes the time from the initial UNHCR referral to their arrival to the U.S.. The length of the vetting process is likely to increase with policy change having to do with security measures. The United States Refugee Admissions Program (USRAP) is in charge of interviewing, screening and performing background checks on refugees. Where refugees are resettled depends on the needs of the refugee, housing costs, refugee's relatives and resources available in communities. There are around 190 U.S. resettlement locations. After the screening process and upon arrival at an U.S. airport, nine refugee resettlement agencies (with 312 offices and 185 locations) that have agreements with the U.S. Department of State take over. I will detail these agencies and other programs more below.

#### **2.4 Refugee Programs in Houston, Texas (U.S.)**

The U.S. Department of State's Reception and Placement (R&P) program gives refugees a travel loan to get to the U.S. which must be repaid. The R&P program then gives resettlement agencies money to help with refugee's first three months. There are nine U.S. resettlement agencies who arrange housing, clothing, food, help with getting Social Security cards, medical appointments, and social services among other necessities. After the three months are up, it is up to the states (Texas) and other nongovernmental agencies

(NGOs) through the ORR to provide services for refugees (National Immigration Forum, 2020).

The Matching Grant (MG) program is one of two cash assistance programs. Employment and case management is also provided through the program which can last up to 180 days or roughly six months after arrival. It is funded by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR). The ORR funds national voluntary agencies (VOLAGS) who provide the services. Discretionary programs are programs funded through the ORR with grants. They include community and faith-based organizations and voluntary agencies who apply for these grants. Only VOLAGS have an agreement with the U.S. Department of State to receive and resettle refugees and there are national and local VOLAGS. Refugee service providers can include: community and faith-based organizations, educational institutions, mutual assistance associations and VOLAGS.

The following programs are funded by the U.S. Health and Human Services' ORR. The Refugee social services and targeted assistance grant provides services in Texas. They include: job placement support, vocational training, on-the-job training, professional recertification, ESL (English as a second language) classes, social classes, pre-GED (general education development) classes, drivers education and citizenship support. Refugees can receive support through this program for up to five years from arrival depending on funds and prioritization of clients. Refugee service providers enter a bid for these grants and some local VOLAGS receive grants without the bid to provide the employment program required by the refugee cash assistance program. The School Impact and Targeted Assistance Discretionary programs respectively are for school children and women from Congo and Burma. They assist with integration and education of children as well as ESL and employment assistance to pre-literate women. These specific refugees can participate in these programs provided by school districts, VOLAGS and refugee service providers for the first two years upon arrival .

The city and county health departments provide the refugee health program. It is available for a refugee's first three months and includes the initial health screening, vaccinations and referrals. The services are culturally and language appropriate. Unaccompanied refugee minors are provided the same assistance that is provided to foster children in Texas. The Texas Department of Family and Protective Services has contracts with refugee service providers in Houston. Children up to the age of 18 are provided services as well as some services extended to age 21.

Also funded by the ORR are the two big assistance programs available to refugees, the Refugee Cash Assistance (RCA) and Refugee Medical Assistance (RMA) programs. The refugee cash assistance is the other cash assistance program available as mentioned above. Refugees must not be eligible for TANF (cash aid to families with dependent children) and must participate in an employment program. The program lasts eight months from date of arrival and harsh cash penalties are dealt if the client does not participate in the employment program which is much like many activation programs. The program is a public and private partnership provided by VOLAGS through contracts. The RMA program also lasts eight months from date of arrival. Refugees must not be eligible for Medicaid (public health insurance program) and it is provided by the state of Texas. All refugees are mandated to apply for a green card after one year in the U.S. and after five years of residency with their green card, they are eligible to apply for U.S. citizenship (South Texas Office for Refugees, n.d.)

### **2.5 Integrating in Houston, Texas (U.S.)**

A report published in 2017, stated that one out of every six Texans is an immigrant (Immigrants Drive, 2021). Houston holds around one third of the immigrant population for the entire state of Texas. In 2016, 5.1% of the immigrant population in

Houston were likely refugees. These refugees find jobs in manufacturing, healthcare and general services among other industries in Houston (New American Economy, 2019).

A report titled 'Refugee Integration in the United States' was written in 2016 through the Center for American Progress and the Fiscal Policy Institute. The report used data from the 2014 American Community Survey for Somali, Burmese, Hmong and Bosnian refugees. These groups were identifiable in the U.S. census and have a combined total of 500,000 people, making them ideal groups to report on. They found that these refugee men obtain employment rapidly and are often employed at rates higher than U.S.-born men. The refugee women however take more time. At the ten year mark they have employment rates equal to or above U.S.-born women. Also, after ten years refugees have major increases in wages. For example, a recent Burmese female refugee might make around \$21,000 a year, but has major increases to \$50,000 after ten years. The same can be said for men. Refugees are also upwardly mobile in their careers often working white collar jobs. Refugees become business owners like their U.S.-born counterparts and boost their local economies. For example, thirty one out of every 1000 Bosnian refugees that are employed are business owners.

In the U.S. there are race and gender wage gaps. For instance, black women earn the least while white men earn the most. When comparing genders with the same education, refugees who have graduated high school earn 87 cents to the dollar that U.S.-born white men make. This is even using the highest earning rate of refugees. Refugees who have graduated college earn 74 cents to the dollar that U.S.-born white men make. The gender wage gap is smaller among refugees than the U.S.-born population. In comparison, women in the U.S. make 82 cents to the dollar that men make. This could be because both genders of refugees often earn at low levels as such for Hmong refugees. While Burmese and Somali women often make more than men.

Race discrimination is extended to refugees. Bosnian men earn the most compared to U.S.-born white men while Somalis earn the least comparatively. In the U.S., Bosnians are labeled white while Somalis are labeled black. Besides race and gender, language and certification requirements present barriers. Human capital often doesn't cross borders. They may have degrees or certifications in their home countries but the U.S. requirements become a barrier to reaching their potential.

These refugees learn English, become home owners and become U.S. citizens over time. After ten years, 86% of Somalis and 67% of Hmong speak English well. Burmese and Bosnian refugees own homes at a higher rate than U.S.-born people after ten years. Somalis are the outlier with a low home ownership rate, 47% lower than U.S.-born people. More than three fourths of all four refugee groups become citizens after twenty years or more.

The four groups of refugees that were the focus at the time of this report make up a large proportion of refugees in the U.S.. More specifically one out of every five. We can make broad assumptions or generalizations about other groups of refugees that have been resettled in the U.S. based on this report. These conclusions show that refugees do integrate in the U.S. over time. Local areas that resettle refugees benefit from economic growth and provide humanitarian aid. A report from the Migration Policy Institute stated that 'the refugee resettlement programs's key goal of promoting early employment is largely being achieved.' They overcome many barriers to do so.

While refugees are doing well integrating economically and socially, there are areas where they could receive better help. Education for refugees is one area that needs attention. Educational levels for refugees compared to U.S.-born men and women are usually lower. For those resettled as adults, their high school graduation rates are much lower than

those who arrived as children and have been given the opportunity for education. Different refugee groups have been found to need help with language, home ownership and education.

Not all places are welcoming. Many states, cities and counties introduce bills, express opposition or place moratoriums on refugee resettlement. However, metropolitan areas with growing immigrant populations have growing economies. Immigrants, including refugees, add workers, jobs and consumers who stimulate the economy. Growing economies can be used as a point to support the refugee resettlement program. Metropolitan areas that support this finding and have high numbers of immigrants are San Francisco, Los Angeles, New York, Seattle, Dallas, Houston and Washington D.C. (Kallick, D. & Mathema, S., 2016).

### **3. Oslo, Norway**

#### **3.1 Introduction of Oslo, Norway**

As I have made presidential periods to refer to for the U.S., I will have prime minister periods for Norway. The Jens Stoltenberg (Labor party) period from October 2005 until the Erna Solberg (Conservative party) period from October 2013- present day. Norway also has different definitions for asylum seeker and refugee. According to UDI (The Norwegian Directorate of Immigration) ‘A person is only an asylum seeker from the time he or she reported to the police in Norway and applied for protection (asylum) until UDI or UNE has considered the application and made a final decision. When asylum seekers have received a final answer to their application, they are no longer called asylum seekers. If they have received a positive answer, they are granted permit as a refugee or on humanitarian grounds. If their application is finally rejected by UDI or UNE, they must leave Norway (Asylum Seeker, n.d.).’

A pamphlet from the Directorate of Integration and Diversity describes the purpose of the introduction program ‘to ensure that those who need basic qualifications will receive the initiatives and guidance they need in order to get into education, training or a job.’ Since most refugees have limited job opportunities when they first arrive an introduction program was necessary. The participants can be ages 18-55 and the program typically lasts for two years. The program is full time which is 30-37.5 hours a week. The participants are also given an introduction benefit (money) similar to a job. In 2018, the yearly benefit was NOK 193,766 or € 20,257. The program has eight steps: settlement in a municipality, mapping out your skills, individual plan, learning the Norwegian language and about Norwegian society, language practice, work experience, social networks and jobs, and lastly further education and training (The Introduction Scheme, 2011). User-involvement in tailoring one’s own introduction program will be of focus for Norway.

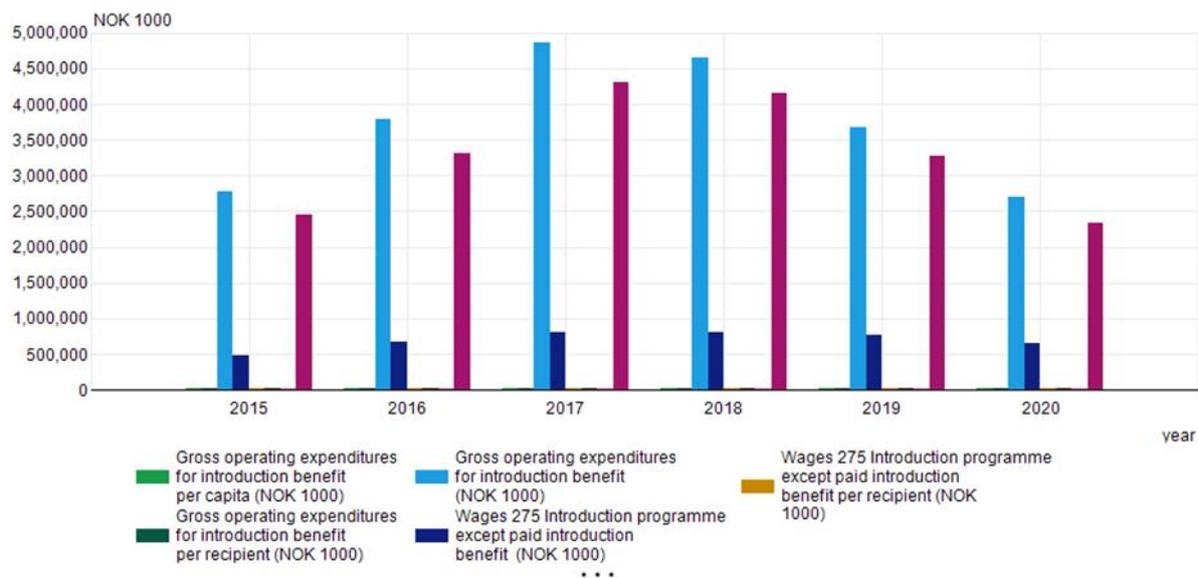
### **3.2 Statistics of Oslo, Norway**

Most of the statistics I have collected are from the Erna Solberg period as her leadership began in 2013. In 2018, there were a total of 27,067 participants and of that 7,170 were between 18-25 years olds. Young minorities find it especially difficult to find employment. Out of those 7,170 young adult participants, only 2,506 are women which makes them particularly vulnerable in the labor market (Introduction programme, 2019). A key focus in Norway could be on young female refugees.

Among refugees there seems to be a positive correlation between length of stay and employment. There is a low level of education for most refugees for many reasons. Low levels of education and employment translate to low incomes. This is a clear problem for refugees and Norway, which policy may help to fix (Statistics Norway, 2016).

Statistics Norway updated their statistics in 2021 for information on the introduction program for immigrants for the years 2019 and 2020. There were a total of 13,897 participants in the introduction program in 2020, a sharp decline from the 2018 total of 27,067. Between the years 2015 and 2020 there was an increase which peaked in 2017/2018 which then decreased to 2015 numbers in 2020. This can be explained by the 2015 refugee crisis in Europe. This can also be seen by examining an expenditure graph from Statistics Norway. The bar graph shows the rise and fall (pyramid shape) in expenditure over those five years which can be seen below.

12268: Introduction programme, operating expenditures function 275, by contents and year. The whole country.



Source: Statistics Norway

(Statistics Norway, 2021)

There seems to be many reasons for fluctuating numbers of participants in the introduction program including policy change and a current pandemic. It seems important to view data over several years as this past year, 2020, was most likely affected because of the COVID-19 virus. Of the total 3,365 18-25 year old participants there were 1,792 male and 1,573 female. The fewer female participants again highlights the importance to focus on women. The age ranges for statistical reference usually are 18-25, 26-35, 36-45, and 46-55.

Participants in the program by country in descending order of the top ten recorded include: Syria, Eritrea, Somalia, Sudan, Ethiopia, Afghanistan, Iran, Iraq, Congo, and Saudi Arabia. Predominantly Middle Eastern and African countries. The top three municipalities, in number of participants are located in Oslo, Bergen and Stavanger.

In 2019, one year after program completion, 73% of males and 48% of females were employed and/or in education. Forty-three percent of total females were in the other or unknown status category. Of those 43%, 21% were unknown and essentially lost in the system. Another interesting fact is that employment and/or education rates varied by municipality with Lillehammer and Røyken tying for best at 82% (Statistics Norway, 2021).

There was a sharp decline in 2015 of the number of asylum seekers in Norway since the refugee crisis in Europe. In November 2015, parliament passed a proposal to narrow the scope of asylum policy. In 2015, 3.6 percent of Norwegian's were refugees with the top numbers being from Somalia, Iraq and Iran. Another group of refugees come from Bosnia and Herzegovia and were given refugee status in the 1990's during the Yugoslav wars. To further understand this figure, refugees make up 28 percent of the immigrant population in Norway in 2015. In 2014, immigration by reason had the most in number for labor then family, refugee, and education. Around 2004-2005, labor being the reason for immigration overtook refugees. More recent refugees (2014) come from Eritria, Syria, Somalia, Sudan, Afghanistan and Iraq. Refugee countries and immigrant countries do not match in number as Poland had the most immigrants in 2015. Oslo received 811 refugees in 2015, 1,000 in 2016, 850 in 2017 and in 2019 only 250. This will be the least in ten years. In 2017, the city council proposed that it be the district having the least non-western immigrants. These immigrants who would normally go to Oslo are going west in the country. (Taylor, 2018)

Norway had a chance to change refugee policy with the 2015 refugee crisis. This crisis was a shock to the system which created an opportunity to break path-dependency policy making. Instead it took the path to more restrictive policy. New policy ideas are often thought up when current infrastructure cannot handle the problem; a brain storming of sort. The media has a part in framing the problem and bringing it into the public's view. This in part can affect immigration and integration policy, including refugee policy. Fears about the lack of employment and social integration have effected the introduction program. Policy issues are presented in ways that are capable of influencing public opinion or politics. The way media frames the issue however, is formed by the culture and institutions of a country and Norway is no exception.

Norway is usually politically inbetween liberal Sweden and restrictive Denmark. The anti-immigration progress party in Norway for example is more moderate than the Danish people's party. Norwegian media find middle ground on a positive to negative scale when compared to Sweden and Denmark when mentioning immigration. The tabloid VG and newspaper Aftenposten were specifically studied. Big articles were about drownings in the Mediterranean, specifically the little boy, Alan Kurdi. Then the Paris terrorist attacks that left 137 dead. The pictures of Alan Kurdi lead to public outrage. In Norway, phrases like Syria dugnad were used in the media to describe Norway's duty to the issue. Most European countries entered the 'race to the bottom', to appear the least attractive as destinations to migrants of all kinds. While Norway did take many refugees during the crisis, there were proposals and policys to restrict immigration. This included stricter integration requirements for permanent residency for refugees (Hagelund, A., 2020).

### 3.3 Refugee Policies in Oslo, Norway

Djuve and Kavli, through Fafo Institute for Labor and Social Research in Oslo, Norway published an article in 2019 in which they both outlined and discussed some policy in the introduction program. I will use their article 'Refugee Integration Policy the Norwegian Way-Why Good Ideas Fail and Bad Ideas Prevail', as a guide while adding other ideas, insights and definitions in the next several paragraphs. The authors use the Norwegian introduction program and evaluations of it to show that the programs measures remain the same despite evaluations showing need for change. The program has been found to have little effect on refugees gaining employment. The little change that has occurred has been paternalistic and controlling because of the popular lazy welfare recipient view. This view does not allow for policy makers to learn from policy research and reports of the program measure's quality, such as language class quality.

Refugees find it difficult to become employed in their host countries even though they have the legal right to and participate in the introduction program. Again, there is a positive correlation between length of stay and employment but there is still a big gap in employment rates between refugees and natives even after years. Typically the nordic welfare model is used in Norway, but for refugees there is an active labor market program, also known as activation policy. The policy has conditions for requirements of education and training for example to receive the monetary benefit. This shows a shift in welfare from unconditional to conditional benefits. This shift is explained by critical-juncture and path-dependency theory. Path-dependency is when policy makers fail to learn from research or the past, make assumptions and error on the side of caution to the point where they persist on the same path whether its working or not. Since 2013, the start of the Erna Solberg period, there has been a conservative political shift in Norway. Controlling refugees has been more important than learning policy for policy makers.

While activation policy is controlling, it is intended to help increase employment for refugees. The two intentions of activation policy can be divided into two pillars, the social investment pillar and the behavioural control pillar. Politicians don't always promote good ideas or the removal of bad ones. Also, politicians often follow the ideals of their constituents. We can see this in Erna Solberg's conservative followers. Path-dependency has been the typical path to policy making but the idea of policy-learning became popular in the 2000s. Policy makers are only incentivised to learn from policy when there is a chance for them to lose an election and power. Another good point is that we must trust social scientists' analysis of social policy to make decisions, not politicians and their constituents. An analogy would be to trust and respect a doctor's knowledge on vaccines and not politicians who have no expertise on the issues. This is how bad ideas get pushed through and better ideas get prevented.

Refugees have a lower employment rate of all migrants in Norway. Other migrants for instance have come for work or education. There are some known reasons for this such as trauma obtained in their home country and a long asylum process sets them back. There are also differences in employment rates of refugees from different countries and of male and female refugees as described in my statistics section above. The quality of employment is not the same between refugee groups and between refugees, migrants and natives. There is a quantity and quality of employment issue. Another important point not in my statistics section is refugee's employment rates in other EU countries compared to the Scandinavian countries. This could give us insight as to the reasons behind the rates. The EU's average refugee employment rate in 2014 was fifty-five percent, while Sweden, Denmark and Norway's refugee's employment rates were all equal or higher than fifty-five percent. The employment gap between refugees and natives is actually higher in the Scandinavian countries as they have high employment rates for the general population.

Refugee employment rate varies by level of education. The same can be said for the general population; people with higher levels of education have higher employment rates. Education doesn't translate across borders for many refugees. Language, different degree and training requirements, difficulties obtaining information and discrimination all undermine the education of refugees obtained in other countries. In 2015, fifty-three percent of adult refugees in Norway age 15-74 listed primary school as their highest level of education completed. A study from 2017 showed twenty-six percent of native Norwegians also listed primary school as their highest level of education completed. This disadvantage for refugees starting at primary school not only makes it harder for them to find a job but makes it more difficult to participate in the introduction program. I'm hypothesizing that people with lower education levels have a harder time with self-advocacy and user-involvement. The program itself will also not be effective if they are not focusing on lower educational levels. Refugees with no primary education would have a difficult time getting and completing an internship for example. Vocational training received in the host country is a more valuable path to employment than formal education received in the home country. A German study found that subsidised vocational training increased odds of employment for immigrants. Job search training however is not effective for immigrants. Vocational training is only a small part of the Norwegian introduction program. More subsidized vocational training is needed in the program.

Language training has been found to have long-term rather than short-term positive effects on employment. This is therefore an important part of the introduction program, but the quality of training and the educational level of the participants effect the results. Refugees with limited education have difficulty passing even low-level language test in Norway. Also, close follow-up with Norwegian introduction program participants had a positive effect on employment rates.

With respect to active labor market programs, studies in Norway found that subsidized employment and shorter training activities had a positive correlation with employment. However, they found that on the job training had no effect on employment. This was the most common measure being used in the introduction program with no evidence base. Subsidized employment is usually reserved for those that are more easily employed. Background characteristics of different refugee groups may mean that the results cannot be easily transferred from one group to another. In activation programs like the introduction program, behavioral control is acquired by reducing benefits. When the Danish government lowered benefits to make working more desirable it was women and people with low education, the most vulnerable, who suffered. An enduring theme here is women and education. The hypothesis is that those who remain on the lower benefit just don't have the skills to become employed and being punitive will not have a positive effect. Conditionality and sanctions seem to harm women who we should be prioritizing. Those who do respond to sanctions, end up taking lower paid jobs with less hours. Behavioural control also looks like mandatory participation in the introduction program and passing the language and citizenship test. The lack of evidence showing that these requirements actually helps with refugee integration shows that the requirements are simply symbolic in nature.

### **3.3.1 Changes In Policy From 2003-2018 in Oslo, Norway**

The Introduction Act, more specifically the act on an introduction program and Norwegian language training for newly arrived immigrants, was published September 1, 2003 and came into effect August 31 and September 1, 2004. Upon reading the act itself, newly arrived means arrived less than two years ago. The municipality is required to implement the program within three months of arrival to their municipality. Section four of the act describes the programs aims as, to 'Provide basic Norwegian language skills, provide basic insight into Norwegian social conditions, and prepare for participation in working life.' The program at the

very least must include language training, social studies, and either preparation for further education or work. Section six specifically describes individually adapted plans. This is part of the user-involvement context of the program. The act states, ‘The plan shall be drawn up in a consultation with the person concerned’ (Norway, 2003 ).

Several amendments and policy changes have been made to the introduction program since it’s existence in 2003. The table below shows any changes to the program until June, 2018. The changes can be categorized into either the social investment pillar or the behavioral control pillar which are the two sides of activation policy and programs. The changes can be further categorized as change or more of the same. This highlights the policy-learning and path-dependency theories.

**Table 1.** Policy changes and initiatives in the introductory programme, 2003–2018.

	Social investment	Behavioural control
1. Language training	–	2005: 300 hours obligatory 2011: 600 hours obligatory 2013: obligatory to take test 2017: obligatory to pass test
2. Formal education	2016: formal right for participants to attend full-time secondary education	–
3. Counselling	2018: underscoring of the need for coherent qualification mapping	2018: central government may instruct local municipalities on how to sanction participants
4. Wage subsidies	–	–
5. Other ALMPs	2017: ‘fast track’ for refugees with relevant labour market qualifications 2018: underscoring of work- or education-oriented measures in addition to language training	–
6. Income support/welfare benefits for programme participants	2018: underscoring of possibility of ‘third year’	2016 and 2017: curbing of rights to other welfare benefits

(Kavli, H.C. & Djuve, A.B., 2019)

Starting with the social investment pillar, since 2003, participants have been allowed to get primary education in the program. They were also allowed to take individual secondary classes on top of the primary education. This however did not work in practice since secondary education was stopped if they hadn’t finished primary education and the two-three years of the introduction program is not long enough to finish this education. The case

workers didn't want refugees to start an educational track they couldn't finish under the program. There is also no language adaptation in these classes which makes it difficult for refugees to participate. Policy change came in 2016 when refugees were allowed to be in secondary education full time and receive their benefit. This change can be categorized under the social investment pillar. In 2017, the fast track was initiated which allowed an increase in employment subsidies for highly skilled refugees, the ones most likely to get jobs. In 2017, 120 refugees participated in the fast track program. The use of on-the-job work training and on-the-job language training has been a focus of policy. In 2018, there was an amendment to clarify that language training alone did not meet the minimum requirements of the introduction program and work or education oriented training was also needed. This reinforcement of policy is seen as path-dependent or more of the same but does fall under the social investment pillar. In 2018, since there is no law that specifies the number of participants per case manager, reinforcement of efficiency of counselling was stated; 'Individual training programs should be based on a mapping of the qualifications acquired before resettlement in a municipality.' This falls under the social investment pillar and can be seen as path-dependent. Also in 2018, it was reiterated that the program could be extended to three years. This also falls under the social investment pillar and is path-dependent.

From 2003-2018, behavioral control policy, the other side of activation policy, has increased more than social investment policy. In 2005, policy set a minimum of 300 hours of language training required in order to get a permanent resident permit. It was always offered but not required. In 2011, this number doubled to 600 hours required. In 2013, in addition to the required language training hours, a language test was added as a requirement. Then in 2017 it was made a requirement to pass this language test. And finally in 2018, sanctions were put on those who did not pass language and citizenship tests. In 2016,

introduction participants' rights to other welfare benefits were limited, including the one for single parents and for those whose children do not go to barnehage (child care).

All of the policy changes made under the social investment pillar are simply reinforcements of previous policy. Phrases like soft regulations and underscoring are used to describe those changes. All of the policy changes under the behavioral control pillar are hard regulations or obligatory and affect more participants. There is more of a focus on behavioral control and on program participation and completion than on program content and quality. Activation measures are still being used that have already been found to not be effective. On the other hand, program measures like education that are known to work have not made it into policy. Politicians are looking at individual participants instead of the program itself. Policy learning is not being used in either pillar and these changes are not supported by social scientists. Politicians have no motivation to change policy if their constituents agree with current policy. Another political view is that employment of immigrants and refugees is not the real goal of policy but the tightening of policy. The 2015 crisis put refugees on the political agenda and on citizens minds. Obstacles to new education policy for refugees must also not be ignored. Those include: costs, municipal autonomy and the division of responsibility between levels of government and policy sectors. These prevent local attempts at providing adapted secondary education for instance. In 2018, the introduction program was transferred to the Ministry for Education and Research (Kavli, H.C. & Djuve, A.B., 2019).

### **3.4 Comparison of Scandinavian Countries**

The report titled 'Nordic Integration and Settlement Policies for refugees' was published in 2019 through the Nordic Council of Ministers. They studied participants in refugee integration programs in Norway, Sweden and Denmark from 2008-2016 and examined the transition to employment and educational enrollment as their dependant

variables. Although a contested idea, the integration of immigrants into employment is seen as necessary to uphold the current welfare state in Western Europe. Employment integrations is seen as the route to social and cultural integration. Comparing Scandinavian countries can help illuminate the strength and weakness of Norway's refugee integration policies and programs.

Their analysis found that two program measures specifically had positive effects on employment of refugees; education and subsidized employment. As a part of integration programs, Denmark had seven to nine percent participate in regular education, Sweden had just over twenty percent and Norway had over thirty percent. To explain some of the differences in the programs, there is a bigger percent of participants with higher education from their home countries who participate in regular education in Denmark and Sweden. In Norway however, the majority of participants getting regular education have only achieved primary education as their highest level of educational obtainment in their home countries. Most Norwegian participants that get education as part of their program, get primary education. These participants mentioned above getting primary education, have higher estimated employment rates than both Sweden and Denmark from the fourth year after beginning. This clearly indicates that Norway investing in primary education for refugees has a positive long-term impact on employment levels.

Subsidized employment is the measure with the most positive correlation to employment rates. In the past, people have argued that the positive effects are due to selection, noting the low numbers of participants in subsidized employment. Meaning those picked were the most qualified to succeed. Sweden however makes an argument against this hypothesis. Sweden has twice the number of participants in the subsidized employment measure and even then they have the same employment rates as Norway and overtake Denmark. This indicates that Norway should use subsidized employment on a larger scale to

improve their refugee employment rates. There is also a subsidized employment gap in all three countries including Norway between men and women in the program measure. Specifically, more women should be selected for subsidized employment in Norway.

Another point to make is that the two main goals of settlement policies are in conflict which affect the employment rate. The goals are dispersed settlement and settlement in favorable labor markets. In all three countries, males settled in the capital are the participants most likely to have a job. Participants have a better chance in finding a job in the capital Oslo, Norway but they are not able to choose their initial resettlement locations. Considering the great heterogeneity of refugees, this study has compared a limited set of characteristics. Individual characteristics of refugees is not seen to change employment rates by more than a couple percentage points. Only one refugee characteristic explained 4.5 percent of the employment gap. This was between men in Denmark and Sweden. All other comparisons, including ones in Norway, were insignificant or had statistical uncertainty (Hernes, V. & Arendt, J.N., 2019 ).

## **4. Theoretical Framework**

### **4.1 Introduction to User-involvement Theory**

User-involvement, citizen participation and other similar ideas can be used to guide the need for user-involvement in the introduction program and other similar refugee policy and programs. I will elaborate on Sherry Arnstein's idea of citizen participation and will use other noteworthy authors and researchers to guide my theoretical framework.

### **4.2 Sherry Arnstein**

Arnstein was certainly influenced by her diverse education and work . She held degrees from UCLA in physical education and American University in communications. She worked in both social work and public policy, in both the private and public sectors. Arnstein

eventually found herself at the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). Her first project was a federally mandated strategy to desegregate all hospitals in the United States. Segregation in hospitals was infringing on the right to life and the right to equal care for minorities in the U.S.. Within the same agency in 1966 she took on the role of chief advisor on citizen participation. Her job was to explain what exactly citizen participation was since their model cities program required it and no one in the department understood what it meant. The model cities program was a federal urban aid program developed out of President Johnson's 'war on poverty.' Arnstein guided citizen participation in community planning and policy making. Other papers published by Arnstein after 'Ladder of Citizen Participation' (1969) include; 'Maximum Feasible Manipulation' (1972) and 'A Working Model for Public Participation' (1975) (American Association, n.d.).

#### **4.2.1 Model Cities**

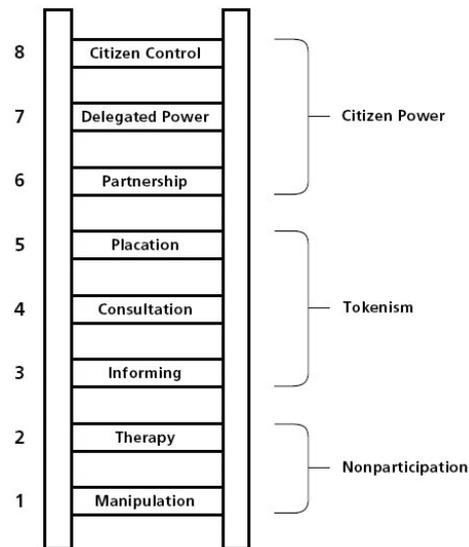
'Maximum Feasible Manipulation' was written by Arnstein as told to by the Area Wide Council (AWC) and their involvement in the model cities program in Philadelphia. This paper is helpful in seeing what happens when citizen participation policy is implemented, from the view of the community. The AWC was created by the community, for the community, in response to the model cities program to ensure actual citizen participation. HUD agreed to the involvement of the AWC to fill the need of community involvement. The community was upset by not being involved in the program from the very beginning stages. For example, the definition of citizen participation was defined without the participation or input of the community. The AWC felt that the community was being used as a rubber stamp of approval instead of real involvement. The intention was a partnership or at least an illusion of partnership between the AWC (community) and HUD/ government. What happened was a knock-down, drag-out fight. From the beginning, HUD started going back on their promises starting with less funding than originally promised and continued with lying and

manipulation. The idea of giving funding to AWC came from trying to give some of the power to the community. Towards the beginning of the program the AWC was labelled a trouble maker. They became involved in a local protest and harassment from the local and federal government began. City hall and HUD punished the AWC by cutting back on funding which led to staff cuts, staff going without pay and community fundraising. The AWC ends up suing HUD for limiting their right to participate. Disputes within the AWC and manipulation from outside sources also weakened the AWC. The AWC learned from this initial experience. They believe the program is a politicians game and you cannot trust city hall or HUD. They were given entrance to the game but on unequal grounds as they do not have the money or power the government has. This is particularly ironic since the federal government stated the goal of citizen participation is to build trust between city hall and the community. Looking back, the AWC also recommends not being reactive to the government and to stay on track with the communities agenda. For example, the city created crisis for the AWC which then sidetracked the organization from expanding their base and rising in power. Arnstein worked for the HUD and also agreed to write a paper in the words of the AWC, therefore I believe her position on community versus government was complicated. These case studies, such as the one illustrated above, can be used to make better policy and implement it in a way that promotes citizen participation (Arnstein, S., 1972). To further illustrate the struggles refugees may have to fully participate in policy and programs. In all actuality, you could replace the acronym AWC (Area Wide Council) with refugees.

#### **4.2.2 The Ladder**

As stated in the introduction, Arnstein's idea of citizen participation would give power to the have-nots. This power would allow victims of the system to take control. They would be included in future planning and could steer policy to their benefit. Public agencies

perpetuate the lack of power and control. She illustrates this in degrees of power as a ladder, which you can see below.



(Doberson, B., 2012)

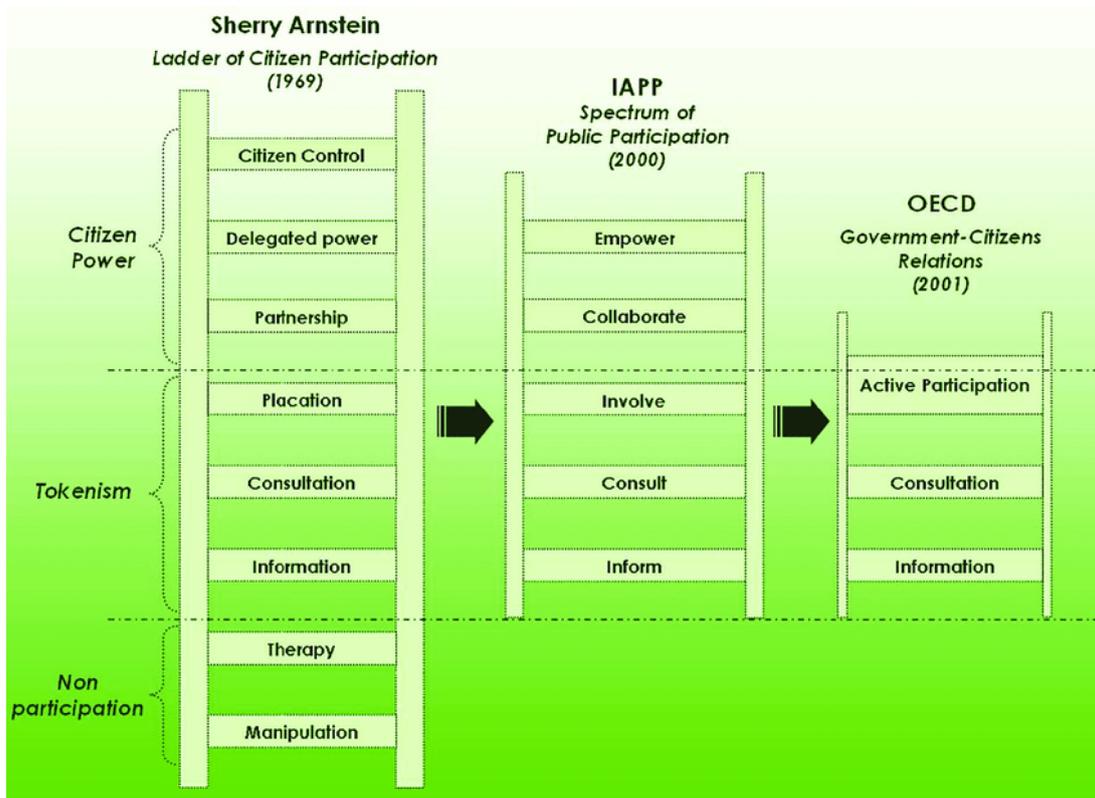
The Ladder describes citizen participation from a low to high degree (ascending) using a ladder with eight steps. The very bottom two steps are manipulation and therapy. Both are labeled as nonparticipation in reference to user-involvement. The ‘city’ for example as in model cities, has the best plan and they use public relations to manipulate citizens. They also attempt to educate and therapize citizens to their side. Step number three is informing which could be called the first ethical step toward citizen participation. Unfortunately it is a one-way communication with the citizens left with no way to give feedback. The ‘city’ is a vacuum chamber of ideas at this point. The fourth step is consultation which could include; attitude surveys, neighborhood meetings and public enquiries. However, Arnstein believes this step is just for show with no meaningful intentions. The fifth step is placation. This step involves citizens advising and planning but the ‘city’ holds the power in decision making. For these reasons, steps three, four and five all fall under the umbrella term tokenism. A small number of citizens are involved or citizens are given just a little bit of power to give the

appearance of equality. Step number six is partnership, where some power is finally being given to citizens by using negotiation. Citizens and the 'city' are sharing the responsibilities and participating on joint committees. Step number seven is delegation. Here citizens are the majority on committees, for example. Power has been given to them or delegated, to make decisions. The 'city' or program is now held accountable. The final step, number eight, is citizen control. The citizens, often the have-nots, control all of the planning, policy making, management, and funds of a program. For instance, in the model cities program, the AWC or citizens would do all the planning, policy making, management, and handling of funds. In my opinion, the only real 'city' involvement would be providing the funding. The last three steps number six, seven and eight are the only steps to reach citizen power (Dobson, C., n.d.).

In order to equalize power, community planning and policy should be a democratic process. (Arnstein, S.R., 1969). Communities, government and planners use her working model to take on injustices including inequitable citizen participation practices. We continue to need this ladder because we have stagnated at the bottom of the ladder at nonparticipation and tokenism.

The International Association for Public Participation (IAPP) and the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) have tried updating Arnstein's 1969 ladder of citizen participation in 2000 and 2001 respectively. In 2010, Pedro Martín argues with an illustrated comparison that the OECD's model hardly reaches above the level of Arnstein's tokenism. Both the IAPP and OECD's models ignore citizen control. For this reason I will continue to reference Arnstein when referring to citizen participation. In the very least, we need active participation in the relationship between citizens and the government to create a partnership. Only truly meaningful citizen participation can break the cycle of participation and transfer power from the government to citizen. To further

understand Arnstein, the OECD, the IAPP and Pedro Martín's vision, see below (Karsten, A., 2014).



(Karsten, A., 2014)

### 4.3 User-led Organizations

Peter Beresford's most recent publications are about participatory social policy and welfare including; 'All Our Welfare: Towards Participatory Social Policy' (2016) and 'Social Policy First Hand: An International Introduction to participatory Social Welfare' (2018). He is also the co-founder of 'Shaping Our Lives', which is a national network of service users and disabled people. User-led organizations or ULOs, among other things, advocate for individuals, educate the public and lead research studies. While being involved in an ULO is empowering, as advocates can help others like themselves (Our Latest Work, 2020). We need advocates in almost all aspects of social policy and welfare. They stop things from going wrong as do checks and balances do in the government. Social workers are also great

examples of advocates. They can stand up for those with little say and little power such as refugees. Beresford is involved with people with mental health disorders and he links how physical healthcare works to how mental healthcare should work. 'The latest thinking in physical healthcare focuses on patient participation, prevention and holistic approaches to wellbeing.' Listening to and respecting service users such as mental health service users is important to develop adequate services (Beresford, P., 2019). I also think we can make the link to refugees. Refugees need to participate in their 'care' and implementers need to listen and look at the person holistically for refugees to be able to integrate into society better. Service users also face powerlessness and discrimination which leads to poor mental health (Ziersch, A., 2020). Perhaps another reason for refugee participation and even a refugee ULO.

Refugees set up informal groups in their new countries to help one another. These groups however are not formalized or funded and therefore may not be able to achieve their full potential. 'Urban Refugees' piloted a refugee led organization (RLO) project in Malaysia. They learned that there was short and long term benefits. By mentoring the RLO's, they were able to add new services, improve gender disparity within the organization, be more strategic and get funded. 'Urban Refugees' agrees that refugees need to be engaged in improving services in part by others involved in listening to their experiences and by mentoring RLO's (The Importance of Refugee, n.d.).

There are a few different options in the approach to policy implementation. Bottom-up policy uses the individual service users as the experts. Street level bureaucrats are also used as consultants as opposed to higher ups. The bottom-up approach promotes community empowerment and user-involvement in services (Top-down or bottom-up, n.d.). This is another example of user-involvement in social policy that can be used as a basis for the need of user-involvement in refugee programs and policy.

## 5. Methods

Literature reviews are a basis for research; just as the CHAPAR project has done a literature review, interviews and analysis. Given the short time I am allotted, I will confine the methods to a literature review on user-involvement and policy and program analysis. By using a literature review I aim to summarize sources, analyze the literature, highlight patterns, and relate it to my research question. First, I will use my research question to direct the literature search which needs to be answerable with existing data and information. I will make a list of keywords that are related to refugee policy in Oslo and Houston and do searches on databases such as: OsloMet's library catalogue Oria, Google Scholar, JSTOR and EBSCO to name a few. I will pay special attention to looking for the theme of user involvement within literature and policy, and sub-themes such as research, social work, the introduction program and empowerment. I will then evaluate whether an article is useful and credible, find relationships between the articles and take notes. I will also analyze existing policy related to refugee integration. Using existing quantitative and qualitative research, I will explain policies and how they came about. Then I have planned to assess the effects and implementation of said policy. There are many approaches to policy analysis, but for now I have chosen the five E approach. This includes effectiveness, efficiency, ethical considerations, evaluations of alternatives, establishment of recommendations for positive change (Romeo, J., n.d.). I have planned a thematic and chronological structure for my thesis ("How to Write a Literature Review | A Step-by-Step Guide," 2019). Tentative chapter descriptions include: 1. Introduction, 2. Houston, Texas, 3. Oslo, Norway, 4. Policy comparison, 5. Implications and recommendations. Some themes within the chapters could include user-involvement (degree of participation), policy aims, policy similarities, and policy differences. OsloMet has given my colleagues and I the

deadline of August 16th, 2021, at noon with the recommendation of 16,000 Words + or - 10%.

## **6. Literature Review on User-involvement**

### **6.1 Introduction to Literature Review**

In this literature review I will discuss user-involvement and the sub themes; research, social work, the introduction program and empowerment. I will use a thematic organization, chronological whenever possible and a relevance level from low to high. I will then conclude with how the articles relate and common themes found throughout the literature.

### **6.2 User-involvement and Research**

In the article ‘User Involvement, Research and Health Inequalities: Developing New Directions’, Peter Beresford again highlights the need for user--involvement. Beresford’s focus here is within research and health inequalities, but we can easily see connections to user-involvement of refugees.

In research, specifically in the past, user-involvement usually means institutions such as government departments and philanthropies are involved in the research process. They often fund the research, guide the process and expect feedback. This has long been an understood relationship between academia and money. The shift in the new understanding of user-involvement would be whom the user is. The people who would benefit from the research are the public, patients and service users for example. The shift is away from institutions toward the service users.

Public health and social work are two areas where user-involvement research is important; in the very least as a component of a research study and at most a full-fledged user study. A couple of research networks in the U.K. have user-involvement requirements in the

research they fund. Like any new idea, there has been some resistance to user-involvement in research. Beresford claims this resistance is usually not made clear in formal arenas but it is often an undercurrent. I could infer from this that academics, researchers and institutions have no credible rebutte to user-involvement in research but have poor attitudes about the possible difficulties this could provide for them.

There is a wide range of degrees of user-involvement in research as well as many dimensions a user could be involved in as Beresford and Clare Evans outlined in their 1999 article 'Research Note: Research and Empowerment.' These dimensions include: identifying the purpose and potential benefits of research, identifying the focus of research and research questions, commissioning research, (seeking, obtaining and controlling research funding), designing the research, undertaking the research as researcher, managing the research, collecting and analyzing data, producing publications, developing and carrying out dissemination policies, and deciding and undertaking follow up action. In the CHAPAR project, case study 4, the researchers intend to use young immigrants (users) in the introduction program in Norway as interviewees. The users of the introduction program would participate in dialouge conferences to study how service user's needs are taken into consideration the introduction program (Guilhereme-Fernandes, A. & Kjørstad, M., 2019). This is the section where their research design includes user involvement by using users as interviewees. Their research is about user involvement in the intro program and they need user involvement in the research to achieve that. This may show limited user involvement in the research design as there may be some barriers to getting newly immigrated young adults to lead research as their main focus is employment among other things such as language and education. An example of how young immigrants could be further involved is by identifying and setting research agendas for future research and perhaps past users becoming involved in the research. Past users in other areas become excellent leaders in their fields.

Research that reaches further back in time than user involvement research include: user controlled research, emancipatory disability research and survivor research. All three have links to feminist, black and educational research. User research is clearly political because of the lack of objectivity that is usually associated with scientific research. Research involving refugees for example is also very value-laden. As refugees are often used as political pawns themselves, it can be very difficult to take the politics out of the research and policy making. There is also a concern that users will be used as tokens in research. They will be present but have no real involvement. In Sherry Arnstein's 'Ladder of Citizen Participation', steps three through five (counting from the bottom-up), information, consultation and placation fall under the umbrella term tokenism. Tokenism is just for show with no meaningful intentions. Users could advise or help plan research but the researchers hold all the decision making power (Arnstein, S. R., 1969). The benefit of user-involvement in research is research that is based on the needs of the users themselves, more effective engagement of research participants and more open responses from users.

User research needs to specifically include groups that are often excluded to equalize research. There are often barriers to participate for these groups which include: people with learning difficulties, people with multiple or profound impairments, non-verbal people, older people with impairments especially those that do not identify as disabled, black, ethnic minorities and refugees. Here Beresford has specifically stated the need to include refugees in user research. This is a very small list of excluded groups in research, but I will stop here as my focus is on refugees. There are ways to help break down some of these barriers users experience in participating such as: Providing time and/or resources, giving choices in their involvement, structuring meetings as inclusive, providing advocacy, reaching out to excluded groups and ensuring language isn't a barrier to participation. *Shaping Our Lives* (user-led organization) describes the lack of barriers as access, with environmental, cultural,

communication and resource access as being the most important. They also highlight the need for respect and support of users. Service users themselves feel that user research helps to address inequalities in practice and could help to develop new knowledge. Alike, refugees as service users could lead research, help address inequalities and develop new knowledge (Beresford, P., 2007).

### **6.3 Refugee Involvement in Research Development**

Patient and public involvement (PPI) is much like user-involvement in research. In the case of this article, it is the involvement of refugees as research development advisors. This process has the potential to re-shape research. Refugee's involvement for example, could help identify areas of research, give input on what health outcomes they are striving for, help reduce stigma and help with informed consent.

Researchers at Uppsala University in Sweden were evaluating a group program for refugee children with signs of post-traumatic stress. Refugee advisors were welcomed to help develop trial protocol. Three parents and one child over eight was selected and paid hourly. It took the form of a meeting/focus group on one day with an Arabic translator. Language barriers were common involving interpretation and miscommunication issues. There were a few other group dynamic issues but the outcome remains positive. Refugees felt they were being helpful by offering useful information. They also felt there was value in being able to tell their stories as well as having others hear and learn from them. The refugee participants also felt they were welcomed as equal research group members. They also felt the original research group showed thanks for their participation and the refugees enjoyed it. Empowerment was felt which is a clear theme of user-involvement. Finally, there was evidence that the refugee advisors did influence the research development.

One criticism of the focus group by refugees was that there could have been more refugees participating to gain more diverse viewpoints as they felt uneasy with speaking for every refugee. The authors of this article found the need for PPI skill-based training and international implementation. Organizations like INVOLVE and GRIPP (Guidance for Reporting Involvement of Patients and Public checklists) have formed to help guide the process, and PiiAF (Public Involvement Impact Assessment Framework) to help guide PPI impact assessment. Most of the assessments come from the U.K., as I have seen with methods of user-involvement (Warner G. et al, 2021).

#### **6.4 User-involvement in Social Work Education**

Goals of social work include promoting empowerment and co-constructing research and theory with service users. However, user-involvement isn't a reality in social work currently. Historically, service users are seen as people with problems and this attitude gets passed down to social work students. Students usually learn about user-involvement through service user held lectures or theory. There usually isn't any cooperation between students and service users. There seems to be a gap between what actually happens in social work education and their lofty goals of user-involvement.

There are two main what they call gap mending strategies from a U.K. and Scandinavian perspective. Peter Beresford from the U.K. points out that service user participation can be found in policy documents as of late. As I have mentioned before, the 2003 Introduction Act in Norway specifically states the programs should be made in cooperation with the service user. There are two different ideas of service user participation; consumerist/managerialist and democratic/citizenship. In the first model, service users are seen as customers who can perfect goods and services with their feedback. There is no transfer of power in this model. The second model does aim to transfer power and has service

user participation in all dimensions. It is important to remember the client is the expert of their own life. Social workers are often seen as the experts on their client's lives. Service user's life experiences aren't valued and users are humiliated after meeting with social workers. Social workers need to view service users as their partners or allies in fixing problems.

Co-production is the partnership between service users and providers. There are three levels of co-production including: being used as a description, a tool of recognition and a transformation of services. The first level involves services getting constructive feedback from users. The last level actually redistributes power among service users and providers. It involves co-production throughout the whole process of development to delivery. Challenging power structures within social work is also important. This level also requires empowerment, a sub-theme to user-involvement. User-led organizations (ULOs) can be seen in this last level. Again, ULOs are typically groups of disenfranchised people who get together to problem solve their own issues. The book, 'Pedagogy of the Oppressed' by Paulo Freire has in part been credited to this movement. In an attempt to get rid of oppression in education, he believes students should co-produce knowledge. Another argument he has is that only those that have been oppressed can help the oppressed as the oppressors objectify the oppressed (Freire, P., 1972). We can see this in ULOs.

The PowerUs network (est. 2011) includes social work educators and service users from Sweden, Norway and the U.K.. The group had come up with different ways to mend the gap between social workers and service users. In Norway, Ole Petter Askheim created a university class that combined students from the social work department and service users. Service user-involvement in social work education is mandatory in some European countries. In Norway, the requirements are a bit vague and the degree of user-involvement can be up for debate. The requirement states, 'service users' needs should be at the center of the work and

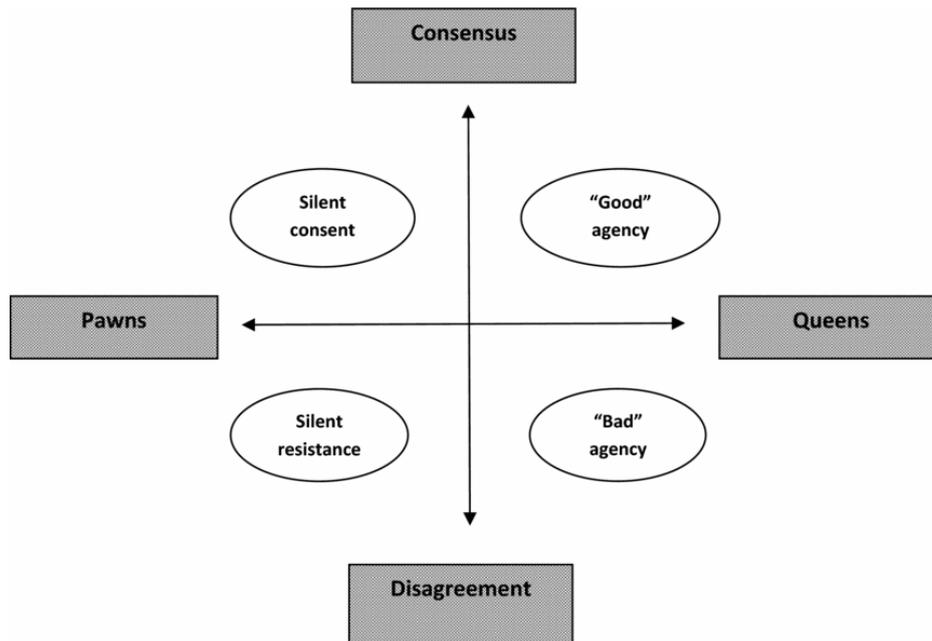
that the social workers should show respect for the service users' knowledge and choices'. The class was started at the Lillehammer University College in 2009 and is titled, 'Empowerment: Meeting face to face gives insights'. There was a follow up study in 2014 on the lasting effects of the class. Social work students replied that the classes had changed their minds about the the social worker's and service user's role and they were able to use this in their current work. The service user students replied that they understood oppression more and were able to change their role as a service user. Some of the service user students decided to further their education, perhaps empowered by the class (Askheim, O.P. et al, 2016).

### **6.5 Promoting User-involvement in the Norwegian Introduction Program**

The article 'Facilitating User Involvement in Activation Programmes: When Carers and Clerks Meet Pawns and Queens', analyzes user influence in the Norwegian introduction program for immigrants and refugees with special attention to the characteristics of service providers and users and how they interact. This article defines user-involvement as; 'any communication of individual characteristics, needs for preferences relevant to the shaping of the relevant service, from the user to the service provider. User influence implies that user preferences have had an actual influence of the shaping of the service.' The introduction program marked a shift in the integration policy in Norway. It once was based on unconditional social benefits and voluntary language training, the introduction program is a mandatory full time program with a high employee to user ratio. This shift has a possibility to hinder refugee's social and cultural rights. User-involvement can be used as a marker to whether this program is intrusive and hinders user's rights like stated above or is empowering. Empowerment is also one of my sub-themes in this literature review as it highly correlates with user-involvement. This article also refers back to Arnstein's 1969 article stating that, 'Citizen participation in decision making is essential for empowerment and democracy.'

The writers build on Julian Le Grand's article 'Motivation, Agency and Public Policy: of Knights and Knaves, Pawns and Queens', using pawns and queens to describe the characteristics of service users in the introduction program and adding their own names of carers and clerks to describe service providers. Queens are empowered users with choice while pawns are described as passive. User-involvement is seen as an ethical measure of the introduction program. Some barriers to user-involvement include: lack of knowledge, language and health issues. Another ethical dilemma is the service providers motivation. This is where Le Grand's knaves and knights come into play. The knave would be a service provider whose main motivation is self-centered and a knight on the opposite end has an altruistic motivation of helping others. A third party to service users and providers are policy makers. How policy makers view service users and their attitudes about user influence shape policy. Le Grand's idea of knights, knaves, pawns and queens was used for social policy in England like this article's authors in Norway. There seems to be a focus of user-involvement in places like Scandinavia and the U.K. but research is lagging in other places in the world including the U.S..

The preferred service user in the introduction program according to service providers would be a queen. However, programs like this reduce autonomy by design. There are rules users must follow and disagreements between providers and users on what is morally good and bad behavior. There is more to user-involvement than just simply acting and providers get to decide what is good agency and bad agency as Le Grand and this article has decided to label them. This uncovers an imbalance of power between providers and users, they prefer queens who are autonomous but they must also have what they decide is good agency. In other words, make your own decisions but make good ones. Not everyone is capable of acting or communicating efficiently. According to this article, they are pawns who either silently consent or resist which you can see in the figure below.



(‘Service providers’ perceptions of service user agency, by service user autonomy and level of consensus between service users and service providers.’)

(Djuve, A., Kavli, H., 2015)

Le Grand separated service providers according to their motivations as knaves and knights. This is seen as possibly too simplistic. The authors separate service providers according to their actions taking away the sense of morality. In doing so they changed knaves and knights to carers and clerks. We can assume that both categories of providers have good intentions. Actions in-line with carers include: care-oriented, a flexible understanding of their job duties, flexible and use bargaining with users, have personal relationships with users and are detail-oriented with results. Actions in-line with clerks include: rule-oriented, clear understanding of their job duties, strict with users, keep a professional boundary with users and see the big picture in respect to results. The interactions between carers and clerks, pawns and queens, in situations carers and clerks find problematic (bad agency and no agency from users) as described in the previous paragraph is of particular interest.

Behavior is often influenced by culture. Since this article and some of my own research is on Norway, I will contextualize the Norwegian immigrant/refugee perspective. The immigrant population in Norway jumped up by ten percent, from 1980-2014. The main goal of the Norwegian introduction program is employment and a study from 2014 revealed that immigrants (especially Asian and African) have employment rates below the national average. Refugees particularly have a difficult time becoming employed. Many of these refugees do not have the education or skills required by Norway, face discrimination and come from cultures with traditional gender roles. The program specifically states that it will not support any traditional gender roles and each individual person is responsible for themselves economically. Without delving into cultural sensitivity, the fact that only women (typically) become pregnant and many other reasons behind some of the aspects of traditional gender roles including a main breadwinner, I can see how this is problematic to Norwegian's gender equality ideals. Getting or expecting the same thing from male and female refugees doesn't necessarily mean equality. Women often come to Norway not having ever worked outside of the home, have no education or skills and have children they are expected to take care of with no help from their husbands. The Introduction Act (2003) set up the legal framework for the introduction program. This allows every adult (18-55) newly resettled refugee individual training (language and work) and an income with obligatory participation. Adults 18-25 receive  $\frac{2}{3}$  of the income benefit and each hour any user misses is deducted from their income. The hourly benefit in 2018 was  $\frac{1}{1850}$  of the annual benefit for example. The program last for up to two sometimes three years. When this article was written in 2014, between 8,000 and 13,000 refugees were registered as users in the program. Since the training needs to be full time and adapted there are other courses besides language, social studies and work training. Such as computer and cooking classes or psychiatric treatment and

exercise. The training plan being made in cooperation with the participant is the user-involvement aspect.

The authors did interviews with program teachers and case workers, a majority who were women. They also interviewed past and present program users, a majority who were also women. The data can be seen as skewed by gender or provides insights particularly valuable since young female refugees seem to be especially vulnerable in the Norwegian labor market. They further divided the program providers into carers and clerks using a questionnaire. Most providers however are a mix of the two categories. Users were again divided into pawns and queens dependent on their behavior.

Pawns are not interested in being involved in the process of creating a training plan for themselves, they do however have an idea of what they want for their future, just not how to get there. There is an example of this in the article of a man in the program who wants to be a car mechanic but doesn't know how to become one in Norway and trusts his caseworker will be the better guide. Here a carer will attempt to turn a pawn into a queen while a clerk will make decisions for a pawn. Carers also see disagreeing queens as a good thing as arguing in itself can be seen as user influence and in the end of the program users are better prepared for the world by being queens rather than pawns. Clerks will stick to the program rules no matter what.

When carers and clerks respond to pawns and bad agency (often disagreeing queens) there are consequences to user influence. User-involvement often takes patience and rule bending. In the defense of the case workers, they don't always have the time and resources (quantity over quality issue) which most social workers can relate to. Having users participate in planning their own training (empowerment) is just as important as the outcome (employment) (Djuve, A., Kavli, H., 2015).

## 6.6 Ideals of Empowerment Within the Introduction Program

Ariana Guilherme Fernandes wrote the article ‘(Dis)Empowering New Immigrants and Refugees Through Their Participation in Introduction Programs in Sweden, Denmark, and Norway.’ While the author discusses all three countries’ introduction programs, I will only discuss Norway as it is my focus. She highlights that while there are empowering aspects to the introduction program like user-involvement, there are many disempowering aspects to overcome. Empowerment can be seen as the shift of power from those with more power to those with little power. With this power, people can help themselves. Besides an individual idea of empowerment there is also a structural one, within social structures. If those with little power understood the unequal power structures and how it affected their lives, they would likely demand change. There are both liberal and radical ideals of empowerment. The Norwegian introduction program contains some liberal empowerment ideology. Specifically the use of user-involvement within the program.

The idea of liberal empowerment follows the free-market model, where service users have choices. Services would then have to meet the wants and needs of users to do well in theory. The idea of radical empowerment is different in that it finds issue with the structure not just the individual like in liberal empowerment. Radical empowerment followers believe the free-market model will not help those that are the most disadvantaged. Like those in the introduction program, those most likely to find jobs don’t need the most help. Their policy goals are to eliminate social injustice. The introduction program in Norway only looks to fix the individual’s problem of employment. It is disempowering to use the idea of liberal empowerment in the introduction program. The program is dismissing the structural barriers to employment. The mandatory nature of the program is also disempowering. By not participating, the introduction salary is withdrawn all together or by an hour by hour basis. ‘Everyone has the right to a minimum standard of living regardless of their ability or will to

perform any duty.’ The introduction program being mandatory makes it a duty. The program is making it the duty of the refugees to integrate into the Norwegian society and work force. By not participating not only do refugees not get the introduction salary but they also won’t receive citizenship.

User-involvement can be found under both the liberal and radical ideals of empowerment. In the introduction program it comes in the form of individual plans made in collaboration with the user. Both liberal and radical ideals agree the refugees know what they need in order to succeed. Case workers can use this to hold power of refugees. If the refugees are not participating the way case workers think they should, they can be overruled. Like in the article above, disagreeing queens participate in their plans but not with what is thought of as good agency. This is disempowering to overrule the queens. The radical empowerment ideals need to be more present in the introduction program to attain real user-involvement and truly empower refugees (Fernandes, A.G., 2015).

### **6.7 Discussion of Literature Review**

Through writing this literature review I have found that user-involvement is a topic discussed in the U.K. and Scandinavia more than other countries including the U.S.. I feel it would truly be a good thing for those discussions to happen in other countries. Research is a place where user-involvement can be useful for the researchers and users. Refugees themselves could get involved in research to help integration measures for those that come after them to have a better experience. Where user-involvement is taught is also important. Social workers need to focus on this from day one, starting with their initial transition education. How case managers respond to user-involvement or the lack thereof in the introduction program has consequences. However, having users participate in planning their own training is empowering and just as important as how well the program works as a whole.

Empowerment is one of the most enduring and important themes of user-involvement. There needs to be structural change to balance power between the refugees and the institution (Norwegian government). Radical empowerment and meaningful user-involvement are ways to achieve it.

## 7. Policy and Program Comparative Analysis

I have made a table of comparisons between Houston and Oslo for quick reference. Some of these comparisons include demographics, policy and programs among others. I will describe the comparisons in more detail below and answer my research question.

	<b>Houston</b>	<b>Oslo</b>
<b>City only area size</b>	<b>599.59 square miles</b> in 2010 (U.S. Census Bureau, n.d.)	<b>175 square miles</b> (Sawe, B.E., 2017)
<b>City only Population</b>	<b>2,320,268 million</b> in 2019 estimates (U.S. Census Bureau, n.d.)	<b>580,000 thousand</b> in 2020 (Population Stat, n.d.)
<b>Poverty rate</b>	<b>20.1%</b> in 2019 (U.S. Census Bureau, n.d.)	<b>9.68%</b> in 2011 (NewsinEnglish.no, 2011)
<b>Diversity</b>	White alone 50.1%, <b>white alone not Hispanic or Latino 24.4%</b> , Hispanic/Latino 45%, Black/African American 22.6% cont. in 2019 (U.S. Census Bureau, n.d.)	<b>70% ethnically Norwegian</b> (Norway Population 2021, n.d.)
<b>Language</b>	Language other than English spoken at home, % of people 5+ (2015-2019) = <b>48.9%</b> (U.S. Census Bureau, n.d.)	No comparable data available
<b>Refugee #s</b>	<b>2,662</b> avg # of refugees resettled in Houston/ year for FY 2016/17 (Houston Welcomes Refugees, n.d.)	<b>850</b> refugees in 2017 (Statista Research Department, 2016)
<b>Major Policy</b>	<b>Refugee Act of 1980</b> (National Archives Foundation, 2016)	<b>2003 Introduction Act</b> (Norway, 2003)
<b>Policy Type</b>	<b>Activation policy</b> , RCA requires participation in employment program for cash assistance (South Texas Office for Refugees, n.d.)	<b>Activation Policy</b> , Introduction program requires participation in language and employment program for cash benefit (Kavli, H.C. & Djuve, A.B., 2019)
<b>Policy in response to</b>	<b>Vietnam war</b> (National Archives Foundation, 2016)	<b>Yugoslav wars</b> (Taylor, 2018)
<b>Program length</b>	RCA & RMA, <b>8 months</b> (South Texas Office for Refugees, n.d.)	Introduction program, <b>2-3 years</b> (Kavli, H.C. & Djuve, A.B., 2019)
<b>Program User-involvement</b>	<b>No</b> evidence found	<b>Yes</b> , section six of the Introduction Act (Norway, 2003) <b>Nonparticipation, tokenism</b>

<b>Policy change</b>	<b>Path-dependent</b> (American Immigration Council, 2021)	<b>Path-dependent</b> (Kavli, H.C. & Djuve, A.B., 2019)
<b>Reduced refugee resettlement</b>	<b>Donald Trump, Republican Party</b> (American Immigration Council, 2021)	<b>Erna Solberg, Conservative Party</b> (Taylor, 2018)
<b>Ease of understanding policy and programs available</b>	A <b>Jigsaw puzzle</b> of support Federal, state, NGOs	Support <b>streamlined</b>
<b>Refugee integration strengths</b>	<b>Employment rates</b> Wage increases Upwardly mobile careers Entrepreneurs Speak English well Home ownership rates Become citizens Grow economies (Kalick, D. & Mathema, S., 2016)	Subsidized vocational training Close follow-up with participants Subsidized employment Short training activities Social investment Primary/Secondary education Individualized training (These all lead to higher employment rates) (Kavli, H.C. & Djuve, A.B., 2019) (Hernes, V. & Arendt, J.N., 2019)
<b>Refugee integration weaknesses</b>	<b>Race discrimination</b> <b>English levels (group specific)</b> <b>Certification requirements</b> Home ownership (group specific) <b>Education levels</b> (Kalick, D. & Mathema, S., 2016)	<b>Employment rates</b> Quality of jobs <b>Certification requirements</b> <b>Discrimination</b> <b>Education levels</b> <b>Norwegian level (group specific)</b> Women left out Reports show need for change Information barrier Behavioral control No language adapted education classes Job Training (Kavli, H.C. & Djuve, A.B., 2019)

## 7.1 Geographics and Demographics Comparison

The different cultural, historical, demographic and geographic realities of the two locations allow for a maximum difference design. This can highlight the way these differences could possibly influence policy. The city of Houston, not including the metro area, is almost 3.5 times bigger than the city of Oslo in square miles (Sawe, B.E., 2017). A bigger city in land size usually translates to a bigger population. The population of the city of Houston, again not including the metro area, is four times bigger than the city of Oslo (Population stat, n.d.). The poverty rate is not entirely comparable, due to different standards,

calculations and years. However, the poverty rate for Houston is twice that of Oslo at 20.1% versus 9.68% (NewsinEnglish.no, 2011).

As far as ethnicity, Oslo is 70% ethnically Norwegian (Norway Population 2021, n.d.). In contrast, Houston is the most diverse of the top ten U.S. cities. The percentage for white alone not Hispanic or Latino is 24.4%. Almost in reverse compared to Oslo. Houston also has diversity in language with 48.9% of people aged five and over speaking another language besides English at home. That is almost half of the population over five years old (U.S. Census Bureau, n.d.). Houston also resettles three times the number of refugees than Oslo does. Houston resettled around 2,662 (Houston Welcomes Refugees, n.d.) and Oslo resettled 850 refugees in 2017 (Statista Research Department, 2016). It is possible that having more immigrants including refugees in the area makes for a more positive environment for refugees. One difficulty important to note is that I had a hard time accessing information on Oslo in English. This could make some of my statistics more out of date or less accurate.

Refugee policy and outcome differences in these two locations could be explained by these differences. It is also possible that the similarities persist despite the differences. The latter could mean the policy is not population specific and could be used in a variety of locations if there are favorable outcomes. My hypothesis is that policy making needs to be done for specific populations taking things like demographics into consideration, and we will not be able to make broad generalizations for all refugees.

## **7.2 Politics, Policies and Programs Comparison**

The major refugee policy in Houston is the federal Refugee Act of 1980 which was developed in response to the Vietnam war and the many Vietnamese and Cambodian refugees who came to the U.S. (National Archives Foundation, 2016). War was a

similar instigator in Oslo with the Yugoslav wars in the 1990's producing many refugees that came to Norway. The 2003 Introduction Act was Norway's answer to the influx of people.

Both policies are activation measures, meaning there are requirements of participation in programs in able to get cash benefits. Similar to many unemployment programs. More specifically, the RCA in Houston requires participation in an employment program for the cash assistance and there are big penalties on benefits for not complying. The introduction program also requires participation in language and employment programs for the cash benefit. Here hour by hour deductions are taken from the benefit for not complying. In Houston, the RCA and RMA last up to eight months from arrival (South Texas Office for Refugees, n.d.). The introduction program in Oslo goes on for a considerably longer time at two sometimes three years.

User-involvement was a key focus in my research. I found no evidence of user-involvement in Houston's refugee policy or programs. However, section six of the Introduction Act spells out that, 'the plan shall be drawn up in a consultation with the person concerned' (Norway, 2003). The level of meaningful user-involvement might actually be low. Using Arnstein's ladder of participation from my methods section, the consultation described above would fall under the umbrella terms of non participation and tokenism. The degree of the user-involvement of the consultation in the program could fall under five individual steps of the ladder: manipulation, therapy, information, consultation and placation. If the consultation in the program matches the step of consultation on Arnstein's ladder, Arnstein herself believes this step is just for show with no meaningful intentions. In the next step, placation, the introduction program still holds the power in decision making. The user-involvement in the program would need to reach the next tier of citizen power to have any meaningful user participation and empowerment (Arnstein, S.R., 1969).

Both cities had negative ramifications from leadership on refugee policy. Donald Trump (Republican party) in the U.S. lowered refugee ceilings and issued travel bans. Erna Solberg (Conservative party) in Norway made controlling refugee policy amendments and had effects on refugee numbers (Taylor, 2018). Also, both cities followed path-dependency when it came to policy change (American Immigration Council, 2021). They both opted for more of the same or more behavioral control (Kavli, H.C. & Djuve, A.B., 2019).

While researching refugee policy and programs in Houston, I felt as if I were putting together a jigsaw puzzle. I had to look at several websites to lay out the federal and state governmental support as well as NGOs and VOLAGS within the city. For Oslo, there seems to be support centered around the introduction program with a few NGOs sprinkled in. I can imagine refugees in Houston would have a hard time understanding their rights and benefits offered with English being their second language.

### **7.3 Refugee Integration Strengths and Weaknesses Comparison**

Making generalizations from the ‘Refugee Integration in the United States’ report, refugees integrate in the U.S. quite well. Refugees often have employment rates equal to or higher than U.S.-born people. After ten years refugees have increases in wages, sometimes double the dollar amount. Refugees work up the job ladder to white collar jobs and have an entrepreneurial spirit. After ten years many refugees speak English well and own homes at higher rates than U.S.-born people. Also, most refugees become U.S. citizens after twenty years or more. Local areas that resettle refugees benefit from the economic growth they provide. The Houston metro area has a large and growing immigrant community and have a growing economy.

While refugees are doing well in general integrating in the U.S., there are areas of focus where they need more support. They experience race discrimination that affects their wages among many other things. Not all groups of refugees are able to learn English well and some get left behind. Rigorous U.S. certification requirements put refugees back in their careers. Some groups of refugees, like the Somalis in this report struggle to own homes. In general, educational levels are lower for refugees than for U.S.-born people. They haven't had the opportunity in their home country. Most issues that refugees face while trying to integrate seem to be group specific, by country of origin or by gender or educational level for example. Group specific targeted assistance for refugees would make the most sense in helping them to integrate. I have no doubt that the refugee programs and policies in Houston affect the ways refugees do and don't integrate well (Kalick, D. & Mathema, S., 2016).

Compared to the U.S., Norway has a big gap in employment rates between refugees and natives even with time. They have the lowest employment rate of all migrants in Norway. The quality of the jobs they do get are low compared to other migrants and natives. Different degree, training and certification requirements, difficulty accessing information and discrimination all undermined the education level already received by refugees in their home countries. Refugees in Norway have low education levels often at primary school levels, an obvious barrier to employment. Refugees with limited education have difficulty learning and passing Norwegian language exams. There is no language adaptation in primary and secondary education which makes it difficult for refugees to participate. Behavioral control like mandatory participation, language and citizenship tests hurt the most vulnerable. Of the most vulnerable are women who are often underrepresented in programs meant to increase employment like subsidized employment. Reports show lack of evidence showing that these requirements actually help refugee integration, yet there is no change or slow change. A Norwegian study found that job training had no effect on employment rates and it was the

most common measure being used in the introduction program. More behavioral control policies were used between 2003-2018 than social investment policies (Kavli, H.C. & Djuve, A.B., 2019)

All of these program measures discussed below are found to positively effect refugee employment rates. Therefore these measures should be a focus of the introduction program which is meant to help refugees gain employment. We can infer from a German study that more subsidized vocational training in Norway could lead to increased employment rates. It is only a small part of the introduction program. Studies in Norway found that subsidized employment and shorter training had positive correlations with employment. However, women should be prioritized in this program measure since they have been underrepresented. Also, close follow-up with Norwegian introduction program participants had a positive effect on employment rates. Norway's investment in primary education for refugees has had a positive long-term impact on employment levels. The number of participants in primary education and the language adaptation of the classes could be a focus. There has been a lack of focus on social investment measures like education, close follow-up and user-involvement in the past (Hernes, V. & Arendt, J.N., 2019), (Kavli, H.C. & Djuve, A.B., 2019).

Reports I read about Norwegian refugee policy and integration tended to have a negative spin. Refugees have low employment rates and the introduction program needs to change. I did not read anything refugees in Norway do well at in terms of integration. Reports however did articulate which integration measures lead to increased employment rates. The issues integrating were not usually group specific and could be generalized for most refugees. Reports I read about U.S. refugee integration leaned toward the positive. Refugees grow economies and bring culture. They tended to have group specific issues, by race or gender for example. Despite these differences both countries had four overlapping issues including: race

discrimination, high certification requirements, low education levels and those with low education levels had difficulty learning the new language.

## **8. Conclusion**

Through writing this policy analysis and literature review I have introduced refugee integration policy and programs. I have also defended my choice of comparison, Oslo and Houston, as a maximum difference design and described statistics, policies and programs, and integration capabilities. I was able to answer my research question in my comparative analysis which included geographics, demographics, politics, policies, programs and integration strengths and weaknesses. User-involvement and citizen participation were the focus of my theory section in which I highlighted Arnstein's ladder and user-led organizations. This set up the reasoning behind the need for user-involvement in integration policy and my literature review. Some of my sub-themes in my review included: research, social work, the introduction program and empowerment.

From my research, I can point out that both countries have problems with discrimination, high certification requirements, low education levels and group specific low language levels for refugees which all affect their employment rates. Helping combat discrimination, helping with certification or training, adapting lower education levels and language classes for those who struggle the most are all suggestions for both countries to benefit from. For Norway specifically, one policy measure I would suggest is to get more women in subsidized employment or subsidized vocational training. Following evidence-based reports and social scientist's recommendations are key. For the U.S. specifically, I would suggest group specific funding, for example, with the low home ownership rates of Somalis. Giving funding to those groups who need it the most, like the Somalis in this specific case, makes the most sense. Using the evidence that user-involvement leads to

empowerment in Norway, I would suggest that the U.S. find a way to implement it. As far as the institutions of refugee integration, I would recommend a shift away from activation penalties and mandatory participation. There needs to be a structural power change for social justice. Refugees also need to empower themselves with user-led organizations. The radical empowerment of refugees being the ultimate goal.

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## 10. Attachment

### **Case study 4: Young immigrants and refugees in the introduction programme.**

Coordinating researcher Monica Kjørstad (OsloMet) and researcher Ariana Guilherme Fernandes (OsloMet).

The aim of this case study is to develop knowledge about the challenges and conditions for young immigrants' participation in the introduction programme for newly arrived immigrants and refugees. Specific research questions focus on what are the drivers and barriers of participation and how can participation be improved? Previous social work studies of implementation of workfare have shown that it is difficult to achieve a real user influence on decisions made and that it is also rare to achieve a partial influence (Kjørstad 2015). Moreover, several studies show that young adults with a minority background are a particular vulnerable group in the labour market (Strand, Bråthen and Grønningsæter 2015, Widding-Havnerås 2016). This vulnerability is further increased for young immigrants as they, for various reasons, have an even weaker position in the labour market.

The introduction programme is supposed to strengthen the target group's labour market integration. While it is an important aim that the introduction programme should be developed in cooperation with each individual user, user influence might be difficult to (fully) attain, as participation in the programme is mandatory. Further, because the majority of young immigrants in the programme have only been settled in Norway for a short period of time, language barriers might also be an important obstacle in achieving user influence. There are few studies (Kavli and Djuve 2015) that have focused on user's experience of the programme, and even fewer, if any, that have looked at young immigrants illustrating a pressing need to focus on the proposed user group.

In phase I of the project, the research questions will be explored and discussed based on a literature review. In phase II of the project, the research questions will be further explored through a series of 12 – 15 dialogue conferences lasting 1,5 years to study how service users' needs are taken into consideration in the introduction programme. The analytical work will identify organizational, legal, professional, management and policy issues that could be drivers and/or barriers to developing participatory-based services. More importantly, the analytical work will also identify and examine user participants ability, or lack thereof, to utilize their user involvement.

The case study group will consist of two professional practitioners, 5 – 8 service users<sup>1</sup> recruited from the introduction programmes in Oslo and two researchers. The dialogue conferences will be videotape-recorded. The study will be innovative by implementing the knowledge brought forward in the dialogue conferences into all relevant levels of the professional educational program of social work at Oslo Metropolitan University and other social work education programs, and to various relevant social welfare services.

#### **Del studie 4**

Del studie 4 har som mål å utvikle kunnskap om forholdene og utfordringene for unge innvandreres deltakelse i introduksjonsprogrammet for nyankomne innvandrere og flyktninger. Forskningsspørsmålene vil se på hva som hemmer og fremmer muligheten for medvirkning, og hvordan medvirkning kan økes. Tidligere studier som har sett på implementering av «workfare» har vist at det er utfordrende å oppnå reell brukervedvirkning på beslutninger som tas, men også at det er uvanlig å få til delvis medvirkning (Kjørstad

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<sup>1</sup> For logistical reasons, the service users will be recruited from one main language. Moreover, it is imperative to take into account possible language barriers, as such the dialogue conferences will also have a qualified interpreter available for translation. The study will recruit participants and practitioners from “best practice” boroughs in Oslo municipality. What constitutes as best practice boroughs will be critically discussed and assessed with IMDi and Oslo Municipality, and in close consideration with available research and results with the introduction programmes.

2015). Det er videre flere studier som viser at unge voksne med innvandrerbakgrunn er en særskilt sårbar gruppe i arbeidsmarkedet (Strand, Bråthen og Grønningsæter 2015, Widding-Hanverås 2016). Denne sårbarheten blir ytterligere forsterket for unge nyankomne innvandrere da de av ulike grunner, har en enda svakere posisjon i arbeidsmarkedet.

Introduksjonsprogrammet har som formål å styrke målgruppens arbeidsmarkedstilknytning. Til tross for at det er et viktig mål at introduksjonsprogrammet skal utformes i samarbeid med den enkelte deltakeren, er det vanskelig å få til (full) brukermedvirkning, da deltakelse i programmet er obligatorisk. Fordi majoriteten av unge innvandrere som deltar i introduksjonsprogrammet kun har vært bosatt i Norge i en kort periode, kan språkbarrierer også være en viktig hindring for å oppnå medvirkning. Det er få studier (Kavli og Djuve 2015) som har sett på brukernes opplevelse av å delta i programmet, og enda færre, om noen, som har sett på unge nyankomne innvandrere, hvilket viser at det er et stort behov for å se på nevnte brukergruppe.

I fase en av prosjektet vil forskningsspørsmålene bli utforsket og drøftet i lys av en litteraturstudie. I fase to av prosjektet vil forskningsspørsmålene bli ytterligere belyst gjennom en serie av 12 – 15 dialogkonferanser over en periode på 1,5 år for å se på om deltakernes behov blir ivaretatt i introduksjonsprogrammet. Det analytiske arbeidet vil identifisere organisatoriske, juridiske, profesjonelle, ledelses og politikk område som kan være hemmende/fremmende i utvikling av tjenester som er brukerbaserte. Det analytiske arbeidet vil også identifisere og utforske deltakernes evne til å nyttiggjøre seg av deres muligheter til brukermedvirkning.

Case studien vil ta utgangspunkt i to grupper. Hver gruppe vil bestå av 2 profesjonelle praktikere (ansatte), 5 – 8 deltakere som rekrutteres fra introduksjonsprogram i Oslo kommune og 2 forskere. Dialogkonferansene vil bli filmet. Studien vil være innovativ

gjennom å implementere ervervet kunnskap som kommer frem i dialogkonferansene i alle relevante utdanningsnivåer i sosialt arbeid ved OsloMet – storbyuniversitetet, og i andre sosialt arbeids utdanninger, og til ulike relevante sosiale tjenester.